

days when He was consciously drawing near to His cross, entering day by day more deeply into its shadow and its chill. Dr. George Matheson, writing of Christ's intimacy with the Bethany family during the last, sad year of His life, terms it "The Union of the Altar and the Hearth." "Is it strange," he asks, "that on His path to the altar He should have lingered awhile by the hearth?" No, it is not strange. We know that the altar and the hearth were inseparably associated in His heart. It was in behalf of the homes of the world that He endured the shame of the cross. "Like the dew of Hermon, that cometh down upon the mountains of Zion," the grace of Calvary falls copiously on Bethany. If in the home at Bethany He was warmed and strengthened for the cold, dark road He had to tread, richly has He requited the kindness. From His altar-fires He has cast into the homes of unnumbered multitudes the seeds of a brighter flame than was ever kindled on the hearthstones of mankind before. By His cross He has for ever sanctified and glorified the home.

The Evangelists record two instances in which Christ joined in social festivity with the Bethany family. Each of these brief stories is an exquisite literary cameo. In