

ORDER OF WORSHIP

Our excellent and much esteemed Bro. Emmons, in his tract called "*The Voice*," (one or two numbers of which only ever reached my eye,) and also in some other publication, perhaps in this also, has based an outline of the order of Christian, worship in the public congregation on the arrangement of the words in Acts 2:42. "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." Luke, he endeavors to prove, set down these things in the order in which they were observed, and distributed all the worship of the congregation on the first day of the week into these several parts and order. Our beloved Bro. Emmons is a great lover of good order, and is precise in all points to a scruple; and therefore an effort for a perfect system of order comes as naturally from him as light from the sun. It may be our misfortune, but so it is, and we may as well acknowledge it candidly, never to have had a single prepossession or conviction in favor of this arrangement. And yet I do not like to differ—nay, I am scrupulous of myself when I do differ much from the good sense of my good Bro. Emmons. But in this, notwithstanding all my leanings, partialities, etc., etc., I must dissent from him. I have no evidence whatever of the truth, reason, or authority of such an arrangement, and regard all that I have read from him on Acts 2:42 as wholly Illogical, inconclusive, and unsatisfactory. But I must give my reasons:

1. Bro. Emmons, takes for granted that Luke is describing the worship of the Jerusalem church on the first day of the week in full assembly met. *This is a pure assumption*, and incapable of proof. It is much more likely that it had respect to their "being daily it; the temple praising God," as stated vs. 46, 47, is a general description of the way and manner in which they religiously employed their time when together.

2. It would give to the Christian worship a liturgy, a ritual form like the Jewish, wholly incompatible with the genius of Christ's religion, and would make its meaning and utility to depend essentially upon arrangement. This, to my mind, would be an intolerable idea, and hostile to the spirit and scope of the evangelical economy,

3. It would, with the stamp of divine authority, condemn the worship of every Christian community among us, as fully as the temple "divine service" reprobated on the pain of the divine displeasure any innovation or change. To ascribe to any arrangement of items a divine appointment is to make every departure from it positively sinful and unacceptable to God. For if all these things be done in the most perfect manner and with all the devotion of the heart, if they are numerically wrong—if the first should be second, and the second first, the whole worship is an innovation upon divine authority, rebellion against the Lord, and not to be tolerated.

4. But, 4th. It is all founded on the most capricious circumstances—upon premises singular, anomalous, and wholly unprecedented—upon the mere collocation of the four words in verse 42. Has the divine authority for any

arrangement of things ever before been gathered from such a source! I say, never; never from the mere arrangement of words in a sentence has the arrangement of any religious observance, or its divine authority, been instituted so far as I have read the Bible. Let us have only a parallel case in all Holy Writ, where, without command, the mere numerical order of the words of a historian established the divine authority of any order of divine worship. It cannot be done. I say a second time, it cannot be done—so far from it, that the simple order of words in a sentence proves neither the order of things in time, nature, or importance.

For example, when Paul says even in the way of exhortation, "I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving thanks be made for all men;" does any one conclude that in every public address, or in any particular address to the Throne of Grace, that we are numerically to place supplications first; then, prayers, or deprecations; then, third, intercessions; and end in the fourth place with giving thanks! And this is a much stronger case than the passage in Acts; for there it is the order of a historian's arrangement of words; but here it is the arrangement of an apostle in tendering an exhortation concerning public worship, and the most important part of it. I conceive, then, that the order of the words in Paul's exhortation is much more didactic and authoritative than Luke's narrative. And yet who ever thought that Paul commanded us in all public worship to have first supplications, then deprecations, then intercessions, and finally thanksgivings for all men, etc!

Now in giving commands it is natural enough to do

that first which stands first—as, "Repent and be baptized;" "Repent and pray to God," says Peter to the baptized sorcerer; "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," etc. But can any one imagine that because this is so, and ought to be so, that in all narratives, exhortations, and descriptions, the things must stand in time, nature, or importance, as the words happen to be arranged?

For example: "Add to your faith, courage; to courage, knowledge; to knowledge, temperance; to temperance, patience; to patience, godliness; to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love." Must this addition proceed numerically in this order because of time, nature, necessity, or importance?

Again: "The wisdom that comes from above is first pure, then peaceable, (primarily so,) gentle, easy to be persuaded, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." Do these attributes, etc., follow in this order by force of time, nature, or importance?

Again: "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness, temperance," etc. Does nature or time make them thus dependant?

Once more: Paul describes the Christian state thus: "You are come to Mount Zion the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the First Born enrolled in heaven, to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator," etc., "and to the blood of

sprinkling," etc. Is this the order of time, nature, importance; etc ?

So little is to be confided in the mere *arrangement of* words, or even of facts in sacred writings, that uniformity in descriptions and narratives, even amongst the historians, is not to be expected. Moses, in describing the plagues of Egypt, sets them down thus: 1. The conversion of water into blood. 2. Frogs. 3. Lice. 4. Flies. 5. Murrain. 6. Boils. 7. Hail. 8. Locusts. 9. Darkness. 10. Destruction of the first born. While David, in the 78th Psalm, puts them down blood, flies, frogs, locusts, hail, etc., and in Psalm 105 he sets them down darkness, blood, frogs, lice, hail, locusts, etc.

The order of events, as connected in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus, is not the same in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Why, then, found the order of Christian worship upon the casual notice of Luke, Acts 2:42, and claim for this order the warrant of a "Thus saith the Lord."—! —?

The Jews and Christians entered God's courts with praise as all ancient tradition saith—an item, by the way, omitted altogether in Acts 2:42. David says, "Enter his courts with praise!" Surely Christian's have as good a reason on the Lord's day morning to enter Christ's house with praise, as the Jews to enter the temple or the synagogue. And as the social prayers are of primary importance, why should they be last in the worship of the Lord's day, and why should our thanksgivings be at the close of our prayers?

Why should we tie up ourselves to formularies of worship when the Lord has left us free as to the time of

day or night when the house or place where, the meeting shall be held? What we ought to do is not left to our own option. We are to continue steadfast in the apostles' teaching, fellowship, breaking of the loaf, prayers, and praises; but as the Lord has left it discretionary with us whether we shall meet at sun rise, noon, or sun-set—under an oak, in a garret, or in a synagogue—whether we shall begin with singing, praying, reading, teaching etc.,—whether we shall stand or sit in singing—whether we shall kneel or stand in praying—whether we shall sit around one table or in our pews while we partake of the loaf—whether we should have a chest fixed in some part of the house called "the Lord's treasury," or whether we should have reserved a plate or book, etc., etc.,—I say, while it is obviously left without either a single precept or precedent in all the New Testament wholly discretionary with us, why should we seek to impose any form upon all the churches as essential to the acceptability of their worship—as of divine authority?

It is pleasing, indeed, to see the brethren freely unite in one harmonious and general outline of worship in public assemblies, as is now generally practised; such as singing, reading, thanksgiving, teaching, singing, exhorting, praying, blessing, breaking the loaf, contributing to the Lord's treasury, preaching the word, etc., as the occasion may require. But that all things may be done decently and in order, it devolves upon the elders of the congregation and the brethren to have an understanding upon the time and place for everything; and then to have every thing in its proper time and place. The localities of particular communities, as to country, village, or city residence, etc., must be taken

into account in the arrangements that are most for edification, sanctification, and comfort; which, indeed, together with our usefulness to the world, are the supreme ends and objects of the Christian Institution.

So much we offer in reply to sundry questions upon the subject of order. See again our Extra on Order, Vol. 6, page 484. This work is now about being re-issued from the London press.

Alexander Campbell in Millennial Harbinger, June, 1838.

Below we give an extract from Bro. Campbell's Extra on Order, to which he refers the reader in the above article. It runs as follows:

“We need not repeat what is so clearly written in all the addresses to the churches, that there are certain ordinances delivered to the church by her exalted Redeemer, which she is constantly to observe in all her meetings to worship him; that songs of praise, that prayers, supplications, and thanksgivings are to be preserved before the throne of grace, in the name of our great High Priest; that the Scriptures are to be read—that the word is to be inculcated, and exhortations tendered—that the Lord's death is to be commemorated—that the poor saints are to be remembered—and that discipline, when necessary, is, to be attended to—are so fully and authoritatively delivered to us in the apostolic epistles, as to leave no doubt on the mind of any devoted and diligent disciple concerning the duties incumbent on every church.

But at what hour of the day, and in what sort of a house, and how often on the Lord's day the church should assemble; and whether she should first pray, sing, or read the Living Oracles; and at what period of her worship she should do this or that, are matters left to the discretion of the brotherhood, and to that expediency which a thousand contingencies in human lot and circumstances must suggest, and for which no unchangeable ritual or formulary could possibly have been instituted. The Jews' religion was given and adapted to one nation, whose temple was fixed in Jerusalem; but Christianity is designed for all nations, and is adapted to all the varieties of human circumstances, from east to west, and from pole to pole.

Whether, then, the church shall meet once, twice, or thrice on the Lord's day; and at what hours, and how long she shall continue each meeting: whether she shall sing first or pray first: whether she shall commemorate the Lord's death in the morning, at noon, or in the evening, etc., etc., must be decided by the voice of the brethren. But that all the ordinances shall be solemnly attended to, and that perfect order shall be preserved in all her worship, are matters clearly and positively propounded and enjoined.”— *Millennial Harbinger*, October, 1835.

COMMENTS.

We publish the above article and extract in tract form, because some have represented Bro. Campbell as believing in and teaching or endorsing a stereotyped, invariable, and divine order or arrangement of the items of Christian worship. The part of his writings that are referred to as thus teaching, is his article on Order of Worship in the *Christian Baptist* of 1824. Below we give an extract from that article, from which any candid reader can see that Bro. C. had no thought of a stereotyped arrangement of the items of worship, and that he used the phrase "order of worship" in an altogether different sense:

"By the phrase, "order of Christian worship," we do not mean the position of the bodies of the worshippers, nor the hour of the day in which certain things are to be done, nor whether one action shall, be always performed first, another always second, and another always third, etc., etc., though in these there is an order which is comely, apposite, or congruous with the genius of the religion, and concerning which some things are said by the apostles; and, perhaps, even in some respects, these things may be determined with certainty as respects the practice of the first congregations of disciples; but that there are certain social acts of Christian worship, all of which are to be attended to in the Christian assembly, and each of which is essential to the perfection of the whole as every member of the human body is essential to the perfect man—is that which we wish to convey by the phrase, "order of Christian worship."

Now those who hold that Acts 2:42 sets forth the "divine order," can imagine how much reference Bro. Campbell, in the article from which the above is quoted, had to their notion, when, fourteen years afterwards, he calls it an "arrangement" in favor of which he "*never*" had a single prepossession or conviction." And certainly if he did not favor it then, he would not now, when it is causing so much strife, contention and division among the people of God.

Another reason for republishing Bro. C.'s article is that we consider his arguments unanswerable. Will any of the "special divine order" brethren undertake to answer them? Will any of them affirm in oral debate what they teach, i.e., that Acts 2:42 contains the invariable and divine order of worship? If they have the *true* worship, as they claim, they ought to be willing to defend it. A half dozen men are ready to deny their claim. Will they debate? Thus far when challenged they have always excused themselves. "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Jn. 3:20, 21.

This language of the Savior clearly indicates the character of those who disturb churches of Christ by their extreme notions of a special order of worship, and the character of those who oppose them. The special order of worship brethren, like heretics generally, are not united among themselves. In different communities they have different orders, and when questioned separately they seldom mention the same order as being "the special divine order." They are simply united

in their determination, to disturb churches wherever they can, and thus cause division. In so doing they show that they are factionists and thus are heretics. As such they should repent, or receive the treatment which Paul recommends in Titus 3:10, 11. "A man that is a heretic after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself,"

DANIEL SOMMER,

Another Chapter on the Same Subject.

A few weeks ago we published a chapter from Bro. Campbell's pen on the subject of "Order of Worship" with certain approving comments thereon. Since then a tract has been sent forth on the same subject by a certain writer whose name we prefer not to mention. On the 27th page of that tract, the writer to whom we refer quotes from Bro. Campbell the following: "But that all things may be done decently and in order it devolves upon elders of the congregation and the brethren to have an understanding upon the time and place for everything; and then to have everything in its proper time and place."

Having cited the foregoing sentence, the writer of whom we speak expressed himself thus: "If that means anything it means that the elders and the members of the congregation should agree upon some kind of an order, and then follow it, else they could not worship in decency and in order. That is true. But the question arises, Can the elders and the brethren make a better order than Luke gives us in Acts 2:42? Since it 'devolves' upon them to agree upon some order, and then follow it, have they not a perfect right to adopt Acts 2:42? They surely have." Then farther on this tractarian says, "If Acts 2:42 does not give us an order for the worship, who will point out one in the New Testament?"

The reader will please notice the expression "an order" in the foregoing question, and previous to that question

the plea for "a perfect right to adopt Acts 2:42." This is all mild, gentle, and seemingly harmless. But now notice the following on the 11th page of the same tract: "And this something [the contribution] was done immediately after the teaching and just before the breaking of the loaf. Then by whose authority shall we pervert the order and take up the contribution last? By thus changing the divine arrangement we may do the right act in the wrong manner, and our worship therefore become vain worship."

Notice the expressions "the order," and "the divine arrangement," and "wrong manner," and "vain worship" in the foregoing language from the tractarian whose writings are now being examined. Then on the 2nd page of the same tract Acts 2:42 is cited and this writer says, "If this does not give the order then we have none, and the requirement of God's word that we worship, not only in spirit, but according to truth, seems to be an egregious blunder on the part of the Deity. This cannot be."

Notice here what is said about "the order" given in Acts 2:42, and that if that scripture does not give "the order" then "the Deity" seems to have made "an egregious blunder." That is to say, it "seems" to a certain, tractarian that Acts 2:42 must give "the order" of worship in order to save "the Deity" from being chargeable with "an egregious blunder." With this before the reader's mind let us go back to the first page of the mentioned tractarian's production. There we find the following: "Christ once said of certain worshipers, 'This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far

from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.'—Matt. 15:8, 9. And since true worship necessitates the doing of the right act in the right manner, it follows that doing the right act, in the wrong manner, or doing the wrong act in the right manner, is vain worship."

Now then we have the chain of reasoning complete as presented by this unfortunate tractarian. 1. Christ declared that "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" is *vain worship*. 2. This tractarian himself says that "doing the right act in the wrong manner, or doing the wrong act in the right manner is vain worship." 3. If Acts 2; 42 "does not give the order [of worship], we have none," and then the requirement of God's word to worship in spirit and according to truth, "seems" to the mentioned tractarian "to be an egregious blunder on the part of the Deity." 4. Referring to breaking bread before the contribution the same writer says, "By thus changing the divine arrangement we may do the right act in the wrong manner, and our worship therefore become vain worship." 5. But after this tractarian had quoted a sentence from Alexander Campbell, he asks if the brethren have not "a perfect right to adopt Acts 2:42," and speaks of that scripture as giving "an order" for the worship, and "one" order for the worship.

The foregoing quotations and statements clearly set forth Solomon's saying, — "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Prov. 16:18. For if the tractarian whose work we are now reviewing has not fallen from his unscriptural loftiness then it would be impossible for any writer to be guilty of such a performance. First he planted himself on the lofty

plane of Bible truth concerning "vain worship." Then he assumed that a wrong "manner" of doing a right act is "vain worship." Next he assumed that a change from what he calls "the divine arrangement" in regard to *time* of making the contribution is wrong in regard to *manner*, and thus is *vain worship*. Finally he pleads for Acts 2:42 as setting forth "an order for the worship," and "one" "order for the worship." Thus he descends from what he calls "the order" of worship, and "the divine arrangement" of Acts 2:42 until he has come to the humble position of "an order for the worship," and "one" "order for the worship." This shows that another writer has probably written the exact truth when he expressed himself concerning the tractarian under review, and his associates in error, as follows: "Strange how a theory which cannot stand will taper off, and quit a little at a time. 1. The *only* divine order of worship. 2. The *divine* order of worship. 3. *A divine order* of worship. 4. *The order* of worship. 5. *Order* of worship. 6. Worship. It may be, if this keeps tapering, we can get together yet."

Having briefly exposed the descendings and meanderings of those who contend that Acts 2:42 sets forth the special divine order of worship we now come to deal with the leading statements of the tract which lies before us. The tract's title is a misnomer and is therefore suppressed, while its authors name is a reproach among those who know of his unscripturalness, and therefore is not mentioned. Having dealt with the inconsistencies of that tract we now come to deal with its leading statements as such.

1. In Matt, 15th chapter and in Mark 7th chapter we find "vain worship" defined, and illustrated. The definitions thereof are given in these words: "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," and "Full well ye reject the commandments of God that ye may keep your traditions." Matt. 15:3; Mark 7:7, 9. Such language shows that the Savior defines "vain worship" to be a *rejection of divine commands in order to keep human traditions, and teaching human commands for divine doctrine*. Then the Savior illustrated what he meant by referring to the rejection of the divine command to honor father and mother of which Jews were guilty while keeping the traditions of men on that, subject, and rejection of the divine requirement to keep the heart pure while contending for washing of hands, cooking utensils and dishes. Now, then, what relation has such behavior on the part of Jews to the conduct of disciples who attend to *all* the appointments of the Lord's day worship in the right manner, but only differ from a certain historic statement, or incidental mention, of certain items of worship *in regard to the order or time of two of those items*? The answer to this question is that no relation whatever exists between the behavior of *those Jews* and *such disciples*. Yet the reader can clearly see that the tractarian now under review cites the case of those offending Jews who rejected divine commandments in order to keep their human traditions, and tried to class with them all those disciples who differ from what a strained and erroneous emphasis of Acts 2nd chapter an 42nd verse. Such reasoning rivals the most absurd and ridiculous reasoning found anywhere in sectarian literature. It is like the efforts which have been made to convict disciples of not believing in the

salvation of infants because we do not practice infant sprinkling, and that we do not believe in heart religion because we do not depend on emotion as an infallible evidence of pardon, and that we do not believe in conversion to Christ because we reject the mourner's bench. In conclusion on this feature of our review of an erring tractarian we state that a man who can reason so erroneously, and not of himself detect his error, is, to say the least and best that truth will permit, *very unreliable*.

Now we come to the statement which sets forth the second position of an erring tractarian. On the 11th page of his tract, in speaking of making the contribution after the breaking of bread, he says, "By thus changing the divine arrangement we may do the right act in the wrong manner, and our worship therefore become vain." This statement shows that this tractarian here descends from the Savior's definition and illustration of vain worship to what he calls doing "the right act in the wrong manner," and this he calls "vain worship." Now what is the difference between the Savior's definition and this tractarian's definition of "vain worship"? Simply that the Savior said, that "vain worship" consists of rejecting the commandments of God in order to keep human traditions, and "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men," while this tractarian says that "vain worship" "may" consist of attending to the divinely ordained communion and then the divinely ordained contribution instead of first attending to the contribution and then the communion. Of this he says it "may" be doing "the right act in the wrong manner," and "therefore become vain worship." But then it "may" not, and is not vain worship, as we shall hereafter show.

Now we propose to show that this tractarian's use of the word "manner" in such a connection is wholly erroneous. The question of "manner" is not even touched by our deviation from Acts 2:42, of which he complains. It is wholly a question of *time* and not *manner*. The Corinthians were guilty of an error in regard to *manner* when they mixed the Lord's supper with their own suppers, and the Romish church is guilty of an error in regard to manner when the bread only is given to ordinary communicants while the priest drinks the fruit of the vine, and it is an error in regard to *manner* for sprinkling or pouring to be performed for baptism instead, of immersion which is a burial and a resurrection. But to say that to have the communion before the contribution is or even "may" be "the wrong manner" of attending to the right act and thus "become vain worship" reveals inaccuracy of speech and confusion of thought. This tractarian is therefore convicted of ignoring the Savior's definitions and illustrations of "vain worship," and also of absurd and ridiculous reasoning, and finally of a gross misuse of the word "manner." The danger is that a man who will reason thus in order to justify himself, and convict certain disciples of "vain worship"—the danger is that all the worship such a man offers to God is "vain worship," because to the extent of his ability he is causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine which true disciples have learned.

The last position which we wish to consider of the tractarian whose errors we are now considering is stated on the 27th and 28th pages of his tract. That position states that the brethren have "a perfect right to adopt Acts 2:42," for if that verse "does not give us an order

for the worship, who will point out one in the New Testament?" The expression "a perfect right to adopt Acts 2:42," find the expression "an order" together with "one" order, admits a right to adopt something else as "an order," and therefore admits that what this tractarian contends for in regard to the application of Acts 2:42 is a mere *preference* or *opinion*. This is the summing up of the entire controversy, and thus this tractarian *admits* that his pamphlet and all his other efforts, together with the persistent efforts of his associates, is simply a *preference* or *opinion* in regard to the bearing or application of a historic statement. A similar preference for the application of the historic mention of the exact language of the Eunuch's confession is a leading feature of the teaching in a certain misnamed journal in Texas. Those who contend for the exact use of the historic statement in Acts 8:37 call those "I do brethren" who differ from them in permitting penitent sinners to confess their faith in Christ by saying "I do" in answer to a question on that subject. Those who contend for the exact use of the historic statement in Acts 2:42 charge those with being "no order brethren" who differ from them in regard to the application of that statement. Acts 2:42 and Acts 8:37 were *commands* or a *statement of all the commands* given in regard to worship and the confession, the reasoning of the erring tractarian now under review would be of more force. But those scriptures are only *historic statements* in regard, to only *apart* of the subjects which they mention—the Christian's worship and the sinners confession of faith. Besides, the same reasoning which will make a ritual of Acts 2:42, will justify making a ritual of Acts 8:37. Then the very same reasoning would also justify

us in making a ritual of 1 Cor. 6:11, which places sanctification before justification. But this would be an absurdity, as all who are open to conviction will admit as soon as they pause and reflect. Moreover, it is likewise an absurdity to make a ritual of the order of any other historic statement of events and practices. Take for instance what Paul wrote in Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16. There we find the command for Christians to speak to themselves, and to teach one another in "psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing, and making melody" or "with grace" in their hearts "to the Lord." Here is a far better opportunity for a ritual than is found in Acts 2:42, especially as the same order of excises is twice mentioned, sing is mentioned in the form of *commands*, while in Acts 2:42 the order is only once mentioned and then simply as a *historic statement*.

What then are the chief objections to regarding Acts 2:42 as a ritual or stereotyped order to be observed by churches of Christ when they come together for worship on the Lord's day? They are several, and are serious in their character.

1. That the Lord intended it as a ritual is strictly an assumption, unwarranted by the circumstances.
2. The same reasoning which is necessary to conclude that it was intended as a ritual will justify making rituals of a half dozen or more scriptures which mention acts of worship and work.
3. To adopt Acts 2:42 as a ritual would require congregations to defer all praying in each Lord's day meeting for the first act of worship, which would be an

example for all other meetings, and this would exclude an opening prayer from all meetings of disciples.

4. If some one says, as the chief champion of adopting Acts 2:42 as a ritual has said, "I have no objection to an opening prayer," then on what ground can an objection be urged to placing the communion *before* the contribution? In Acts 2:42, The contribution is mentioned *before* the Lord's supper even as the supper is mentioned *before* the prayers. Therefore the same liberty which will permit "an opening prayer"—or a prayer before the contribution—will permit the communion *before* the contribution.

5. To insist that it is wrong to commune before the contribution, and wrong to pray until the last act of the worship, is contrary to the Savior's example when the communion was first instituted, as they then sang a hymn and went out. Moreover, it is contrary to the example of Paul in Acts 20th, which shows that he met with the saints at Troas on the first day of the week, and continued his speech till the next day and then he himself took something to eat before he left them. Besides, to insist that it is wrong to pray until the last act of worship is contrary to Eph. 6:18, and I Thess 5:8, and 1 Tim. 2:8, where Christians are required to pray "always" and to "pray without ceasing," and "pray everywhere." Such requirements forbid that we should conclude that it is wrong to pray in the former part, in the middle, or in the conclusion, or any other part, of any and every meeting of the church. Therefore Acts 2:42 should not be adopted as a ritual, for by so doing the church would array scripture against scripture.

6. To adopt Acts 2:42 as a ritual prevents churches from using preachers, however good and mature they may be, in their regular meetings for worship, and seriously embarrass the overseers and deacons in conducting a meeting in a mature preacher's presence. If the preacher be used to speak after the regular worship is over then the worship will be hurried over in order to "give time for the preaching," which results in having the communion of saints before all have even a fair opportunity to be present, especially if they come from a long distance. Besides, it often results in causing outsiders not to come to the place of meeting till they think the communion is over, which occasions much confusion at the very time when the church should have perfect silence and solemnity. Last, but not least, the outsiders who simply come in time to hear the preaching miss beholding the observance of the Lord's supper, which above all else sets forth the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, with which outsiders need to be impressed.

7. Finally, to adopt Acts 2:42 as a ritual makes an unnecessary deviation from what is common among the churches of Christ, and urging it upon them will cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine of Christ, which is a violation of Rom. 16:17, 18.

8. Here we pause on this subject, earnestly entreating all those who have been misled by the wrong reasoning that has been done by the preachers and writers who have tried to make a ritual of Acts 2:42 to come back to the good old way. In so doing they will not be dividers of the church over a mere opinion or preference. We know a preacher who says that after laboring three

years to advance the ritualistic notion of Acts 2:42 he had to give it up because it would not bear a scriptural test, and has prayed the Lord to forgive him for the harm he had done by advocating that notion. That preacher's example would be good for all others who are advocates of Acts 2:42, as a ritual, to follow, and thereby avoid causing divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine of Christ.

DANIEL SOMMER

Review of Another Tract on the Same Subject

Another tractarian has appeared in behalf of the dying cause which consists of endeavoring to make a ritual of Acts 2:42 for the churches of Christ. That tractarians "Introductory" reads thus:

It is duty, not pleasure, that has moved me to compile the following pages. The subjects have been pondered and the writing postponed with the hope and prayer that nothing of the kind would be needed. But there is now a crying necessity for a fair statement of certain important issues—a manifestly fair statement. Perhaps I am the very least of all the laborers in my Master's vineyard, but no apology is offered for trying, by this means, to be understood, and to have my cause fairly stated. Aware that he represents a goodly number who see, substantially, "eye to eye" with him in these issues, the writer desires to be wholly responsible for the present work. All positions shall be stated with candor, making exact quotations when possible, freely giving the names of those to whom reference is made. This method will enable me to be entirely fair.

COMMENTS.

The reader will please notice the expression "my cause" in the foregoing paragraph. This is a candid admission, and gives the keynote to the music of the special order

of worship hobby. All who advocate that hobby may individually say "my cause" when speaking thereof. Certainly it is not the Lord's cause. It is confessedly a human cause to divide churches of Christ over what is now acknowledged to be only "an order of worship," and it is certainly an unfortunate human cause which requires in its defense the most reckless assertions, crooked reasoning, and personal offensiveness of which its defenders seem capable. Let the reader bear this charge against them in mind, and notice whether it will be sustained.

2. The tractarian whose work is now in hand also writes his "Introductory" as though he intended to make "a manifestly fair statement" "of certain important issues." In regard to this we simply say that had he devoted his tract to setting forth *the Lord's cause*, he would likely have been enabled to make such a statement. But as he proposed to set forth a *cause* he has made "a manifestly fair" exhibition of failure. He has shown himself to be what Bro. Benjamin Franklin was accustomed to call "a scrap doctor" and has sent forth one of the most unjust and personally offensive documents which we have ever seen. Let the reader likewise bear this remark in mind and notice whether we show that it is just.

On 3rd page of the tract in hand we find the following:

SOMMER'S MORE RECENT TRACT.

While collecting my thoughts and materials for this tract, Daniel Sommer's tract, "*Order of Worship*," came to my address. It shall have attention, though necessitating a

change in my plan, and more writing than was at first intended. Since it has gone before the people I am glad to see it before I write. But this effort is not a reply to Sommer's review of Rice's tract, "The Worship" (issued Dec. 1, 1897). Rice's positions so far as Sommer's review is concerned, are untouched. An unprejudiced reader will see in Rice's tract a well meant and very forcible presentation of the *safe* side of the worship question.

COMMENTS.

1. So our review of a certain tract which advocated Acts 2:42 as a ritual did not originate but simply changed the "plan" of the tract now under review, and caused "more writing than was at first intended." From this information it appears that Rice's tract was not regarded as sufficient to advocate Acts 2:42 as a ritual, but that it needed a complement or supplement. This is significant, and suggests the inquiry whether the tract now under review will not need some one else to send forth tract to supply what this one lacks.

2. The paragraph quoted above says, "Rice's positions, so far as Sommer's review is concerned, are untouched." This statement we pronounce *recklessly untrue*. The leading features of his tract we copied and handled plainly and pointedly, and thus far no attempt has been made to confute what we wrote in review of his position. Therefore the statement that "Rice's positions," so far as our review of them is concerned "are untouched" we again pronounce *recklessly untrue*, and refer our readers to what we wrote on that subject as proof of what we now say.

On the 3rd page of the tract in hand its author says, "An unprejudiced reader will see in Rice's tract a well meant and very forcible presentation of the *safe* side of the worship question. As proof, see the following from the loyal and learned Lipscomb, of the *Gospel Advocate*." After quoting a part of Bro. Lipscomb's notice of the mentioned tract the unfortunate writer now under review adds this: "Rice's tract, strong in itself and thus praised, needs not my defense. My effort is to set the facts and practical issues before those who have a right to see them."

COMMENTS.

1. Does Bro. Lipscomb show himself "loyal and learned" in his advocacy of the modern Sunday-school, and in following the international series of lessons selected by sectarianians? Does he show himself "loyal and learned" in the lesson leaves, quarterlies, and commentaries for Sunday-schools which he sends forth from his office, some of which he arranges with his own hand?

2. Did he manifest himself as "loyal and learned" when he sent forth a book on the subject of Christians in relation to civil governments, and in which he averaged more than one serious mistake to each page of his book? He said that he had studied civil governments and the relation of Christians thereto about thirty years before he wrote his book. Is it the part of a "loyal and learned" man to study a subject for thirty years, and then write a book

thereon in which he makes more than one serious mistake for each page? The truth is, that this tractarian's praise of Bro. Lipscomb is as unmerited as it is unmeasured, and is evidently the outgrowth of Bro. Lipscomb's partial endorsement of a tract issued in behalf of a declining cause which one of its advocates calls "my cause," thereby acknowledging it to be a human enterprise. Bro. Lipscomb's remarks in favor of that tract have already done mischief, and I think that he will see the day that he will regret those remarks as we are persuaded to think that he has regretted sending forth his book on the relation of Christians to civil government.

On the 4th and 5th pages of the tract under review its author endeavors to set Alexander Campbell against himself in regard to Acts 2:42, and succeeds just about as well as he, or any other ordinary man, could succeed in setting the Holy Spirit against himself by quoting Romans 4th chapter and James 2nd chapter on the subject of faith. When a speaker or writer discusses a subject in an affirmative manner he seldom pauses to tell what he does not mean. But Bro. Campbell was very guarded in what he wrote on this subject. He told what he did not mean.

DEFENSE OF CAMPBELL.

Here we pause to defend Bro. Campbell's name from the injustice of the tractarian under review who is a slanderer of the dead as well as of the living. In the *Christian Baptist* page 165, Bro. Campbell expressly declares that by the expression "order of Christian worship" he *did not mean* the numerical order of the items of worship. We again give his language:

By the phrase, "order of Christian worship," we do not mean the position of the bodies of the worshippers, nor the hour of the day in which certain things are to be done, nor whether] one action shall be always performed first, another always second, and another always third, etc., etc., though in these there is an order which is comely, apposite, or congruous with the genius of the religion, and concerning; which some things are said by the apostles; and, perhaps, even in some respects, these things may be determined with certainty as respects the practice of the first congregations of disciples, but that there are certain social acts of Christian worship, all of which are to be attended to in the Christian assembly, and each of which is essential to the perfection of the whole as every member of the human body is essential to "the perfect man—is that which we wish to convey by the phrase, "order of Christian worship."

But this unfortunate tractarian in his determination to set Bro. Campbell against himself positively ignored what is said in the foregoing paragraph and quoted the following from the conclusion of the same essay:

In brief, the sum of our remarks on this position is, that if the worship of the Christian church is not uniformly the same, then it is either occasionally or uniformly different. If uniformly different, then there is no established order, as proved in the first dilemma; and if occasionally different, there must be some reason for these varieties; but no reason exists, therefore a difference without a reason is irrational and absurd. It follows then that there is a divinely authorized order of Christian worship in Christian assemblies, and that this worship is uniformly the same, which was to be demonstrated on principles of reason. These positions are capable of rational demonstration on other grounds than those adopted; but this plan was preferred because it was

the shortest, and, as we supposed, the most convincing. This is only preparative or introductory to the essays which are to follow upon the ancient worship of the Christian church. We are hastening through the outlines and shall fill up the interior after we have given an essay on each of the following topics. They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine—in breaking of bread—in fellowship—in prayers—praising God. As we have paid more attention in the general to the apostles' doctrine than to the other items, our next essays will be on the breaking of bread, the fellowship, and prayers of the primitive church (*C. B.*, p. 166).

In other words, our tractarian utterly ignored Bro. Campbell's statement that he *did not mean* the order of items and then quoted the foregoing to prove that Bro. Campbell *did mean* me order of items. With this much before the mind let the reader notice the order stated in the last part of the foregoing paragraph, and see that Bro. Campbell placed the breaking of bread *before* the contribution.

"THEY CONTINUED STEADFASTLY IN THE APOSTLES DOCTRINE-IN BREAKING OF BREAD - IN FELLOWSHIP - IN PRAYERS PRAISING GOD."

Let the reader ponder well the foregoing sentence. That was quoted to prove that Bro Campbell once believed in order of items as given in Acts 2:42, and to prove that varied from that belief when he afterward wrote an exposition of Bro. Emmons' position reveals a recklessness and perverseness that are at once *astonishing*, SHOCKING, ALARMING. It is dreadful—*positively dreadful*—to think of the extreme to which

this tractarian and others have gone in their zeal for this cause.

At this juncture we are reminded that on the 12th page of the tract under review its author says of Bro. L. F. Bittle, "than whom there is no more reliable writer," and quotes the following from his pen:

"But in what order these should be arranged in the weekly assemblies is not clearly set forth in [the] scriptures unless it is done in Acts 2:42. There the teaching is named first, afterwards the worship. As some order must be observed, it is better to take what we find in Luke's narration than to make one of our own. In [this] case we shall have first teaching; then giving; then breaking of the loaf; finally, prayers. This order is reasonable, and no one can devise a better one.— *O. R., Oct. 23, 1894.*

Then our ritualistic tractarian adds:

"This statement is from the *brains* and *heart* of the OCTGRAPHIC REVIEW."

Yes, but here is another statement from the same source as late as March 29th, 1898:

"Nor must we neglect Bro. Sommer's tract on the order of worship, which should be read by all who think Acts 2:42 is a law given for the arrangement of the items of worship. That it is a law can be a matter of opinion only, not an article of faith."

Here we have Bro. Bittle's own explanation of those sadly perverted words which he used in October of 1894. That explanation shows that he regards the order

of items as stated in Acts 2:42 simply as a historic narrative; for he says of those who think "that it is a law given for the arrangement of the items of worship" that their position can be "a matter of opinion only, and not an article of faith." Yet we regret to inform Bro. Bittle that this which he says "can be a matter of opinion only and not an article of faith" has been crowded on churches, and thrust before the brotherhood with great zeal to the division of some churches, to the disturbance of many others, and so as to cause much unpleasantness and even enmity between a considerable number of preachers.

But this is not all. In the REVIEW of Oct. 26, '97, Bro. Bittle expressed himself concerning the order where he meets for worship thus:

The order of exercises yesterday was this: Singing, prayer, scriptural reading by the leader, singing, the reading of Psalm and Mark 15th chapter by brethren previously selected, singing, remarks by the brother who presided at the table, thanksgiving for the loaf and distribution to the communicants, thanksgiving for the cup and drinking of it, contribution for the poor, singing, prayer, exhortation from the 6th chapter of Galatians, prayer, benediction. All was done without pomp or weariness but in simplicity and fervor.

In the REVIEW for Feb. 22, 1898, this was reprinted in order show that Bro. Bittle did not regard Acts 2:42 as a ritual in regard to order of items. Yet in the face of all this the tractarian under review persists in quoting Bro. Bittle's words of 1894 as an endorsement of the ritualism

which that tractarian advocates. *What does this mean?* We know not except that error is a mental poison, and religious error is a religious poison. When such error is received into the mind and heart it seems to unbalance the entire mental system and to beget an unscrupulousness which is positively shocking. To quote a man's language and strain it to mean a certain something, and then persist in straining it in that direction even after he has repeatedly expressed himself against such meaning, and making no reference to what he has said by way of explaining his language—*this* is injustice—deep and intense injustice. That any one claiming to be a Christian is guilty thereof indicates a blind zeal in behalf of an unscriptural cause.

What now will be the fate of Bro. Bittle at the hands of those who have persisted in quoting his language as though he favored their hobby, including the tractarian who says of him "than whom there is no more reliable writer," and who is "the *brains* and *heart* of the OCTOGRAPHIC REVIEW"? Since Bro. Bittle has explained the language that he used in 1894 and that explanation is against them, will now they try to array him against himself as they have endeavored to do with Campbell, Morris and Sommer who when confronted with hobbyism explained what they did not mean when they wrote on Acts 2:42 so as to impart information to plain people? Or, will they persist in quoting Bro. Bittle's language which he used in 1894, and ignore his explanations as given in 1897, and 1898, because those explanations are against them? We shall see.

Now we come to consider a striking and significant feature of the tract before us. "John W. McGarvey,

Isaac Errett, and Ira J. Chase"-all of whose names belong to the innovating side of the disciple brotherhood are quoted in some statement or remote reference they made concerning Acts 2:42. Then Robert Richardson and D. S. Burnett are quoted in a fragment of what they said. Bro. Burnett is quoted as saying, "Bro. Richardson's review expresses my notions of the question of order." This shows that Bro. Burnett did not claim to have *convictions* on the subject, but only *notions*." Now we quote the language of Bro. Richardson as given by our unfortunate tractarian to show that he did not endorse making a ritual of Acts 2:42, but objected to Bro. Emmon's idea on the subject being "considered as of divine authority." Here are the quotations:

We do not object particularly to the order itself: on the contrary we could agree that such an arrangement of the exercises would be very proper and perhaps as good as any other... Please remember, however, as has been already observed, we could agree with our beloved Bro. Emmons in the order which he approves -we only object that this order should be considered as of divine authority."

Now, reader, the tractarian who can use such language from Bro. Robert Richardson's pen, which endorsed by Bro. D.S. Burnett, and use it as favoring the idea that Acts 2:42 was divinely intended as a ritual -that tractarian shows himself capable of seeing evidence where it doesn't exist. He speaks of Bro. Richardson as "one of the most brilliant scribes of the reformation." If this be true, then certainly Bro. Richardson knew how to express himself. In expressing himself on this subject

he distinctly says of the order mentioned in Acts 2:42 that it would be "perhaps as good as any other," and "we only object that this order should be considered as of divine authority." For such language to be quoted in favor of Acts 2:42 as a divinely given ritual seems like the desperate effort of a desperate man.

But this is not all. The ritualistic tractarian now under review has done more in the way of conscripting witnesses and perverting their testimony. He quotes Isaac Errett, the prince of innovators, and having quoted his words he says:

To the same effect B. W. Johnson, C. Kendrick, D. Lipscomb, L. F. Bittle, *et. al.* Here is Errett's language:

The importance of the second chapter of Acts as a starting point in our labors to restore New Testament Christianity, can hardly be exaggerated. That we [meaning this reformation as a whole] have succeeded in developing from this chapter, the beginning of the reign or Christ the mode of the Spirit's operation in the conversion of sinners, the unchanging law of pardon, and of initiation into the Church of Christ, the infallible authority of the apostles to administer the affairs of the absent Lord, and the simple, spiritual worship of the primitive church, is also, we think beyond question."

Now let the reader examine the foregoing paragraph carefully, and notice the absence of any mention of *order of items* in the worship. That is the very point in controversy. It is not *the worship as such*, nor *the number* of items, nor the *spiritual character* of the worship that is in dispute, but it is whether *the order of*

items mentioned in Acts 2:42 was divinely intended as a ritual. Yet because Isaac Errett mentioned "the simple spirit of worship of the primitive church" he is here quoted as though he favored making Acts 2:42 a ritual! Here is another desperate attempt of a desperate man in behalf of what he confessed in his "Introductory" is a *human cause*.

On page 14 of the tract under review is found the following:

SOMMERS FORMER TRACT:

Moreover, Sommer is the author of a tract: "The Worship, and the Order of Worship," published April, 1893. In this he asks, "What is the true worship? What is the right order of the worship?" and states: "The importance of these questions cannot be over-estimated. Unless they be correctly answered, any endeavor to approach God acceptably may prove a failure." He undertakes to show "*the divinely given order of these exercises*," and takes Acts 2:42 as his model. He does it very much as Emmons did in 1896. Emmons was regarded by his critics, Burnett, Campbell, and Richardson, as a scholarly, conscientious Christian—not a heretic. Sommer also shows that Acts 2:42 "refers to their method of procedure in their meetings for worship." What next?

COMMENTS.

1. The "next" should have been to have quoted the order as stated in our tract of 1893, with our preliminary words. That would have been fair. But instead of so doing this unfortunate tractarian preferred to make a few unjust remarks and leave his readers to conclude that we once endorsed his ritualistic idea. But here is what we said:

Moreover, as we are commanded to *tarry* one for another when we come together to eat the Lord's supper it is altogether appropriate that our order when the church meets for worship should be as follows:

1. Singing with the spirit and the understanding one or more songs or hymns.
2. Reverent reading or reciting of a portion of the Book of Psalms.
3. Earnest prayer addressed to God, the Father, in the name of Christ.
4. A song or hymn sung with the spirit and understanding.
5. A chapter or less read reverently in one of the epistles.
6. Then that chapter should be considered either by one or more of the brothers present expounding and applying the teaching thereof, or by different ones asking and answering questions.

7. When the teaching has been done for the proper length of time, then the contribution should be attended to in the spirit that the Scriptures enjoin.

8. Then the Lord's supper should be observed with due solemnity and reverence.

9. One or more exhortations are then in place. Saints should be exhorted to continue steadfast, and sinners should be exhorted to obey the gospel.

10. Finally, a song should be sung, followed by a prayer, or only by the apostolic benediction, as the time and circumstances may permit or suggest.

Now the reader will notice that we expressly said of that order "it is altogether appropriate." We did not claim it as a ritual based on Acts 2:42, but we brought together Eph. 5:19,20; Col. 3:16; Acts 2:42; Acts 20:7. From what we then said we have never changed, and we defy any one to show a single sentence which we have ever written, the which, when fairly interpreted, conflicts with the above-stated order. Yet this unfortunate tractarian speaks of us on the 18th page of his disgraceful document as "a man, that, first and last, has been on nearly all sides of every question." This statement concerning us is *shamefully untrue*. We can name a dozen, and perhaps a hundred questions, concerning which we have taken only one position. Yet this tractarian represents us to his readers as having been "on nearly all sides of every question." Unless repented of no doubt that slanderous untruth will appear against that tractarian in the day of Judgment. Unless he be hopelessly blind and thus utterly irresponsible he well understands that all that we said

in our second tract on the order of worship was not against the order found in Acts 2:42, but simply against that order being regarded as a *divinely authorized ritual*.

Another specimen of injustice is found on the 18th page of the graceless document before us. We quote a paragraph thereof:

At the close of Sommer's last tract (which I suppose represents the notion he is now in), he makes seven paragraphs to pose helplessly as argument against Acts 2:42 as a model. Not one of them weakens the side of the safe worshipers. If the writer had enough time and the reader enough patience, and the "objections" were worth noticing, it would be a very easy matter to brush them aside. They are either inconclusive, or do not affect the question: and his statements conspicuously inexact.

COMMENT

1. The reader can turn to those seven objections as found on the 15th and 16th pages of this tract and judge whether they deserve such treatment. They can also judge the fairness of the tractarian who will thus deal with objections of which he has not "enough time" to quote even a single sentence, yet could take "enough time" to quote such a "note" as is recorded on the 12th page of his tract.

2. A confessedly human cause which this tractarian called *his cause* by using the words "my cause" in his "Introductory" requires a very unreasonable exhibition

of human nature in its behalf.

3. On the 15th page of the tract under review its author says, "He who cannot state with candor the position of an opponent is not entitled to a hearing." But this tractarian at least did not thus state our position either in our former or in our review of Rice's tract.

But notice the following as found on the 16th page of the document in hand:

But Sommer took a radical position on Acts 2:42, using as strong language as any one, and then, without confession or apology, wheels around, and berates and misrepresents those who still (some of them anyway) conscientiously hold the same position, and publicly and brazenly blames them for a condition of things he did his very best to bring about. There is not the semblance of fairness about this. The element of sound moral manhood is lacking. In the interest of truth all parties concerned have a right to know both sides of this case. Borrowing the language of F.D. Power, which suits this case very well, I will say of the REVIEW in its course with me. It simply persists in its paganism: It is incapable of fairness. If it had been a political newspaper we should say it had borne false witness, and all talk....smacked of hypocrisy, but as it is alleged to be a religious journal we will simply say it has been conspicuously inexact, and has not the manliness to confess it.

COMMENTS

The foregoing statements are from first to last

slanderosly incorrect as well as offensively personal, and they indicate a sad exposition of temper which may be justly called *madness*.

2. F.D. Power is a leading innovator, and it fully becomes any one claiming to be an apostolic disciple to adopt his language against the REVIEW.

3. We have previously shown that this tractarian has made strong statements concerning both of our tracts concerning the worship and has not quoted a line from either one of them on the subject.

4. We never used any language indicating that Acts 2:42 should be taken as a divinely given ritual, and this is the only point in controversy.

On the 15th page of the document under review this tractarian says, "No living man stands more fully condemned by Sommer's more recent tract than Sommer himself, as his own quoted utterances show." Yet not a line from either tract is here quoted. Certainly this appears in an ill grace in what claims to be "a manifestly fair statement." This tract is the most personally offensive and shamefully slanderous document which it has been our privilege thus far to examine. Its author has more exhibitions of temper and has come nearer being *always wrong* than any one after whom we have, perhaps, ever been required to read. How much confidence can be placed in his charge that we have changed positions the reader can judge by the use which he made of Dr. Robert Richardson's statements, which were endorsed by David S. Burnett. Bro. Richardson expressly stated that he *objected* to the idea that the order mentioned in Acts 2:42 is of "divine

authority." This objection Bro. Burnett endorsed; yet our tractarian quotes both writers as favoring his view!

On the 18th page of the tract under review we also find something else of interest.

THE REAL DIFFICULTY.

But all candid observers of this (sometimes disgraceful) worship controversy have seen that the ORDER is not the main issue. It is the worship itself.

COMMENTS.

1. If THE ORDER be not "the real difficulty" then it is an imaginary difficulty; for if the question of THE ORDER had not been crowded on churches, then there would have been no controversy at least, so far as the REVIEW is concerned.
2. This tractarian and others of the same opinion have gone to well established congregations that attended to all the items of worship and have not been content till they had introduced their opinion about THE ORDER perhaps to the division of the brotherhood.
3. The above-given statement of this tractarian concerning what he calls "THE REAL DIFFICULTY" implies that those who oppose his ritualistic idea of Acts 2:42 don't believe in urging churches to meet regularly for the pure worship. But this he knows is wholly incorrect. *It is a slander.* We were earnestly contending for regular and faithful meeting for worship every first day of the week before this tractarian came before the public as a preacher. Moreover, those who stand

against Acts 2:42 as a ritual are generally, if not always, as earnest in the direction of regular worship as are our ritualistic brethren.

PROPOSITIONS FOR DEBATE.

The tractarian under review presents four propositions for debate, the absurdity of which were exposed in the REVIEW for April 26th, and to that number of the REVIEW we simply refer our readers. By careful examination of the exposition therein made they can learn that advocates of Acts 2:42 as a ritual seem incapable of stating their own position or the position of those who oppose them on that subject.

AN EXPLANATION.

In our tract on "The Worship, and the Order of Worship," published in 1893 we stated, "There should be no preaching on Lord's day when the church meets for worship." This has been quoted against us, and we now wish to explain that it was *an unguarded* sentence. The connection shows that we meant that the time should not be taken up in preaching the gospel to sinners when *sinner are not present*. When this explanation is made then even that statement, unguarded though it was, will appear in harmony with all else that we have written on the subject. There was a period when we had some confidence in an erroneous conclusion which certain brethren had reached with reference to the

word translated "preached" in Acts 20:7, and during that period several of our statements received a form which was unguarded, and thus need explanation.

THE WORST INJUSTICE.

But the worst injustice is inflicted by our critics in regard to the question of explanation. Those critics positively ignore Alexander Campbell's explanation of his own words. Then they ignore L. F. Bittle's explanation of his words. As for Daniel Sommer, they seem to think that he should be personally assailed and slandered utterly regardless of truth and righteousness. The advocates of Acts 2:42 as a ritual seem to think that if any one has ever used the expression "order of worship" approvingly then he must have endorsed their idea, and if he ever wrote disapprovingly of their idea, then they will charge him with having been on "both sides" of the subject. This is pitiable conduct if those critics are guilty thereof through ignorance and it is contemptible conduct if they are guilty thereof through perverseness. In either case they are unworthy of the confidence of their fellow mortals, and will continue to be till they repent and learn better manners.

CONCLUSION.

Reader, the close of our review of the second tract recently issued in favor of Acts 2:42 as a ritual is now at hand. But we have not exposed all its mistakes, for it is erroneous from its alpha to its omega. Its author says in his "Introductory" that what he intended to present was *his cause*, for he called it "nay cause," and from that statement to the conclusion of his tract he showed that he was endeavoring to exalt his human cause to the dignity of a divine arrangement. In so doing he has been guilty of strained and reckless efforts to give his cause a show of defense. As a result he has shown himself a misguided man and has produced a graceless thing. Yet his father-in-law, Alfred Elmore, endorses his tract without reserve, and thus commits himself to all the errors therein contained. Here is the endorsement, as copied from the *Gospel Echo* of Mar. 31, 1898.

BRO. ELSTON'S TRACT.

Many will be interested in hearing that Bro. B. J. Elston has written a tract upon the worship, and they would be much more interested in reading it. And this tract is not the rival of Bro. Rice's tract, but it ought to go along with it. Bro. Elston's tract, while it indorses the position taken by the *Echo* upon the public worship, it goes farther, and reviews in a fair and bold manner the objections to this position. All who wish to see set forth in clear and fair terms, Campbell against Emmons, and then Campbell against Campbell—against himself: Sommer and Morris against Rice and Elmore, et al., and then Sommer and Morris against Sommer and Morris—against themselves, should buy and read this tract There is neither slang, nor fuming,

nor misrepresentation in the work; it gives all the articles precisely as they were written, and shows with force the strength and the weakness of the men referred to above. I bespeak for this timely tract a liberal sale. You can hardly afford to miss reading it.

Price, 5c single copy; 3 copies 10c; 12 copies 30cts.
Address B. J. Elston, Covington, Ind.

Such an endorsement binds Bro. Ellmore to the mistakes in both matter and manner of the disgraceful document that we have reviewed and exposed. May God have mercy on our erring brethren is our humble petition in their behalf.

DANIEL SOMMER.