

RESTORATION OF THE ANCIENT ORDER OF THINGS.

No. VII

ON THE BREAKING OF BREAD—No. II.

THE apostles were commissioned by the Lord to teach the disciples to observe all things he had commanded them. Now we believe them to have been faithful to their master, and consequently he gave them to know his will. Whatever the disciples practised in their meetings with the approbation of the apostles, is equivalent to an apostolic command to us to do the same. To suppose the contrary, is to make the half of the New Testament of non-effect. For it does not altogether consist of commands, but of approved precedents. Apostolic example is justly esteemed of equal authority with an apostolic precept. Hence, say the Baptists, shew us where Paul or any apostle sprinkled an infant, and we will not ask you for a command to go and do likewise. It is no derogation from the authority for observing the first day of the week, to admit that christians are no where in this volume commanded to observe it. We are told that the disciples, with the countenance and presence of the apostles, met for worship on this day. And so long as we believe they were honest men, and taught all that was commanded them, so long we must admit that the Lord commanded it to be so done. For if they allowed, and by their presence authorized, the disciples to meet religiously on the first day, without any authority from their King, there is no confidence to be placed in them in other matters. Then it follows that they instituted a system of will-worship, and made themselves lords instead of servants. But the thought is inadmissible, consequently the order of worship they gave the churches was given them by their Lord, and their example is of the same force with a broad precept.

But we come directly to the ordinance of breaking bread, and to open the New Testament on this subject, we see (Matt. xxvi. 26,) that the Lord instituted bread and wine on a certain occasion, as emblematic of his body and of his blood, and as such, commanded his disciples to eat and drink them. This was done without any injunction as to the time when, or the place where, this was to be afterwards observed. Thus the four gospels, or the writings of Matthew, Mark, and John leave it. At this time the apostles were not fully instructed in the laws of his kingdom; and so they continued till he ascended up to his Father and sent them the Holy Spirit. After Pentecost, and the accession gained that day, the apostles proceed to organize a congregation of disciples, and to set them in the order which the Lord had commanded and taught them by his Spirit. The historian tells minutely that after they had baptized and received into their society three thousand souls, they continued steadfastly in a certain order of worship and edification. Now this congregation was intended to be a model, and did actually become such to Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth. The question then is, What order of worship and of edification did the apostles give to the first congregation they organized? This must be learned from the narrative of the historian who records what they did. We shall now hear his testimony, (Acts ii. 41,) "Then they who had gladly received his word were baptized, and about three thousand were that day added to them: and they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and in