

A dramatic landscape photograph of a lake and mountains under a cloudy sky. A bright light source, likely the sun, is positioned behind a layer of clouds on the left side of the frame, creating a powerful beam of light that illuminates the water and the surrounding landscape. The water is a deep blue-grey, reflecting the light from the sky. In the background, dark, rugged mountains rise against the sky. The overall mood is serene yet powerful, with a sense of divine light breaking through the clouds.

***GEORGE
MÜLLER***

***THE LIFE
OF TRUST***



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George Müller

The Life of Trust

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INTRODUCTION.

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What is meant by the prayer of faith? is a question which is beginning to arrest, in an unusual degree, the attention of Christians. What is the significance of the passages both in the New Testament and the Old which refer to it? What is the limit within which they may be safely received as a ground of practical reliance? Were these promises limited to prophetic or apostolic times; or have they been left as a legacy to all believers until the end shall come?

Somehow or other, these questions are seldom discussed either from the pulpit or the press. I do not remember to have heard any of them distinctly treated of in a sermon. I do not know of any work in which this subject is either theoretically explained or practically enforced. It really seems as if this portion of Revelation was, by common consent, ignored in all our public teachings. Do not men believe that God means what he appears plainly to have asserted? or, if we believe that he means it, do we fear the charge of fanaticism if we openly avow that we take him at his word?

The public silence on this subject does not, however, prevent a very frequent private inquiry in respect to it. The thoughtful Christian, when in his daily reading of the Scriptures he meets with any of those wonderful promises made to believing prayer, often pauses to ask himself, What can these words mean? Can it be that God has made such promises as these to me, and to such men as I am? Have I

really permission to commit all my little affairs to a God of infinite wisdom, believing that he will take charge of them and direct them according to the promptings of boundless love and absolute omniscience? Is prayer really a power with God, or is it merely an expedient by which our own piety may be cultivated? Is it not merely a power (that is, a stated antecedent accompanied by the idea of causation), but is it a transcendent power, accomplishing what no other power can, over-ruling all other agencies, and rendering them subservient to its own wonderful efficiency? I think there are few devout readers of the Bible to whom these questions are not frequently suggested. We ask them, but we do not often wait for an answer. These promises seem to us to be addressed either to a past or to a coming age, but not to us, at the present day. Yet with such views as these the devout soul is not at all satisfied. If an invaluable treasure is here reserved for the believer, he asks, why should I not receive my portion of it? He cannot doubt that God has in a remarkable manner, at various times, answered his prayers; why should he not always answer them? and why should not the believer always draw near to God in full confidence that he will do as he has said? He may remember that the prayer which has been manifestly answered was the offspring of deep humility, of conscious unworthiness, of utter self-negation, and of simple and earnest reliance on the promises of God through the mediation of Christ. Why should not his prayers be always of the same character? With the apostles of old he pours out his soul in the petition, "Lord, increase our faith."

And yet it can scarcely be denied that the will of God has been distinctly revealed on this subject. The promises made to believing prayer are explicit, numerous, and diversified. If we take them in their simple and literal meaning, or if in fact we give to them any reasonable interpretation whatever, they seem to be easily understood. Our difficulty seems to be this: the promise is so “exceeding great” that we cannot conceive God really to mean what he clearly appears to have revealed. The blessing seems too vast for our comprehension; we “stagger at the promises, through unbelief,” and thus fail to secure the treasure which was purchased for us by Christ Jesus.

It may be appropriate for us to review some of the passages which refer most directly to this subject:—

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for *every one* that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh *it shall* be opened.” “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, *how much more* shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that *ask* him.”^[1]

In the Gospel of Luke the same words are repeated, with a single variation at the close. “If ye, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the *Holy Spirit to them that ask him.*”^[2]

“I say unto you that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or

three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”^[3]

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do that which is done to the fig-tree, but also ye shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and it shall be done. And *all things whatsoever* ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.”^[4]

The same promise, slightly varied in form, is found in the Gospel of Mark. “*Have faith in God.* For verily I say unto you that whosoever shall say to this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea, and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he hath said shall come to pass, he shall have whatever he saith. Therefore I say unto you, Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.”^[5]

Now I do not pretend that we are obliged to receive these words literally. Unless, however, we believe the Saviour to have spoken repeatedly on the same subject, at random, and with no definite meaning, we must understand him to have asserted that things impossible by the ordinary laws of material causation are possible by faith in God. I do not perceive, if we allow these words to have any meaning whatever, that we can ascribe to them any other significance.

“Verily I say unto you, He that believeth in me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do, because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be

glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name I will do it.”^[6]

“Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name. Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.”^[7]

“The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man *availeth much*,”^[8] that is, it is a real power, a positive energy. The apostle illustrates what he means by availing prayer by the example of Elias, a man subject to like passions as we are: “He prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months; and he prayed again, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.”^[9]

The conditions on which prayer will be heard are in various places specified, but particularly in John xv. 7: “If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye shall *ask what ye will*, and it shall be done unto you.” That is, if I understand the passage, prevalence in prayer is conditioned by the conformity of our souls to the will of God; “if ye abide in me and my words abide in you.” On this condition, and on this only, may we ask what we will, with the assurance that it will be done unto us. Faith, in its most simple meaning, is that temper of the mind in the creature which responds to every revealed perfection of the Creator. Just according to the degree in which this correspondence exists, is the promise made that we shall have whatsoever we ask.

It is evident, from the eleventh of Hebrews, that the views of the Apostle Paul concerning faith were entirely in harmony with the passages recited above. He reviews the

lives of the most eminent saints, for the express purpose of showing that the impressive events in their history, whether physical or moral, were controlled entirely by faith. He sums up the whole in this remarkable language:—

“And what shall I say more? For the time would fail me to tell of those who *through faith* subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens; women received their dead raised to life again; and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection.” We are, I think, taught by this passage that the apostle believed faith to be a power capable of transcending and modifying every other agency, by which changes became possible which to every other known power were impossible. We see that in this catalogue of the victories of faith he includes the subjection of almost every form of what we call natural laws. The whole passage seems an illustration of the meaning of our Lord, when he says, “If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say to this sycamine tree, Be thou removed and planted in the midst of the sea, and it shall obey you.”

It seems then apparent that the doctrine of the peculiar and wonderful power of the prayer of faith is as clearly revealed in the Scriptures as any other doctrine. It would seem evident, at any rate, from the passages just quoted, that the Apostle Paul understood the teachings of our Saviour to mean what they say. From the general tenor of the Scriptures I think we may learn two important truths:

First, that there is a certain state of mind in a devout soul to which God has promised all that it asks, subject, however, as to the manner of the answer, to the dictates of his infinite wisdom and goodness; and, second, that in granting such petitions he does not always limit his action within the ordinary or acknowledged laws of matter or of mind. I do not perceive how we can interpret the passages above cited, as well as many others, without giving them a meaning at least as extensive as this.

Why is it, then, that this whole range of revealed truth has so generally been looked upon as an unknown and unexplored region? Why should we limit either the goodness or the power of God by our own knowledge of what we call the laws of nature? Why should we not admit that “there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in our philosophy”? In a universe governed by moral law, why should not moral laws take precedence of all others? Why should we deny that there is a power in prayer to which we have not commonly attained? We are straitened in ourselves, and suppose that we are straitened in God. We interpret the gracious promises of our most loving Father in heaven by the rule of our own imperfect and unbelieving piety. We ask for light from without, while the light can only come from a more elevated piety within. We ask for examples of the effects of faith at the present day, corresponding to those spoken of in the sacred Scriptures. Thoughtful men acknowledge that there must be a meaning in these promises, which they have not yet understood, and they see plainly that the kingdom of God can never come with power until this prevalence in prayer shall have

become a matter of universal attainment; and yet they dare hardly believe that God is as good as he has revealed himself to be.

There have, nevertheless, from time to time, occurred, what plainly appear to be, remarkable instances of answers to prayer. Many of them have faded from recollection, with the generation in which they occurred; those which are remembered, however, seem to teach us that God is a living God now as truly as in times past. The history of persecutions is always filled with remarkable answers to prayer. The rescue of Peter from the power of the Sanhedrim in one case, and from the power of Herod in another, has been a thousand times repeated in the history of the church of Christ. The answer to prayer for divine direction as to the time and manner of performing some Christian service, to which an individual has felt himself specially called, has frequently been very remarkable. The biographies of the early and of many of the later Friends are replete with such instances. Any one who will read the edifying memoirs of George Fox, John Woolman, William Allen, and Stephen Grellet, will find what I have alluded to abundantly exemplified. The well-authenticated accounts of the late revivals in this country and in Ireland teach us that most remarkable instances of answers to prayer were of almost daily occurrence. In the last century a single instance deserves particular remembrance; it was the founding of Franke's Orphan House at Halle. It seemed to him to be a Christian duty to attempt something for the relief of orphans, and he commenced the undertaking. From time to time, as the number of applicants increased, the means for

their support was provided, in answer, as he firmly believed, to fervent and unceasing prayer. Thus an extensive establishment was reared, which has continued to the present day, providing education and support for thousands of the poor and destitute, and it has been for a century and a half one of the most honored of the charitable institutions of the continent of Europe.

The most remarkable instance of the efficacy of prayer with which I am acquainted, is that recorded in the following pages. It seems, in fact, to be a practical illustration of the meaning of those passages of Scripture which I have already recited. A young German Christian, friendless and unknown, is conscious of what he believes to be a call from the Lord to attempt something for the benefit of the poor vagabond children of Bristol. He is at this time preaching the gospel to a small company of believers, from whom, at his own suggestion, he receives no salary, being supported day by day by the voluntary offerings of his brethren. Without the promise of aid from any being but God, he commences his work. In answer to prayer, funds are received as they are needed, and the attempt succeeds beyond his expectation. After a few years he is led to believe that God has called him to establish a house for the maintenance and education of orphans. He was impelled to this effort, not only from motives of benevolence, but from a desire to convince men that God was a LIVING GOD, as ready now as ever to answer prayer; and that, in the discharge of any duty to which he calls us, we may implicitly rely upon his all-sufficient aid in every emergency.

Mr. Müller was led to undertake this work in such a manner that aid could not be expected from any being but God. He did not of course expect God to create gold and silver and put them into his hands. He knew, however, that God could incline the hearts of men to aid him, and he believed, if the thing that he attempted was of Him, that he would so incline them, in answer to prayer, as his necessities should require. Most men in making such an attempt would have spread the case before the public, employed agents to solicit in its behalf, and undertaken nothing until funds adequate to the success of the enterprise had been already secured. But Mr. Müller, true to his principles, would do no such thing. From the first day to the present moment he has neither directly nor indirectly solicited either of the public or of an individual a single penny. As necessities arose he simply laid his case before God and asked of him all that he needed, and the supply has always been seasonable and unfailing.

The conductors of benevolent enterprises generally consider it important to publish the names of donors, appealing thus to what is considered an innocent desire in man to let our good deeds be known, and thus also to stimulate others to do likewise. Ignoring every motive of this kind, Mr. Müller made it his rule to publish the name of no contributor. When the name was known to him, which, however, was not often the case, he made a private acknowledgment; while in his printed account he only made known the sum received, and the date of its reception. In this manner, forsaking every other reliance but God, and in childlike simplicity looking to him alone for the supply of

every want, all that he needed was furnished as punctually as if, in possession of millions, he had drawn from time to time on his banker.

Thus has he continued from, I think, the year 1834. By degrees the establishment increased, and it was necessary to leave the hired houses in which the children had thus far been accommodated. Land was purchased, and a building was erected in the vicinity of Bristol. This was soon filled to overflowing, and another building was demanded. This was erected, and it also was very soon filled. These buildings were sufficient to accommodate seven hundred orphans. At the present moment, a third building, larger than either, is in the process of erection, and is to be finished in the course of the ensuing summer. When this shall be completed, accommodations will have been provided for eleven hundred and fifty orphans. These expensive buildings have been erected; the land has been purchased on which they stand; this multitude of children has been clothed and fed and educated; support and remuneration have been provided for all the necessary teachers and assistants, and all this has been done by a man who is not worth a dollar. He has never asked any one but God for whatever they needed, and from the beginning they have never wanted a meal, nor have they ever allowed themselves to be in debt. There seems in this to be something as remarkable as if Mr. Müller had commanded a sycamine tree to be removed and planted in the sea, and it had obeyed him.

But this is not all. Mr. Müller saw that there was a great demand for copies of the Holy Scriptures, both in Great Britain and on the Continent, and he commenced the work

of Bible distribution. This so rapidly extended itself that he was soon obliged to open in Bristol a large Bible House. He believed that great good might be done by the circulation of religious tracts, and he has carried on this work extensively. He was moved to make an attempt to aid and even to support missionaries among the heathen, as well as other good men, of various denominations, who, with very inadequate means of living, were preaching the gospel to the poor and destitute at home. He began to aid them as their necessities came to his knowledge, and now one hundred such men are depending on him, wholly or in part, for support.

Here, then, we certainly behold a remarkable phenomenon. A single man, wholly destitute of funds, is supporting and educating seven hundred orphans, providing everything needful for their education, is in himself an extensive Bible and Tract and Missionary Society, the work is daily increasing in magnitude, and the means for carrying it on are abundantly supplied, while he is connected with no particular denomination, is aided by no voluntary association, and he has asked the assistance of not a single individual. He has asked no one but God, and all his wants have been regularly supplied. In these labors of love he has, up to the present time, expended nearly a million of dollars. It is thus that he has endeavored to show to an unbelieving world that God is a living God, and that he means what he has said in every one of his promises.^[10]

I have referred to Mr. Müller as if he were the sole agent in this work. This, however, is by no means true. His co-workers in the Institution are all of the same spirit as

himself. Mr. Craik, a gentleman from Scotland, has been with him from the beginning, has shared in all the labors and responsibilities of these vast undertakings, and has been specially blessed as a preacher of the gospel. The remuneration of all the assistants is contingent on the means received in answer to prayer. When sacrifices are to be made, they are all prompt to make them, and they do not expect an answer to prayer until they have contributed, from their own scanty wages, whatever can be spared after providing for their actual necessities.

The last Report of Mr. Müller's labors has just been received. From this we learn another interesting fact. It seems that the late revival in Ireland is indirectly connected with these labors in Bristol. A pious young Irishman read "The Dealings of the Lord with George Müller," and received from it new views of the power of believing prayer. He felt the need of prayer for the perishing around him, and determined by prayer and conversation to labor for their salvation. First, however, he asked that God would give him an associate. This prayer was granted. These two then united in earnest prayer for some additions to their number. This prayer was granted. In this manner a small company was united in asking for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on their neighborhood. They devoted themselves to prayer and to labor among the people by whom they were surrounded. Their prayers were answered. The Spirit was poured out; twenty-five souls were converted. Multitudes united with them in supplication. They went from place to place, praying and laboring for the conversion of men; and thus the work

extended, until the whole district of Ulster was visited with that remarkable outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

All these we suppose to be indisputable facts. If in any respect there has been a misstatement, or even an exaggeration, the means are abundant for detecting it. The whole work has been carried on in the presence and under the inspection of the whole city of Bristol. There stand those large and expensive buildings. There are seen the seven hundred orphans who are in every respect admirably cared for. Everything has been paid for, for Mr. Müller is never in debt. His poverty is well known, and he will not accept of any money as a provision for his future necessities. His accounts have been annually audited by a competent committee. There is not the man living who can contradict his assertion, "I never asked aid from a single individual." Hundreds weekly visit the Institution, and no one has ever found in it anything at variance with Mr. Müller's published statements. Last of all, the Rev. Dr. Sawtelle, a gentleman known to thousands in this country, has added his independent testimony to the truth of all that is here related. More conclusive evidence to the truth of facts cannot be desired.

To account for a fact is to refer it to some general law whose existence is already established. When it is therefore asked, How shall these facts be accounted for? we inquire, to what known law can they be referred? They cannot certainly be referred to any known law of human action. How would we decide if a similar case should occur in physics? Suppose a series of experiments should be made daily for twenty-five years in chemistry or mechanics, with

the same invariable result, and this result could be referred to no previously established law—to what conclusion should we arrive? There could be but one conclusion, in which all men of science would unite. They would all declare that a new law had been discovered, and would modify their systems accordingly. It seems to me that on all sound philosophical principles we are bound to come to the same conclusion in the present case. We can refer these facts to no other law than to that announced by the Saviour in his promise to answer the prayer of faith. There is no reason to suppose that in the case of Mr. Müller and his associates there is anything exceptional or peculiar. What God has done for them we cannot doubt that, under the same conditions, he will do for every other believing disciple of Christ.

What, then, are the conditions of this remarkable experiment, if such we may call it? They are something like the following. A poor and unknown man is convinced that it is his duty, as a servant of Christ, to labor in several ways for the relief of the temporal and spiritual wants of the ignorant and destitute. He consecrates himself to the work by dedicating to it his time and labor, and whatever pecuniary means should come into his possession. He resolved that he would neither appeal to any of the ordinary motives which dispose men to humanity, nor even solicit aid from any human being, but simply make his wants known to God, believing that, if he was doing the work of God, the divine promise was pledged in his behalf. Not only did he trust in God that all the pecuniary aid which he needed would be furnished, but that, in answer to prayer, all needed

wisdom would be given him in the conduct of his complicated and arduous undertakings. The result has met his most sanguine expectations. The institution has increased to a most magnificent charity, aside from its missionary, Bible, and tract operations; all its wants have been from time to time supplied; and it is at the present moment carried on upon precisely the same principles on which it commenced. We cannot resist the conclusion that if any one will undertake any other Christian work in a similar spirit, and on the same principles, his labor will be attended with a similar result.

While we believe this, however, we do not pretend to affirm that just such immediate results will always be seen. This would be to limit the omniscience of God by the short-sighted ignorance of man. It may best suit the purposes of infinite goodness to answer the prayer of faith by crosses and disappointments; but these in the end shall be found in the most signal manner to promote the object to be accomplished. While the disciples were praying and laboring for the extension of the kingdom of Christ in Jerusalem, it seemed a strange answer to prayer that they should be driven out of the city; but the meaning of it was evident when churches arose in Phenice and Cyprus and Antioch, and it became manifest that the gospel was designed not for Jews alone; but for the whole family of man. Paul devoted himself with unquenchable zeal to the salvation of men, and, with a fervid eloquence which has given him a place among the noblest orators of antiquity, delighted to spend his life in persuading men to be reconciled to God. He was a man whose confidence in God was as unshaken as

any whose history has been recorded by the pen of inspiration. It doubtless was to the disciples of that age, as well as to himself, a most unaccountable dispensation that he should have been impeded in his great work by the necessity of composing dissensions and rectifying errors which were constantly arising in the churches which he had planted, and, most of all, that so many years of his life should have been spent in prison. Yet it is to these, at the time untoward circumstances, that we owe the writing of those epistles which occupy so large a portion of the volume of inspiration, and without which the message of God to man would not have been completed. In no other way could his prayer to be useful to the cause of Christ have been so fully answered.

With this understanding of the promise granted to the prayer of faith, I do not see why we should not take the case of Mr. Müller as an example for our imitation. Whoever attains to this same simple desire in all things to do the will of God, and to the same childlike trust in his promises, may, I think, hope for a similar blessing. God is no respecter of persons. "*If any man do his will, him he heareth.*" And all the teaching of the Scriptures confirms us in this belief. The passages which we have quoted at the commencement of this paper, with hundreds of others, all lead to the same conclusion. In the Scriptures every form of illustration is used to impress upon us the conviction that God is indeed our Father, and that he delights to grant our requests for anything that is for our benefit, and specially that he pledges himself to direct by his counsel, and aid by his

providence, every one who honestly labors to promote the cause of true benevolence and real religion.

If this be so, how important is this subject in its bearing on individual effort. No Christian, though the poorest and humblest, ever need despair of doing a noble work for God. He need never wait until he can obtain the co-operation of the multitude or the wealthy. Let him undertake what he believes to be his duty, on ever so small a scale, and look directly to God for aid and direction. If it be a seed which God has planted, it will take root, grow, and bear fruit, *"having seed within itself."* "It is better to trust in God than to put confidence in man; it is better to trust in God than to put confidence in princes." A multitude of cases can be adduced to prove that this course is in harmony with the designs of God. It is abundantly shown in the case of Mr. Müller. Take the case of Robert Raikes. Suppose that he had established no school until a powerful association, formed from ecclesiastical dignitaries, millionaires, and the multitude, had united in his support, his effort could hardly have escaped ridiculous failure. On the contrary, he simply established a school by himself. It was a seed which God had planted, and its fruit now shakes like Lebanon.

On the contrast which is seen between the plan of Mr. Müller and the plans by which our missionary and other benevolent operations are conducted, it is unnecessary to enlarge. If Mr. Müller is right, I think it is evident that we are all wrong. We cannot go into this subject in detail. We may, however, be permitted to remark, that the means which are frequently employed to secure the approbation and pecuniary aid of worldly men, in carrying forward the cause

of Christ, are intensely humiliating. It would seem as though God was the last being to be relied on in carrying forward the work which he has given us to do.

But it is time to bring these remarks to a close. We commend this most unpretending of narratives to the thoughtful consideration of Christians of all denominations. We have greatly overrated the teaching of these facts, if they do not furnish strong incentives to a life of holy exertion, and impart an unwonted and powerful motive to earnest and believing prayer.

Providence, December 17, 1860.

FOOTNOTES:

^[1] Matthew vii. 7-11.

^[2] Luke xi. 13.

^[3] Matthew xviii. 19, 20.

^[4] Matthew xxi. 21, 22.

^[5] Mark xi. 22-24.

^[6] John xiv. 12-14.

^[7] John xvi. 23, 24.

^[8] James v. 16.

^[9] James v. 17, 18.

^[10] The following brief statistics will show the magnitude of the work already accomplished:—

The number of pupils hitherto instructed in all the day, evening, and Sunday schools, is 13,124. The whole number of *orphans* educated within the establishment is 1,153. Of the 700 now in the Institution, 260 are hopefully pious. Missionaries aided at the present time, 100. Since 1834 there have been circulated—Bibles, 24,768; Testaments, 15,100; Psalms, 719; other portions of Scripture, 1,876; or, total, 42,463 Bibles or portions of Scripture. Tracts and books (not pages, but separate publications), 11,493,174.

Two large buildings have been erected, a third is in the process of erection; the land on which they stand has been purchased. The expense of the orphan work alone has amounted to £133,528 sterling, and the expenses are daily increasing.

The contributions by which these expenditures have been met have been sent from every quarter of the globe. The largest amounts have been, as might be expected, from England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales; but to these may be added the Cape of Good Hope, Mt. Lebanon, Demerara, Newport, R. I., New York, Philadelphia, California, France, Holland, Sardinia, Australia, etc., etc.

THE LIFE OF TRUST.



CHAPTER I.

BOYHOOD AND YOUTH.

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1805-1825.

BIRTH—EARLY DISHONESTY—INSENSIBILITY—
CONFIRMATION IN THE STATE CHURCH—
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TRANSGRESSORS—THE GYMNASIUM AT
NORDHAUSEN—THE UNIVERSITY AT HALLE—
ROVINGS.

I was born at Kroppenstaedt, near Halberstadt, in the kingdom of Prussia, September 27, 1805. In January, 1810, my parents removed to Heimersleben, about four miles from Kroppenstaedt, where my father was appointed collector in the excise.

My father, who educated his children on worldly principles,^[11] gave us much money, considering our age. The result was, that it led me and my brother into many sins. Before I was ten years old, I repeatedly took of the government money which was intrusted to my father, and which he had to make up; till one day, as he had repeatedly missed money, he detected my theft, by depositing a counted sum in the room where I was, and leaving me to myself for a while. Being thus left alone, I took some of the money, and hid it under my foot in my shoe. When my

father, after his return, had counted and missed the money, I was searched and my theft detected.

When I was between ten and eleven years of age I was sent to Halberstadt, 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, when my mother was suddenly removed. The night she was dying, I, not knowing of her illness, was playing at cards till two in the morning, and on the next day, being the Lord's day, I went with some of my companions in sin to a tavern, and then we went about the streets half intoxicated.

This bereavement made no lasting impression on my mind. 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, 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. Yet I was not without some feeling about the solemnity of the thing, and stayed at home in the afternoon and evening, whilst the other boys and girls, who had been confirmed with me, walked about in the fields.

My time till midsummer, 1821, was spent partly in study, but in a great degree in playing the piano-forte and guitar, reading novels, frequenting taverns, forming resolutions to become different, yet breaking them almost as fast as they were made. My money was often spent on my sinful pleasures, through which I was now and then brought into trouble, so that once, to satisfy my hunger, I stole a piece of coarse bread, the allowance of a soldier who was quartered in the house where I lodged.

At midsummer, 1821, my father obtained an appointment at Schoenebeck, near Magdeburg, and I embraced the opportunity of entreating him to remove me to the cathedral classical school of Magdeburg; for I thought that if I could but leave my companions in sin, and get out of certain snares, and be placed under other tutors, I should then live a different life. My father consented, and I was allowed to leave Halberstadt, and to stay at Heimersleben till Michaelmas. Being thus quite my own master, I grew still more idle, and lived as much as before in all sorts of sin. When Michaelmas came, I persuaded my father to leave me at Heimersleben till Easter, and to let me read the classics with a clergyman living in the same place. I was now living on the premises belonging to my father, under little real control, and intrusted with a considerable sum of money, which I had to collect for my father, from persons who owed it to him. My habits soon led me to spend a considerable part of this money, giving receipts for different sums, yet leaving my father to suppose I had not received them.

In November, I went on a pleasure excursion to Magdeburg, where I spent six days in much sin, and though

my absence from home had been found out by my father before I returned from thence, yet I took all the money I could obtain, and went to Brunswick, after I had, through a number of lies, obtained permission from my tutor. I spent a week at Brunswick, in an expensive hotel. At the end of the week my money was expended. I then went, without money, to another hotel, in a village near Brunswick, where I spent another week in an expensive way of living. At last, the owner of the hotel, suspecting that I had no money, asked for payment, and I was obliged to leave my best clothes as security. I then walked about six miles, to Wolfenbittel, went to an inn, and began again to live as if I had plenty of money. On the second or third morning I went quietly out of the yard, and then ran off; but being suspected and observed, and therefore seen to go off, I was immediately called after, and so had to return. I was arrested, and being suspected to be a thief, was examined for about three hours, and then sent to jail. I now found myself, at the age of sixteen, an inmate of the same dwelling with thieves and murderers. I was locked up in this place day and night, without permission to leave my cell.

I was in prison from Dec. 18, 1821, till January 12, 1822, when the keeper told me to go with him to the police office. Here I found that the commissioner before whom I had been tried, had acquainted my father with my conduct; and thus I was kept in prison till my father sent the money which was needed for my travelling expenses, to pay my debt in the inn, and for my maintenance in the prison. So ungrateful was I now for certain little kindnesses shown to me by a fellow-prisoner, that, although I had promised to call on his

sister, to deliver a message from him, I omitted to do so; and so little had I been benefited by this, my chastisement, that, though I was going home to meet an angry father, only two hours after I had left the town where I had been imprisoned, I chose an avowedly wicked person as my travelling companion for a great part of my journey.

My father, who arrived two days after I had reached Heimersleben, after having severely beaten me, took me home to Schoenebeck, intending, at Easter, to send me to a classical school at Halle, that I might be under strict discipline and the continual inspection of a tutor. Easter came, and I easily persuaded him to let me stay at home till Michaelmas. But after that period he would not consent to my remaining any longer with him, and I left home, pretending to go to Halle to be examined. But having a hearty dislike to the strict discipline of which I had heard, I went to Nordhausen, and had myself examined to be received into that school. I then went home, but never told my father a word of all this deception till the day before my departure, which obliged me to invent a whole chain of lies. He was then very angry; but at last, through my entreaties and persuasion, he gave way and allowed me to go. This was in October, 1822.

I continued at Nordhausen two years and six months. During this time I studied with considerable diligence the Latin classics, French, history, my own language, etc.; but did little in Hebrew, Greek, and the mathematics. I lived in the house of the director, and got, through my conduct, highly into his favor, so much so that I was held up by him in the first class as an example to the rest. I used now to rise