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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Religious.

### George Muller on Baptism.

About the beginning of April, 1830 (when twenty-five years old), I went to preach at Sidmouth. While I was staying there, three sisters in the Lord had, in my presence, a conversation about baptism, one of whom had been baptized after she had believed. When they had conversed a little on the subject, I was asked to give my opinion concerning it.

My opinion was, "I do not think that I need to be baptized again."

I was then asked by the sister who had been baptized, "But have you been baptized?"

I answered, "Yes, when I was a child." She then replied, "Have you ever read the Scriptures and prayed with reference to this subject?"

I answered, "No?"

"Then said she, 'I entreat you never to speak any more about it till you have done so.'"

It pleased the Lord to show me the importance of this remark; for whilst at that very time I was exhorting one to receive nothing which could not be proved by the word of God, I had repeatedly spoken against believers' baptism, without having ever earnestly examined the Scriptures or prayed concerning it; and now I determined, if God would help me, to examine that subject also, and if infant baptism were found to be scriptural, I would earnestly defend it; and if believers' baptism were right, I would as strenuously defend that, and be baptized.

As soon as I had time, I set about examining the subject. The mode I adopted was as follows: Repeatedly I asked God to teach me concerning it, and I read the New Testament from the beginning, with a particular reference to this point. But now, when I earnestly set about the matter, a number of objections presented themselves to my mind.

1. "Since many holy and enlightened men have been divided in opinion concerning this point, does this not prove that it is not to be expected we should come to a satisfactory conclusion about this question in the present imperfect state of the church?" This objection was thus removed: "If this ordinance is revealed in the Bible, why may I not know it, as the Holy Spirit is the teacher in the Church of Christ now as well as formerly?"

2. "There have been but few of my friends baptized, and the greater part of them are opposed to believers' baptism, and they will turn their backs on me." Answer: "Though all men should forsake me, if the Lord Jesus take me up I shall be happy."

3. "You will be sure to lose one-half of your income if you are baptized." Answer: "As long as I desire to be faithful to the Lord, He will not suffer me to want."

4. "People will call you a Baptist, and you will be reckoned among that body, and you cannot approve of all that is going on among them." Answer: "It does not follow that I must, in all points, go along with those who hold believers' baptism, although I should be baptized."

5. "You have been preaching for some years, and you will have thus publicly confessed that you have been in an error, should you be led to see that believers' baptism is right." Answer: "It is much better to confess that I have been in error concerning that point than to continue in it."

6. "Even if believers' baptism should be right, yet it is now too late to attend to it, as you ought to have been baptized immediately on believing." Answer: "It is better to fulfil a commandment of the Lord Jesus over so late than to continue living in the neglect of it."

As soon as I was brought into this state of heart, I saw from the Scriptures that believers ONLY are the proper subjects for baptism, and that immersion is the only true scriptural mode in which it ought to be attended to. The passage which particularly convinced me of the former, is Acts 8: 36-38; and of the latter, Rom. 6: 3-5. Some time after I was baptized, I had much peace in doing so, and never have I, for one single moment, regretted it.

Before I leave this point, I would just say a few words concerning the result of this matter, so far as it regards some of the objections which occurred to my mind when I was about to examine the Scriptures concerning baptism.

1. Concerning the first objection, my conviction now is, that of all revealed truths, not one is more clearly revealed in the Scriptures, not even the doctrine of justification by faith, and that the subject has only become obscured by men not having been willing to take the Scriptures alone to decide the point.

2. Not one of my true friends in the Lord has turned his back on me, as I supposed, and almost all of them have been themselves baptized since.

3. Though in one way I lost money in consequence of being baptized, yet the Lord did not suffer me to be really a loser, even as it regards temporal things; for he made up the loss most bountifully. In conclusion, my example has been the means of leading many to examine the question of baptism, and to submit, from conviction, to this ordinance, and seeing this truth I have been led to speak on it as well as on other truths; and during the twenty-three years that I have now resided in Bristol, more than a thousand believers have been baptized among us.

### Politeness in Religion.

BY J. D. C.

"Take a seat, parson," said the postmaster to the village minister, as he entered the neat and tasteful sitting-room, where that functionary sat in his shirt-sleeves, in a chair tipped on its back legs. "I say to you," he continued, "as I used to say to the old parson 'Take a seat, if you can find one; for I'm no respecter of persons, and when I'm down I can't get up for any man.' You see, as I told you when you came here, that I'm a blunt honest man. I flatter nobody, and always speak my mind, and sometimes flutter fine feathers by it. I've always said that men in black broadcloth look for more respect than others, but they don't get it from me."

The minister was a modest man, and, conscious that he craved no flattery and no obsequiousness, blushed at this ill-mannered reception. He took the seat offered him by the postmaster's daughter, who evidently sympathized with him. "Father is too weary to rise," she said with a smile; "he's been over-looking his hay-makers to-day."

"You've made two mistakes in that short speech, daughter. I'm not weary, and I haven't been overseeing. I've cut as much hay as any man in the field, and I'm fresh enough to go right at it again, if it were necessary. I kept my seat because I wanted to," replied the postmaster. "There was a time in my life, parson," he added very proudly, "when I hadn't a chair to sit on; and now that I have, it's very natural that I should not jump from it for trifles. And more than that, I think it's too late in the day for people to treat ministers as if they were a superior order of beings."

"The people all agree with you in that my dear brother," replied the pastor; and then he addressed himself to the ladies, who had been reared by a gentler spirit than their father's.

He had scarcely commenced conversation with them, when a name which was mentioned suggested a new theme for the father. "Yes, yes," he said, "we all know the Wades, and a sensitive set of folks they are, too, in the church. A while ago they had a son that they said 'went astray'—that I said 'turned out a scamp;' and I told the mother so in the office one day. Now, I was blunt and honest with her, while many that hung pitying round her thought of Sam just as I did. I've always prided myself on my honesty. It's better to be a Joe Blunt than a liar; isn't it parson?"

"It's far better to be neither, my brother," replied the minister; but to be courteous, tender-hearted and merciful, while remaining upright. Sincerity does not consist in a bluntness which attacks others with wanton cruelty. This was not the way Jesus dealt with men."

The postmaster, who had hitherto dwelt in an impregnable castle, which none had dared to assail, lest they should be ingloriously van-

quished, quailed before these gently uttered words; and bringing down his chair to its proper position on the floor, he asked with an air that defied a truthful answer, "You don't mean to call me wantonly cruel do you my pastor?"

"I hope you are only mistaken in what constitutes Christian honesty," replied the other. "God nowhere commands us to speak all that is in our heart to any one; and Jesus himself is a beautiful example of tenderness and gentleness."

Somebody's "fine feathers were fluttered" now, and the postmaster replied, "What would the church do, were there none in it who dared speak their mind? I'm the only man here who is brave enough to be honest; and so I'm the one who has every unpleasant thing to do! If the minister don't give satisfaction, I'm the one to tell him of it; if a candidate is rejected I'm sent with the message; and if an unruly member is cut off, I have to announce the fact to him! Suppose we were all like good Deacon Bland?"

"Then we should have almost a heaven on earth!" replied the pastor; for faithfulness and tenderness are most beautifully blended in that old man's character—he is as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove."

"Do you think the church could stand long without some stronger spirits than his?" asked the postmaster.

"Yes, it stands on a rock, you know, and not on one or two men, be their spirit what it may. And you remember how Jesus rebuked the erring ones who would have called down fire from heaven to destroy his foes, how he commanded Peter to sheathe his sword, and how pitifully he dismissed the sinning woman, at whom none had dared, after his searching words to cast the first stone. It is much easier for human nature to deal in thunder than in consolation, to break a heart than to bind up a broken one."

The postmaster placed his elbow on his knee and his face on his hand, and with brows strongly contracted, sat meditating on the faithfulness which he so much admired in himself, but rarely received from others; and his thoughts were not particularly flattering to his self-love.

The present postmaster came to L. as a hired man to his predecessor. He was active honest and intelligent; and having struggled through a sorrowful childhood in a drunkard's home, and come forth unspotted, he had gained strength by the conflict, and was regarded with much interest by all who knew his history.

After years of faithful service and patient toil he married the only daughter of his employer; and after that he made the great mistake of his life! Instead of aiming more and more to appear worthy of her, and of his good fortune, he put on that air of defiance which people, suddenly rising, assume in self-defence, as if they expected others to taunt them with their former low estate. He was so fearful of being considered proud of the present, and ashamed of the past, that he went to the other extreme, and put on a vulgar bravado, boasting of his former poverty, and hardship, glorying what was the result of his father's shame! He began to amuse his friends by tales of his boyhood, deepening the hues of what was already too dark, and often mortifying his wife in his effort to be bold and honest, and defiant of men's opinions. Had he still remained a prosperous working-man he would not have done this; but with the store, and the post-office, and three hundred acres of rich land, he could afford to do it; for who in that village was bold enough to despise him? What began at home, extended to the business, the town-meeting, and finally to the church. What began in honest independence, settled into blunt insolence; and he was borne with rather than beloved, as he might otherwise have been; for he had the means and the generosity, which, but for this great fault, would have made him everybody's friend and helper. Now, when he did a generous act, it left—by its ungracious accompaniments—a wound behind, like that inflicted by an unkind deed.

And yet, at heart the postmaster was a good man; his virtues being like a pleasant face hidden by a hideous mask. His friends saw but knew not how to remove the defect; for, like most people who are regardless of others' feelings, he was particularly sensitive when his own were touched. Like those who know

that nettles and thorns ought to be torn up, but dare not touch them, so these friends left his errors to grow rank, and drop their seeds around; and while he should have borne fruit he only shot out little spears and arrows.

He sat a few moments as we left him, with his head bowed before his pastor; and then he said abruptly: "Then you think I have no principle, parson?"

"Oh no," replied the minister; "I have no doubt your bluntness passes with you for principle."

"Then you think I have no generosity in my heart?" he said.

"No, I am told that you are a noble-hearted man," answered his friend; "that your purse has no clasp."

"Now, look here, parson," exclaimed the postmaster, "I want you to be as honest with me as I am with other folks. Speak your mind, and I'll bear it, no matter how deep it cuts. If you believe me to have principle and generosity, tell me what the lack is."

"Good manners, my friend, which I consider no small part of religion! It is a very mistaken idea that men can be earnest and useful Christians in the church, while they are bores in the world. Religion refines the manners while it purifies the heart; and he who sets at naught the rules of civility denies his allegiance to the laws of love. Good manners are too lightly estimated in our nation, and that is the cause of half our troubles. Men assail each other in our halls of legislation as foes, rather than bearing with and treating all as gentlemen. An eminent English writer, contrasting his own countrymen with the French, says that a French carter takes off his hat to his neighbor carter, and inquires after 'la santa de madam, with a bow that would not have disgraced Sir Charles Grandison. He also says, 'Life is too short to get over bad manners; for manners are the shadow of virtue.' This is a lesson for us as well as the English."

"But you don't think there's any religion in politeness?" asked our independent friend, a little crest-fallen.

"I think there's a great deal of politeness in religion," replied the minister; "and wherever it is lacking, there are wounds and heartburnings in the family and in the church. Children should be taught good manners towards each other and towards servants, as much as in society; and that which is exercised in public only is a mere semblance—it is hypocrisy."

"I believe half the dissensions in churches come from what some regard as blunt honesty; but which is, in reality, cruelty or insolence. There can be no greater mistake, my brother, than supposing sincerity to consist in roughly speaking one's whole mind. Unless one can read the heart, and at the same time be sure that God has made him an especial messenger to one in error, he may commit great wrong by using this roughness of speech. I may, however, be falling into the very error I am condemning; but you called for my sentence, and promised to take it kindly."

"So I do, pastor, said the postmaster, rising and putting on his coat, as the first act of respect towards his guest. "Come out with me, and see the hay-crop, and take a look at my white steers. Wife, the minister will take dinner with us to-day, and as we don't have him every day, give him something better than he has at home! Let Mike pick a pair of chickens, and get a basket of vegetables ready to put in his chaise."

The current of the good man's mind was changed. It left the bed of mud and stones over which it had long murmured and grumbled, to flow over the peaceful bed of long ago, and to shed cooling and cheering influences around.—*Examiner.*

### The Jews.

*The Jews at Bombay.*—The following statement is represented by the London Jewish Intelligencer to be made on the authority of the Indian Portuguese, a Portuguese journal published at Goa.

"Great excitement has been caused among the Jews at Bombay by the publication by their pontiff, H. B. Kohn, member of the family of Aaron, who has lately come to Bombay from Jerusalem, of a pamphlet under the title, 'The Voice of the Vigilant.'"