

A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things.

No. VI.

On the Breaking of Bread.--No. I.

IN our last number we demonstrated from rational principles, that there necessarily must be, and most certainly is, a divinely instituted worship for Christian assemblies; and that this worship is uniformly the same in all meetings of the disciples on the first day of the week. That the breaking of bread in commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, is a part, or an act of Christian worship, is generally admitted by professors of Christianity. Romanists and Protestants of almost every name agree in this. The society of Friends form the chief, if not the only exception in Christendom, to this general acknowledgment. Their religion is all spiritual, and may be suitable to beings of some higher order than the natural descendants of Adam and Eve; but it is too contemplative, too metaphysical, too sublime, for flesh and blood. We have tongues and lips wherewith men have been impiously cursed, but with which God should be blessed. We have bodies too which have become the instruments of unrighteousness, but which should be employed as instruments of righteousness. And so long as the five senses are the five avenues to the human understanding, and the medium of all divine communication to the spirit of man, so long will it be necessary to use them in the cultivation and exhibition of piety and humanity. But we have a few words for them in due time, for we esteem them highly on many accounts. But in the mean time, we speak to those who acknowledge the breaking of bread to be a divine institution, and a part of Christian worship in Christian assemblies, to be continued not only till the Lord came and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, but to be continued until he shall come to judge the world.

That the primitive disciples did, in all their meetings on the first day of the week, attend on the breaking of bread as an essential part of the worship due their Lord, we are fully persuaded, and hope to make satisfactorily evident to every candid Christian. Indeed this is already proved from what has been said in the fifth number under this head. For, if there be a divinely instituted worship for Christians in their meetings on the first day of the week, as has been proved; if this order, or these acts of worship are uniformly the same, as has been shown; and if the breaking of bread be an act of Christian worship, as is admitted by those we address--then it is [174] fairly manifest that the disciples are to break bread in all their meetings for worship. This we submit as the first, but not the strongest argument in support of our position. We confess, however, that we cannot see any way of eluding its logical and legitimate force, though we are aware it is not so well adapted to every understanding as those which are to follow. Our second argument will be drawn from the nature, import and design of the breaking of bread. This we shall first illustrate a little.

While Romanists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians of every grade, Independents, Methodists Baptists &c., acknowledge the breaking of bread to be a divine institution, an act of religious worship in Christian assemblies, they all differ in their views of the import of the institution, the manner and times in which it is to be observed, and in the appendages thereto belonging. In one idea they all agree, that it is an extraordinary and not an ordinary act of Christian worship; and consequently, does not belong to the ordinary worship of the Christian church. For this opinion they have custom and tradition to show, but not one argument worthy of a moments reflection, not even one text to adduce as a confirmation of their practice. Who ever heard a text adduced to prove a monthly, a quarterly, a semi-annual, or an annual breaking of bread. This course in regard to this institution, I conjecture, drove the founders of the Quaker system into the practice of *never* breaking bread--just as the views of the clergy make and confirm Deists.

Much darkness and superstition are found in the minds and exhibited to the practice of the devout annual, semi-annual and quarterly observers of the breaking of bread They generally make a Jewish

passover of it. Some of them indeed, make a Mount Sinai convocation of it. With all the bitterness of sorrow, and gloominess of superstition, they convert it into a religious penance, accompanied with a morose piety and an awful affliction of soul and body, expressed in fastings, long prayers, and sad countenances on sundry days of humiliation, fasting and preparation. And the only joy exhibited on the occasion, is, that all is over; for which some of them appoint a day of thanksgiving. They rejoice that they have approached the very base of Mount Sinai unhurt by stone or dart. In the opposite degrees of their ascent to, and descent from this preternatural solemnity, their piety is equal. In other words, they are as pious one week or ten weeks after, as they were one week or ten weeks before. If there be any thing fitly called superstition in this day and country, this pre-eminently deserves the name. A volume would be by far too small to exhibit all the abuses of this sacred institution in the present age.

The intelligent Christian views it quite in another light. It is to him as sacred and solemn as prayer to God, and as joyful as the hope of immortality and eternal life. His hope before God, springing from the death of his Son, is gratefully exhibited and expressed by him in the observance of this institution. While he participates of the symbolic loaf, he shews his faith in, and his life upon, the Bread of life. While he tastes the emblematic cup, ^{we} he remembers the new covenant confirmed by the blood of the Lord. With sacred joy and blissful hope he hears the Saviour say, "This is my body broken--this my blood shed for you." When he reaches forth those lively emblems of his Saviour's love to his Christian brethren, the philanthropy of God fills his heart, and excites correspondent feelings to those sharing with him the salvation of the Lord. Here he knows no man after the flesh. Ties that spring from eternal love, revealed in blood and addressed to his senses in symbols adapted to the whole man, draw forth all that is within him of complacent affection and feeling to those joint heirs with him of the grace of eternal life. While it represents to him all the salvation of the Lord, it is the strength of his faith, the joy of his hope, and the life of his love. It cherishes the peace of God, and inscribes the image of God upon his heart, and leaves not out of view the revival of his body from the dust of death, and its glorious transformation to the likeness of the Son of God.

It is an institution full of wisdom and goodness, every way adapted to the Christian mind. As bread and wine to the body, so it strengthens his faith and cheers his heart with the love of God. It is a religious feast; a feast of joy and gladness; the happiest occasion, and the sweetest antepast on earth of the society and entertainment of heaven, that mortals meet with on their way to the true Canaan. If such be its nature and import, and such its design, say, ye saints, whether this act of Christian worship would be a privilege, or a pain, in all your meetings for edification and worship. If it be any proof of the kindness of the Saviour to institute it at all, would it not be a greater proof to allow the saints in all their meetings to have this token of his love set before them, and they called to partake? If it were goodness and grace on his part to allow you twice a-year in your meetings the privilege, would it not be inexpressibly greater goodness and grace to allow you the feast in all your meetings. But reverse the case, and convert it into an awful and grievous penance, and then grace is exhibited in not enforcing it but seldom. On this view of it, if it be an act of favor to command it only twice a-year, it would be a greater good to command it but twice or once during life. Just, then, as we understand its nature and design, will its frequency appear a favor or a frown.

It is acknowledged to be a blissful privilege, and this acknowledgment, whether sincere or feigned, accords with fact. It was the design of the Saviour that his disciples should not be deprived of this joyful festival when they meet in one place to worship God. It will appear (if it does not already) to the candid reader of these numbers, that the New Testament teaches that every time they met in honor of the resurrection of the Prince of Life, or, when they assembled in one place, it was a principal part of their entertainment, in his liberal house, to eat and drink with him. He keeps no dry lodgings for the saints--no empty house for his friends. He never bade his house assemble but to eat and drink with him. His generous and philanthropic heart never sent his disciples hungry away. He did not assemble them to weep, and wail, and starve with him. No, he commands them to rejoice always, and bids them eat and

drink abundantly.

Man is a social animal. As the thirsty hind pants for the brooks of water, so man pants for society congenial to his mind. He feels a relish for the social hearth and the social table; because the feast of sentimental and congenial minds is the feast of reason. Man, alone and solitary, is but half blessed in any circumstances. Alone and solitary, he is like the owl in the desert, and pelican in the wilderness. The social feast is the native offspring of social minds. Savage or civilized, man has his social fire, and his social board. And shall the Christian house and family be always the poorest and the emptiest under heaven! Is the Lord of Christians a churl? Is he sordidly selfish? Is he parsimoniously poor and niggardly? [175] Tell it not amongst the admirers of anniversaries! publish it not amongst the frequenters of any human association! lest the votaries of Ceres rejoice! lest the sons of Bacchus triumph!

The christian is a man. He has the feelings of a man. He has a taste for society; but it is the society of kindred minds. The religion of Jesus Christ is a religion for men; for rational, for social, for grateful beings. It has its feasts, and its joys, and its extacies too. The Lord's house is his banqueting place, and the Lords day is his weekly festival.

But a sacrament, an annual sacrament, or a quarterly sacrament, is like the oath of a Roman soldier, from which it derives its name, often taken with reluctance, and kept with bad faith. It is as sad as a funeral parade. The knell of the parish bell that summonses the mourners to the house of sorrow, and the tocsin that awakes the recollection of a sacramental morn, are heard with equal dismay and aversion. The seldomer they occur, the better. We speak of them as they appear to be; and if they are not what they appear to be, they are mere exhibitions of hypocrisy and deceit, and serve no other purpose than as they create a market for silks and calicoes, and an occasion for the display of beauty and fashion.

Amongst the crowds of the thoughtless and superstitious that frequent them, it is reasonable to expect to find a few sincere and devout; but this will not justify their character, else the worshippers of saints and angels might be excused; for many of the sincere and devout say, Amen!

From the nature and design of the breaking of bread, we would argue its necessity and importance as a part of the entertainment of saints in the social worship of the Lord in their assemblies for his praise and their comfort. We cannot prosecute the subject farther at present. We have been preparing the way for opening the New Testament in our next number, to produce evidence and authority of a higher order. In the mean time, let the christian who apprehends the nature, meaning and design of this institution, say whether it be *probable* that it is, or could be an extraordinary observance, and not an ordinary part of christian worship in the meeting of saints.

EDITOR.

Notification.

WHEREAS the Rev. Mr. *Blackburn*, D. D. a Presbyterian of the town of Louisville, Kentucky, has declared that he did, in a sermon pronounced in Frankfort, "sweep from the arena" the sentiments and views expressed by me in an address delivered in the chamber of the Representatives of the state of Kentucky in November last, and that in my presence too; (in this point, however, he is mistaken, as I was in Lexington the time he spoke on that subject,) this is to inform the said Rev. Mr. *Blackburn*, D. D. that I am prepared to defend, illustrate and establish those sentiments and views before his face, and

where he shall have an equal liberty of opposing all he has to say in defence of his views and sentiments, on the same subject. It will be remembered by many present at that time in Frankfort, that the most offensive item in my address and the most obnoxious to the displeasure of the priesthood, was, "that it was no part of the revealed design of the Saviour to employ clergymen, or an order of men resembling the priesthood, in the diffusion, spread, or progress of his religion in the world. In brief, that the whole Paido-Baptist priesthood is an order of men unauthorized by Heaven. They are neither constituted, commissioned, nor authorized by the Head of the Church to officiate in any one of their assumptions."

I would most respectfully inform the Rev. Mr. Blackburn, D. D. that I feel ready, as far as in me is, to contend for the truth of every sentiment advanced on that subject; and am disposed, all things concurring, to meet him any where within one hundred miles of Louisville, in the month of May or June next, for the discussion of that proposition. I engage upon his taking the affirmative, to show that the whole fraternity of Paido-Baptist clergymen, divines, or ministers, is a human institution, neither commanded, appointed, or decreed by God, to officiate in the office which they have assumed; that all their right so to officiate is self-constituted and bestowed; and is supported merely by a laity whose consciences are, in this respect, created and made by those priests that made and created themselves, and who preached the people into a deep sense of the reverence due to them as the Lord's anointed ones.

I would wish to have it distinctly understood that the whole grounds of debate on this subject are expressed in the following proposition, viz.--

That the Presbyterian clergy, or any other fraternity of Paido-Baptist clergy, is an order of men divinely constituted and authorized.

The Doctor and his brethren say that this proposition is *true* as far as respects their denomination. I am constrained to think, and therefore say, that it is *false*.

Now as public discussion, conducted with moderation and good temper, is of all means the best adapted to elicit inquiry and exhibit truth, I am constrained, from a sense of the high importance of this question, to propose (should the Doctor decline) to meet in conference any minister of the synod of Kentucky, on this proposition; and should they all decline calling this matter into question, I will agree, as far as in my power, to meet any minister of learning and good standing, of any denomination, who will agree to support the above proposition or anyone equivalent thereto, and endeavor to show that it is as false as the assumptions of the Roman Pontiff.

As the Doctor has boasted that he has already "swept from the arena" my sentiments and views on this subject, it gives a peculiar direction to this invitation to him. My duty requires me to give him a welcome invitation to do it again in my presence, and before all who may please to hear him do it. He shall have every respect due to his standing and reputation; and I hereby pledge, myself to submit to any rules of decorum any three respectable citizens shall appoint, one of them being chosen by him, another by me, and a third by these two.

I do not suppose that any intelligent man, or any friend to free inquiry, will snarl at this proposal. If it be lawful to advance a proposition, it is lawful to defend it; and if it be lawful to defend, it is lawful to defend it in the presence of them who say they can assail it. And if it be lawful, generous and christian-like, to attack the sentiments of those whose views differ from our own, in their absence, it is surely as christian-like, as generous and as lawful, to do so in their presence. And if the Doctor has done all he says he has done once, he can more easily do it a second time--and to much greater advantage. Few comparatively had the benefit of his address on that occasion: many would have the benefit of his views in such a full discussion. Public feeling, the circumstances of the times, zeal for truth, and a respect to all