

# AFFECTIONATELY ADDRESSED TO ALL CHRISTIANS.

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“ Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them . . . . and continued his speech until midnight.”—Acts xx, 7.

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OBSERVE, it is *not* said upon the first Sunday in the year, or upon the first Sunday in the quarter, or upon the first Sunday in the month;—but “ UPON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK.” The Holy Ghost knew how to use language so as to express His own thoughts and intentions, and He could have said, “ On the first Sunday of the month, or quarter, or year,” *if* He had pleased; but He did *not* say so; and why? because He meant something *else*, even “ *the first day of the week* ;” which was the day and period marked by the resurrection of Christ and His members in Him. (Eph. ii, 6.)

Reader! is it so with you? Is it the custom with yourself and those with whom you worship, “ *upon the first day of the week* ,” to come together to break bread? if not, why have you changed this blessed appointment of the Holy Ghost from the first day of the week to alternate Sundays? or to the first or last Sunday in the month, quarter, or year?

But, secondly: when Paul thus met them at Troas, what was it brought them together? What was the *motive* in their minds for coming together? Was it to get blessing to their souls in hearing a sermon? or to get comfort in prayer and singing of hymns? or for mutual exhortation? or to hear their pastors? Was it to see an apostle, or to hear an apostle preach? *No.* The Holy Ghost Himself says, "When the disciples came together to BREAK BREAD." This was their *motive\** for coming together,—the *only* motive He has assigned, "to BREAK BREAD." For they were disciples or learners of Jesus, and He had said, "*This do in remembrance of me.*" † (Luke xxii, 19.) And as the

\* In 1 Corinthians xi, this is confirmed, for though the apostle would not (on account of their evil practices) admit that the object was effected for which the Corinthians met? still the *purpose* of their minds in having met, remained the same, and that was (not to hear a sermon, &c., but) *to eat the supper of the Lord.* It is to be observed, that the tenth and eleventh chapters of 1 Corinthians handle *quite* a different subject from the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth chapters; the former chapters treat of the meeting *for breaking of bread*, the three latter of *spiritual gifts*; and there is no necessary connection between these two things; for though spiritual gifts *may* be exercised at the Lord's table, there may and ought to be breaking of bread where *there exist no spiritual gifts whatsoever* which could be exercised. It should here be understood that prayer and praise are the spiritual sacrifices which all believers are qualified to offer, and, therefore, the absence of gifted persons from the assembly is no hindrance to worship.

† That gifted persons are to teach, and that the saints who neglect such teaching will suffer in their own souls for despising what *God* has given for their profit, I admit; the command also to go and preach the gospel *to the world* I rejoice in; and the *duty* of believers to meet for mutual exhortation, edification, and comfort, in the use of any gifts from the Spirit

'Holy Ghost had arranged it in the Churches to be on the first day of the week, (the very day on which Christ arose,) therefore they came together ;—just to be obedient.

They did not then come together to get profit to their souls from hearing a discourse from the pastor or even the apostle ; but they came together to break bread : it surely would have been quite right to desire to be built up in the truth through any gifted person, and much more to hear an apostle, who (ere the scriptures were given) was in his teaching (like the rest of the New Testament prophets) a sort of living Bible : but this was NOT the motive for their coming together. They came together to *break bread*. If you say, “ They did hear Paul ;” I grant it, and add, “ And they did help to pick up Eutychus ;” but neither of these things were the *motives* which the Holy Ghost has assigned for their having come together ; but He assigns quite *another* motive, “ They came together to BREAK BREAD.” And who are you, or I, to add to what the Spirit says ? Their hearing Paul was as accidental a thing as their having to pick up Eutychus. If no Paul had been there—yea, if no pastor,—no gifted brother,—they would have been there together just as much as if no Eutychus had fallen down to be picked up. They came together as *disciples* to BREAK BREAD. So says

which may be among them, I thankfully act upon. But none of these things is the same thing, or has the same force or obligation upon the conscience, as *the supper of the Lord*. Concerning this alone (important as are the others) Christ has said, “ This do in remembrance of *me*,” and this (gift or no gift) is always binding in every place where two or three can gather together in His name, upon every first day of the week.

the Holy Ghost when He is assigning the motive\* in their minds for coming together. Blessed, assuredly, were the privileges which, when so come together, they on that day enjoyed, of hearing the apostle and of seeing a dead man restored to life; but still neither of these things was their *motive* for assembling. The meeting was convened “to *break bread* ;” Paul, as a disciple, of course was there, and most fittingly exercised his gift, and so might any others (either in exhortation, prayer, or praise) who were there, and qualified by the Spirit to do so.

I desire, in all simplicity, to put these two questions to every believer’s conscience.

Are these things so with thee?

First, Do you, “ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK,” come together to break bread?

And, second, When you come together on the first day of the week, is the *motive* in your mind simply “TO BREAK BREAD”?

\* Is it not a singular *fact* that in almost every place the Lord’s supper (instead of being thus, as at Troas, the *leading* meeting on the first day of the week) is not only made to mark *another* period than the first day of the week, but is also made a *secondary* service; brought in at the end of some other service? These changes are not little matters—for they are denials of the Lordship of Jesus among His saints, and of the ordinances of the Holy Ghost for the saints.