

Closer than the closest of all earthly bonds is the vital union of the believer with Christ. One roof may cover them who are knit in the most intimate of human relationships. But beneath that roof, within that family circle, amid all the endearing intercourse and communion, a dividing line runs between spirit and spirit; each dwells apart, has within a hermit sphere of its own to which it can retire, into which none can follow or intrude. But what saith our Lord of the connexion between Himself and each of his own? "He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." He opens Himself to us as the hiding-place, the resting-place, the dwelling-place for our spirit. We flee unto Him, and He hides us in the secret of his presence, and keeps us secretly in that pavilion. What a safe and happy home! How blest each spirit that has entered it! But more wonderful than our dwelling in Him, is his dwelling in us. What is there in us to attract such a visitant?—what room within our souls suitable to receive Him? Should He come, should He enter, what kind of reception or entertainment can we furnish to such a guest? Yet He comes—He deigns to enter—He accepts the poor provision—the imperfect service. Nay, more, though exposed to many a slight, and many an open insult, He still waits on, has pity, has patience, forgets, forgives, acts as no other guest in any other dwelling ever acted but Himself. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." "If any man love me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come in to him and make our abode with him."

To a still higher conception of the intimacy of the union between Himself and his own does Jesus carry us: "As the living Father hath sent me and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me shall live by me." It would seem as if all the earthly imagery elsewhere employed—that of the union of the branches with the vine, of the members with the head, of the building with the foundation-stone,—however apt, were yet defective, as if for the only fit, full emblem Jesus had to rise up to the heavens to find it in the closest and most mysterious union in the universe, the eternal inconceivable, ineffable union between the Father and Himself,—“That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in

us—I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.”

There is a resemblance approaching almost to a coincidence between the language that Jesus used in the synagogue of Capernaum and in the upper chamber at Jerusalem, on the night of his betrayal. "The bread that I will give," he said to the promiscuous audience of Galileans, "is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." "Take, eat," such is his language in instituting the Supper; "this is my body broken for"—or as St. Luke has it—"given for you." In either case the bread turns into the flesh or body of the Lord. There had been no wine used in the feeding of the five thousand, and so in the imagery of the synagogue address, borrowed obviously from that incident, no mention of wine was made. There was wine upon the supper-table at Jerusalem, and so, just as the bread which was before Him was taken to represent the body, the wine was taken to represent his blood. That very eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood, of which so much was said at Capernaum, Jesus, in instituting the ordinance of the Supper, taught his disciples to identify with a true union with Himself. So close is the correspondence that many have been led to think that it was to the Eucharist, and to it exclusively, that Jesus referred in his Capernaum address. We cannot tell all that was then in our Saviour's thoughts. It may have been that in imagination He anticipated the time when He should sit down with the twelve. The Holy Communion may have been in his eye as He spoke within the Galilean synagogue. But there is nothing in what He said which points to it and to it alone. He speaks of the coming to Him, the believing in Him as the eating of the bread which is his flesh. He speaks of spiritual life owing its commencement, as well as its continuance, to such coming, such believing, such eating. Is it in the ordinance of the Supper, and in it alone, that we so come and believe, eat and live? Is there no finding and having, no feeding upon Christ but in the Holy Sacrament? Freely admitting that to no season of communion, to no spiritual act or exercise of the believer, do the striking words of our Lord apply with greater propriety and force than to that season and that act, when together we show forth the Lord's death till He come again, we cannot confine them to that ordinance.

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