

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."<sup>1</sup> 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."<sup>2</sup> 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."<sup>3</sup> The contrary opinion makes these sacraments as they have been called, saving ordinances, and substitutes outward ceremony for vital piety.

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. x. 16, 17.

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. x. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Eph. iii. 17.