

Israelites partook of it, they were reminded of that marvellous deliverance, and were required to tell of it to their children. The passover was instituted on the night of that deliverance. The Lord's supper was instituted on the night when Jesus was betrayed to be crucified; and serves for a memorial of his sufferings and death. When we remember him, we are to remember his agonies, his body broken, and his blood shed. In preaching the gospel, Paul determined to know nothing but Jesus Christ, and him crucified. So, in the eucharist, Christ is presented to view; not as transfigured on Mount Tabor, or as glorified at his Father's right hand, but as suffering and dying. We delight to keep in memory the honors which they whom we love have received; but Jesus calls us to remember the humiliation which he endured. To the lowest point of his humiliation, the supper directs our thoughts.

The simple ceremony is admirably contrived to serve more than a single purpose. While it shows forth the Lord's death, it represents at the same time the spiritual benefit which the believer derives from it. He eats the bread, and drinks the wine, in token of receiving his spiritual sustenance from Christ crucified. The rite preaches the doctrine that Christ died for our sins, and that we live by his death. He said, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you."¹ These remarkable words teach the necessity of his atoning sacrifice, and of faith in that sacrifice. Without these, salvation and eternal life are impossible. When Christ said, "My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,"² he did not refer to his flesh and blood, literally understood. He calls himself the living bread which came down from heaven.³ This cannot be affirmed of his literal flesh. To have eaten this literally, would not have secured everlasting life; and equally inefficacious is the Romanist ceremony, in which they absurdly imagine that they eat the real body of Christ. His body is present in the eucharist in no other sense than that in which we can "*discern*" it. When he said, "This is my body," the plain meaning is, "This represents my body." So we point to a picture, and say, "This is Christ on the cross." The eucharist is a picture, so to speak, in which the bread represents the body of Christ suffering for our sins. Faith discerns what the

¹ John vi. 53.² John vi. 55.³ John vi. 51.

picture represents. It discerns the Lord's body in the commemorative representation of it, and derives spiritual nourishment from the atoning sacrifice made by his broken body and shed blood.

A third purpose which this ceremony serves, and to which it is wisely adapted, is, to signify the fellowship of the communicants with one another. This is taught in the words of Paul: "The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread."¹ A communion or joint participation in the benefits of Christ's death, is signified by the joint partaking of the outward elements. "What communion," says he, "hath light with darkness; and what concord hath Christ with Belial?" "Ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils."² In these words of Paul, to sit at the same table, and drink of the same cup, are regarded as indications of communion and concord. Believers meet around the table of the Lord, in one faith on the same atonement, in one hope of the same inheritance, and with one heart filled with love to the same Lord.

A notion has prevailed extensively, that a spiritual efficacy attends the outward performance of the rite, if duly administered. Some mysterious influence is supposed to accompany the bread and wine, and render them means of grace to the recipient. But, as the gospel, though it is the power of God unto salvation, does not profit unless mixed with faith in those who hear it; much less can mere ceremonies profit without faith. In baptism, we rise with Christ through the faith of the operation of God; and in the supper, we cannot partake of Christ, and receive him as our spiritual nourishment, but by faith: "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."³ The contrary opinion makes these sacraments as they have been called, saving ordinances, and substitutes outward ceremony for vital piety.

¹ 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

² 1 Cor. x. 21.

³ Eph. iii. 17.