

Father's" presence, he invests us with the office of mutual intercessors; empowers us to touch and set in motion, for each other, an almighty agency; making it at once our honour and office to assist, as subordinate agents, in training and conducting each other to eternal life.

Not satisfied with inculcating mutual affection on his people in general terms, he concentrated and expressed his will on the subject in a *new command*. As the Lawgiver of his Church, possessing all authority in heaven and earth, he was empowered to enact what laws he pleased. But, in the exercise of that high prerogative, the only subject on which he chose formally to legislate was, the mutual affection of his people: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." By calling it a new command, he would be understood as giving it additional solemnity, as incorporating it with the ancient tables, and publishing it as an integral part of the eternal moral law. While to complete its power, and to render its appeal to their hearts irresistible, he proposes his own example as the model and motive to obedience, adding, "as I have loved you, that ye love one another." He might justly have engrossed the love of his people to himself; but, no, he consented to take the love they owe to him, in the form of love to each other. He delighted to contemplate his church as a community of hearts, cemented by attachment to a common object, and thus rendered one.

Not only did he enjoin the duty of mutual affection by a new command, to promote our intelligent obedience he explained the reason in which it is founded; "for," said he, "all ye are brethren"—born into the same family, children of the same heavenly Father, partakers of the same new nature, and tending to the same eternal home.

The mutual affection which he commanded, and the reason of which he thus explained, he also affectingly exemplified. Often had his disciples contested the question of precedence in his kingdom. How beautiful, impressive, and instructive the sight which stands before them:—the Lord of glory, folding in his arms a helpless babe, as an emblem of the humility which adorns his kingdom! Thus did he seek both to dry up that fountain of ambition which threatened to embitter the Church, and to inculcate that love which seeketh not her own.

But by what new expedient shall he still further secure this object? Behold him washing his disciples' feet! And why should he thus inculcate the condescending offices of brotherly love, but because he knew that—like the ligaments and arterial network of the human frame—the health and happiness of his body, the Church, depends on their binding power and reciprocating influence!

To bind his people together still more effectually, he made their affection to each other the badge of their discipleship to him. "By this," said he, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." Sin is the great principle of repulsion by which men are severed and kept aloof from each other, and led to pursue their respective ends apart. Christ came into the world to be a new centre of attraction, around which they might rally and reunite. So that if there be a community on the face of the earth, distinguished from all others by the absence of selfishness and the ardour of their love, all who behold them might be constrained to say, "These are certainly the followers of Him whose name is Love."

Having commanded, exemplified, and enforced the mutual affection of his people, he did not leave the performance of the sacred duty to depend on the

result of their own prayers alone;—*he prayed himself with an earnestness that would not be denied, that they all might be one.* "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one." Here the great Intercessor, when only a step from the cross, comprehending his people at a glance in all the nations of the earth, and all the ages of time, prays *that they all may be one*—incorporated in one body, animated by one spirit, united in that love which is the bond of perfectness:—that they may be one *as we are one, as thou Father art in me and I in thee*—closely, spiritually, indissolubly; how intimate and sacred the union of which the mysterious trinity in unity is the heavenly pattern:—that they may be *made perfect in one*, their oneness is necessary to their perfection. Not only is their oneness in each succeeding age necessary to their perfection for the time being, but the final unity of all is necessary to the perfection of the entire body. As it is said of the Jewish church, "that they without us could not be made perfect," to the church in heaven is waiting "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." Such was the specific object for which the Saviour prayed in the presence of the cross, and by which he taught his disciples that they had no separate interests, bound them to each other with the cords of love, and impressed it on them that henceforth and for ever he and they were one.

And having so prayed, in order to give efficacy to his intercession, he ascended the cross. Then was the new centre of Divine attraction established. Then was fulfilled the involuntary prediction of Caiaphas, who said, "It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not. And this spake he not of himself; but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad"—that operating as the attractive of our hearts to himself, and the centre of our unity to each other, he should form his people into one entire globe of love. Then was commenced the fulfilment of his own prediction, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me,"—detaching them from their separate points of selfishness, where they have stood frowning on each other and me, all eyes and hearts shall meet together by centering in me. His cross, like the ark in the wilderness, is the centre around which his people are to encamp; so that they cannot separate into factions, or withdraw from each other, without retiring at the same time from the presence of the cross.

And the union of his Church, which he had thus lived to inculcate, and died to secure, he still continues to enforce by the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper. "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body:" as the individual is made one by the soul which pervades all the parts of his system and unites them together, so all the members of the Christian Church are pervaded and made one by the one Spirit which inhabits them, and of whose presence baptism is the sign. "And we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread," the *one loaf*, and the *one cup*, of which all partake, however numerous, is an evidence and sign that there is but one body of which they are all members. So that as long as these ordinances are administered in his Church, our Lord is virtually calling on his people to be one. He is reminding them that the image they are to present to the world is that of a holy, happy, united family, entering his house together through the one door of Christian baptism.