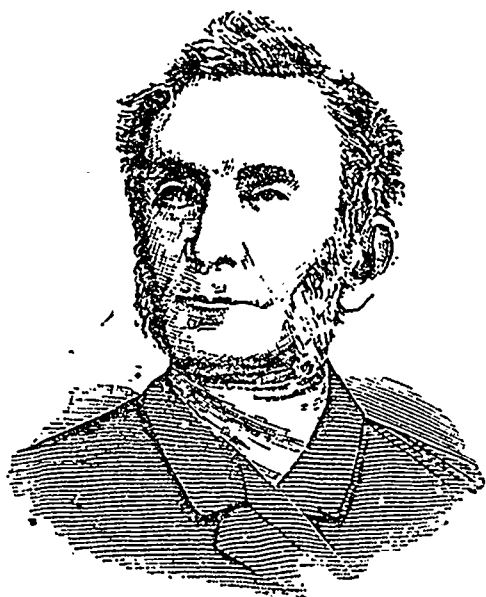


The Lesson of a Life

By Rev. D. Sutherland.

EVERY true life has its lesson, if we have eyes to see and ears to hear. The life of George Muller, the famous philanthropist of England, has a special lesson for our days of doubt and depression. It has left behind it "footprints on the sands of time" for the guidance and encouragement of forlorn souls who feel forced to give up their old faith in the power of prayer.

Muller's career reads like a spiritual romance. In 1835 he established the Ashley Downs Orphan Homes in the city of Bristol for children who had lost both parents and were left destitute. The



GEORGE MULLER

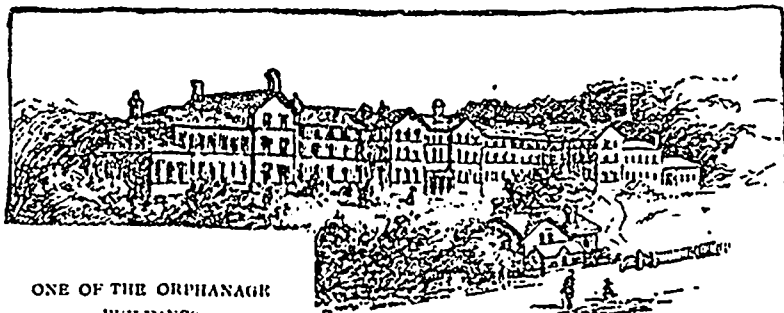
remarkable fact is that he began it partly as an exercise of faith, so that its visible success might be a sign to encourage his fellow-believers. "If," he stated, "I, a poor man, simply by prayer and faith, obtained without asking any individual the means for establishing and carrying on an orphan-house, there would be something which, with the Lord's blessing, might be instrumental in strengthening the faith of the children of God, besides being a testimony to the consciences of the unconverted in the reality of the things of God." This utterance was characteristic of the man.

The Orphanage has been carried on without endowment, without committees, without organization, and without those appeals for subscriptions or other methods which are usually regarded as essential for securing financial support for a charitable enterprise. Muller maintained the work in its origin, maintenance, and growth was one prolonged answer to prayer. From first to last there have been in the homes ten thousand

children, and one way or other about five millions of dollars have been given for the work. Year after year the large expenses, amounting to an annual sum of one hundred thousand dollars, were raised by direct application to God. No man was appealed to for aid, and, however great his generosity, a donor's name was never disclosed. The whole movement was meant to be a proof that the miraculous power of prayer has not passed away.

There was need for such a proof in our generation. The light of belief in the efficacy of prayer is burning low in many hearts, and the cry for a sign is heard in many quarters. We all remember how an eminent English man of science suggested that two wards in a hospital should be set apart to test prayer. All the chapels and churches were to pray for one ward and not for the other, and then it was said we should see what effect prayer had upon disease. It claimed to be the test put by Elijah, requiring the true God to answer by fire, but it was not an Elijah who called for the test. The all-mighty and all-wise Jehovah does not work miracles to satisfy the curiosity of scientific sceptics, but He does work miracles, even in the nineteenth century, to vindicate the faith of believers who trust His promise and power. George Muller's test and its magnificent answer should strengthen faith in the efficacy of prayer. The raising of five millions of dollars and the clothing, feeding, and educating of ten thousand children is an argument in presence of which doubt must be dumb.

It is both interesting and instructive, in the light of Muller's career, to recall the great testimonies of the Bible to the power of prayer. Jacob wrestled with the Angel, and prevailed. Moses cried, and the sea was divided. Joshua prayed, and Achan was discovered. Hannah prayed, and Samuel was born. Asa prayed, and a victory was gained. Jehoshaphat prayed, and God turned away his foes. Daniel prayed, and the dream was revealed, the lions were muzzled, and the seventy weeks were made plain. Nehemiah



ONE OF THE ORPHANAGE BUILDINGS

prayed, and the king's heart was softened. Elijah prayed, and he had power to open and to shut the rain-reservoirs of heaven. Elisha prayed,