



Satisfied with God

A Sermon by George Müller of Bristol

Addresses, etc., delivered by Mr Müller shortly after the death and at the funeral of his beloved wife.

Mrs Müller died at 21, Paul Street, Kingsdown, Bristol, on Sunday afternoon, February 6th, 1870, at the age of 73 years, after a few days' severe suffering. At the usual weekly Prayer-meeting on the following day at Salem Chapel, Mr Müller, after mentioning some subjects on behalf of which prayer had been requested, said,-

“Lastly, I desire, on behalf of myself and family, thanksgiving, that it has pleased the Lord to release my precious wife from her pain and suffering, and that He has given to her what had been the desire of her heart for many years, - to be with Jesus. And I also desire thanksgiving for the great peace of mind which He has given me, and with which He has sustained me, and my dear daughter also.”

Mr Müller, during the meeting, rose and said, “The last portion of Scripture which I read to my precious wife was this: ‘The 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.’ Now, if we have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, we have received grace, we are partakers of grace, and to all such He will give glory also. I said to myself, with regard to the latter part, ‘No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly’ – I am in myself a poor worthless sinner, but I have been saved by the blood of Christ; and I do not live in sin, I walk uprightly before God. Therefore, if it is really good for me, my darling wife will be raised up again; sick as she is, God will restore her again. But if she is not restored again then it would not be a good thing for me. And so my heart was at rest. I was satisfied with God. And all this springs, as I have often before said, from taking God at His word, believing what He says. I fully intended to have preached last night, though I stayed at home in the morning, which I felt to be due to the members of my family to sustain them, and also, feeling the need of rest myself, having been greatly deprived of sleep for several nights, and feeling much worn. But the latter part of the afternoon my dearest wife fell asleep, and for many reasons I had to remain home on this account. Yet if I had preached, this would have been my text, ‘The Lord is good, and doeth good.’ You have often heard me say before, what a lovely Being God is; and I believe it still, and I am satisfied with what He does. For the six days that my dear wife was ill, I had the unspeakable privilege of being her nurse, - my beloved child by day, and myself by night. I am one that feels greatly the want of sleep. Having so much mental work seven days every week, I need sleep greatly, and usually suffer for the want of it; but, in this instance, I have proved, in my own experience, the faithfulness of God, - ‘As thy days, so shall thy strength be.’ As I awoke last night my heart was glad at the thought that my beloved wife was with Jesus. She had done her work, and who would wish it otherwise than that she should have her heart's desire, to go to be with Jesus!”

Mr Müller again spoke: - “A few weeks ago my dearest wife had a very severe cough, on account of which I felt her pulse, and found to my sorrow that she had a very feeble, irregular, and intermitting pulse. When therefore this acute rheumatism, or rheumatic fever, came on, I judged, humanly speaking, how it would end, on account of the effect of acute rheumatism on the heart. Still, in the prospect of this, I was able to say to myself, -

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

You have often before heard me say this, - I meant what I said, and now I took it to my own heart. And I was at peace. And so it was sixteen years ago, when my beloved child was at the point of death. My dear wife and I were at peace. Why? Because we did not love her? We loved her intensely. But we were satisfied with God, whatever He might do. And now how was it? Because I did not love my dear wife? I loved her intensely. As the years rolled on, our affection for each other increased more and more. But it was because I was satisfied with the will of God."

Mr Müller concluded by referring to the keenness of the trial to him as a man and a husband, and to his dependence upon God still, as difficulties increased, and his loneliness was more felt.

On the following Friday the earthly remains of Mrs Müller were conveyed to Arno's Vale cemetery, preceded, accompanied, and followed by a large concourse of people. About 1400 orphans from the five Orphan Houses on Ashley Down followed the remains of their benefactor.

The entire service was conducted by Mr Müller, who spoke in the chapel at Arno's Vale, as follows: -

"I shall read a few portions of God's most precious word, and make a few remarks thereon. First, in the fourth chapter of I Thessalonians, - 'But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first.'

'The dead in Christ!' Not, all the dead; not, all who died before that time. But, 'the dead in Christ,' - those who had fallen asleep as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that is it which gives me the peace, the unspeakable joy I have this day in committing to the tomb the earthly remains of my deeply beloved, precious wife, - because I shall spend a happy eternity with her. Whilst we were living most affectionately and unitedly together for thirty-nine years and four months, this was the theme of our conversation, again and again, and thousands of times; and often and often I have taken her hand, and the hand of my beloved daughter, and said, 'we shall be together throughout eternity,' and our hearts thrilled with joy in the prospect of spending a happy eternity together in the presence of our adorable Lord Jesus. And therefore, because the earthly remains are placed in the tomb of one of whom we have hope and a good scriptural assurance that she is now with Jesus, and that when our adorable Lord comes again, she will have a glorified body, and those who love her here on earth will be united together again with her; therefore we 'sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.'

‘The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.’

I do seek to sustain thereby my own heart. Let us read also a few verses of the fifteenth chapter of I Corinthians.

‘As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.’

Bright and blessed prospect! My precious wife has borne the image of the earthly Adam, who sinned, who fell: she will bear the image of the heavenly Adam, the Lord from heaven.

‘Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.’

That is, in the state in which we now are, we cannot enter into the immediate presence of the Lord; we must first put off this body.

‘Neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery: we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed.’

That is, as previously stated in this chapter, those who die in Christ shall be raised incorruptible. Bright, blessed prospect to my own soul regarding that loved one! She will be raised incorruptible - this weak, frail tabernacle, this suffering tabernacle, in which she endured so much pain and agony during the last few days of her earthly pilgrimage - will be raised incorruptible. Each living believer shall be changed.

‘For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin: and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’

Let me call on all my beloved Christian friends to lay to heart the words, ‘Be ye steadfast.’ Let us aim after it, beloved in Christ. ‘Unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.’

My precious wife died, as it were, in harness. Up to the very last she was at work for the Lord. Even when on her death-bed she gave directions for this thing and another thing to be done connected with the honour of the Lord, - caring about the sick ones outside the house, and sending them refreshments; caring yet for the orphans, and giving directions concerning them. ‘Always abounding in the work of the Lord.’ It was the very joy and delight of her heart to labour for that blessed Jesus who had bought her by His precious blood, in the full assurance of the blessed fulfilment of this word, ‘Forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.’

I will read one other passage in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Philippians, -

‘For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.’

How true regarding her – ‘To me to live is Christ’! During all the thirty-nine years and four months that it was the joy and privilege of my heart to be united by conjugal bonds to that loved one, for her to live was Christ. This dear sister in Christ had one single business in life, one single object in life, - to live for Christ. As soon as I was united to her by conjugal bonds she became a true helper to me in pastoral work. She went about and worked; she laboured, and laboured abundantly, in the Church at Teignmouth of which I was the pastor. And when it pleased God, thirty-seven years and nine months since, to allow us the honour and privilege to come to Bristol, to labour in this city, she in the fullest way gave herself to work among the children of God, and in every way she could, in order to live for Christ. And when it pleased God to give afterwards, as she clearly and distinctly saw, another sphere of labour on Ashley Down, it was day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year, that she laboured in one even, steady course, - for her to live was Christ. Can my heart, then, but rejoice when I think of one whose life was what it was, when there is not so much as the shadow of a question remaining as to where she is now? Oh! how can it be otherwise than that my soul should be filled with unspeakable joy and delight, thinking of that blessed one being with Jesus. For her to live was Christ, and as she put off this her tabernacle, her spirit is now in the presence of Jesus; therefore to her to die is gain. I might give many reasons why to die to her is gain. For her the weakness and weariness of the tabernacle are at an end. For nearly two years past, when she came home with me, about nine o’clock in the evening, from the Orphan Houses, I could see that she was worn to the utmost. I often said, ‘My darling, work less; my darling, stay at home.’ But I could not prevail upon her to do so. She still worked and worked. She loved to be at my side, as I loved to be at her side. But I saw that it was becoming too much for her. Now for her this weariness is past - gone for ever. I might mention a number of other things to show that death was gain, but the greatest is this, it was the desire of her heart to see that lovely One in heaven, our adorable Lord Jesus. She longed to be with Him. Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, was continually the theme of her heart. God allowed me to find a most precious jewel the day before yesterday which that loved one had left behind. My darling daughter told me she had seen, about two years since, in a pocket-book of her beloved mother, a sentence written to this effect, - that she longed to be with Jesus; and when her soul was consciously happy in the Lord, she often wished instantly to depart, only that she dreaded the shock to her beloved husband, daughter, and other relatives and friends. But she wound it all up with this, - ‘Not my will, but Thine, dear Jesus, be done.’ That was just the desire of her heart; not, at some particular time only, on Lord’s-days, or once now and then, but it was the constant desire of her heart to be with the Lord Jesus. Well, to die therefore has been gain to her. Should I wish it to be otherwise? Ah! strange as it may appear to some, what can I say but that I delight in the happiness of my beloved departed one! Oh! the unspeakable peace and joy of my soul as I think she has the desire of her heart. I kiss the hand that has thus laid me low. Do you ask me as a man how I feel? I feel it keenly. Do you ask me as a husband how I feel? I feel it to the utmost. Do you ask me as the director of the Orphan Houses how I feel it? I say again, I feel it to the utmost, and I see no prospect how her loss can be made up. But I kiss the hand that has done it. I rejoice in the joy of my beloved departed one; and if at this moment I could alter it, I would not wish to have her back. The depth of my affection for her is too great to wish her back.

She longed to be with Jesus, she has now the desire of her heart, and her joy is my joy! And now in the full assurance of the resurrection of the just, and of all our loved ones who have died as believers in the Lord Jesus meeting together in heaven, I commit these earthly remains to the tomb. But are all here present prepared for eternity? Who will meet that loved one in heaven? None will meet her there, none will meet me there, but believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be born again before we enter heaven; we must be changed in heart by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. 'Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Let me affectionately ask all present, - Are you prepared for heaven? Only those can enter there who are taken out of the world as, believers in the Lord Jesus."

Mr Müller then prayed, -

"O Lord, accept my grateful thanks that Thou didst give to me the precious blessing of such a wife, of such a companion, of such a helper, of such a comforter. Oh! how good hast Thou been to me for thirty-nine years and four months in giving and keeping her to me. And now Lord, it has pleased Thee to take her to Thyself. So it pleased Thee; it is therefore the very best thing. Thou dost withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly; and Thy poor servant - weak and feeble though he is - walks uprightly; and his beloved one walked uprightly, and now Thou hast taken her, and therefore it is the best thing for her, and for Thy poor servant, and for his beloved child, and for the other relatives and friends. Thy poor servant, therefore, believes Thou hast done it in love; and that, if it had been good for him that his dear wife should yet further labour with him, Thou wouldest have caused her, notwithstanding her advanced years and her frail tabernacle, to remain. Thy poor servant therefore bows to Thy will, and would not forget Thy benefits during their happy conjugal life for thirty-nine years and four months. And as Thy servant knows he shall meet her again, and spend a happy eternity with her in Thy presence, he would bless and praise Thee for the comfort given to him, the comfort given to his beloved daughter, the comfort given to the dear sisters and all the other dear relatives and friends. O Lord! do good to us all. And wilt Thou graciously grant, that to us as a Church this may be blessed; and not only to us, but to thousands of Thy dear children in this large city and elsewhere; and in Thy good providence so work, that in the end good may come out of this event to the Orphans. Now, Lord, we go to the grave. Go with us. Help us yet. Bless us yet. And when Thy poor servant and the other dear relatives shall feel their loneliness, because Thou hast taken their loved one to Thyself, help us to remember her joy in Thy presence. We ask it for the sake of our adorable Lord Jesus Christ."

On the following Sunday evening, Mr Müller occupied, as usual, the pulpit of Bethesda chapel. Before discoursing upon the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses of Ephesians vi., in continuation of the meditation commenced a fortnight previously, he said, -

"Let us read again part of the last verse we have just been singing, -

'Best of blessings He'll provide us,
Nought but good shall e'er betide us.'

If we are acquainted with Jesus, and know Him, just in the measure in which this is the case, from our inmost soul we shall say, -

‘Best of blessings He’ll provide us,
Nought but good shall e’er betide us’

Oh the exercising of confidence in the loving heart of Jesus, - what repose it gives, what calmness, what quietness of soul! What an unspeakable blessing to find Jesus, to have Him for our friend, our almighty friend, our never-failing friend, whose heart never will change towards us, to whom has been given all power in heaven and in earth, and who on our behalf will exercise this His power just in the measure in which it shall be for His glory and our real blessing.

‘Nought but good shall e’er betide us.’

This was the song of my heart during the last week but one. Another portion was, ‘The Lord is good, and doeth good’; and so day by day I proved it, and my soul was peaceful and happy.

Let me affectionately urge all present, especially my young friends, not to be satisfied with religious feeling, and keep aloof from God’s blessed Book. That was my state of heart when I was brought to the knowledge of the Lord in Germany. Even when I was on the point of preaching in the Establishment, and when afterwards I did so, I cared little about God’s blessed Book. My religion was a mere religion of feeling, and so it came - I was a babe, and continued a babe in spiritual things for three years and a half of my Christian course. But when it pleased God, in the riches of His grace, in July, 1829, to bring me to this blessed Book, and to seek to acquaint myself with the Scriptures, it became quite different. I then began to be established in the things of God, to take firmer steps heavenwards, and to fight more successfully in the battles against the powers of darkness. Never let your religion be the religion of feeling, but let it all spring from what you see in this blessed Book. It is because of what I have seen in the Scriptures that you see me here this evening, - and how calm and how peaceful my soul! None of you, except you had heard of it, would suppose that one of the greatest of afflictions that can befall a human being has befallen me. And yet how calm and how quiet I am! And why? Because I take God by His Word, because my religion is not a religion of feeling. With all the depth of affection of a husband, whence sprang the calmness, the quietness, the holy joy I felt all the past week? Because I have been able, by God’s grace, to acquaint myself with God as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures. And thus it comes, and only thus, I am able to stand here with this holy calmness. Last Lord’s-day, immediately after the death of my beloved wife, I should have been here if I had had physical strength; but having had, to watch night after night for several nights, I was unable to come and moreover I felt it my duty to my household to stay at home with them, for many reasons; but so far as the state of my heart was concerned, I should have been able as calmly and quietly to occupy this place as I do now. Why do I refer to this? To seek to encourage you to acquaint yourselves with God, - to know God. And I, by His grace, know Him, and find in Him such satisfaction and I know there is in Him such love to me that my soul is satisfied with Him. See, therefore, the deep importance of coming to the Scriptures; for it is written, ‘They that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee.’ I know Him, therefore I put my trust in Him. But if you only hear about Him, or read about Him, if you do not know Him as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures, then, when trials and difficulties come, it will be seen how little you are acquainted with Him. How important, then, that we hold the truth as it is in Jesus, that we know what God says about the vanities of this world, the blessedness of the world to come, and heavenly realities. Because my soul was enabled to lay hold on eternal life, to treat the truths of the Scriptures as realities, to grasp them by faith and not to hold them as notions, therefore in the

midst of the storm I was calm and quiet, and there was not so much as a particle of difference between the bridal day and the funeral day. Oh, the holy calmness of my soul! But you must know God. I delight to speak about Him, because our holy faith is a reality. The God of the Bible is the same in the second part of the nineteenth century as He was at the beginning. There is no difference between the Living God four thousand years ago and now; no difference between what the blessed Jesus was when on earth and now. Only let us seek to acquaint ourselves with Him; only believe what the Scriptures say about Him; only in child-like simplicity come to the word and believe it, and lay hold on it. Oh how blessed - how blessed! Oh that some of my dear fellow-sinners might be attracted to Jesus this evening! I have a friend in Jesus - a bosom friend. What He is to me He is willing to be to everyone present. Seek Christ first, then confide in His love, in His power, in His wisdom, and you will be happy - happy all the days of your life. Your peace will flow like a river, - not like the ocean, which is sometimes very calm, then all in motion, but your peace will flow like a river, day after day, week after week, month after month, year after year. Oh, it is an unspeakably blessed thing to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus! I had no intention to refer to these points, but it may please God to bless them to one or the other here present.”

At the conclusion of the discourse Mr Müller further said, - “I suppose many dear Christian friends expected I should preach what is ordinarily called a funeral sermon, or give some account of my beloved departed wife. I mean to do so. It is quite in my heart so to do, but I desire, as there is so much to refer to, and as there are so many important incidents in our married life, to do this in the most public way possible. I have reason to believe that many hundreds of persons more than could get into this chapel would desire to be present; and therefore, as soon as God may please to give me strength for this, and as soon as my way is made plain so to do, I shall do so, and delight to do so, and count it a great honour from God to be permitted to do so. Timely notice will be given previously, but when, and where, or in what way, I cannot at this moment say. I am waiting on God, and He will direct me.* I thank all most heartily for the deep love and affection shown to me and my beloved departed wife, in the time of suffering and trial, and for all the inquiries made, and kindness shown to me and my dear daughter and other dear relatives. I commend myself and my dear daughter to your prayers, that God may help us to continue to rejoice in Him, howsoever we may be placed. I trust, by God's grace, we shall be enabled yet further to rejoice in God.”

*The Funeral Sermon was afterwards preached and published, and is still in print.

The logo for Müllers, featuring the name 'Müllers' in a large, black, cursive script font.

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