

## DIALOGUE VII.

*The subject of this Discourse is, On Communion with Christ; in which fellowship, the Lord is pleased, in an especial manner, to open his heart most freely to his beloved ones.*

A CONVENIENT time being come, and these two friends being favoured with an interview with each other, the conversation began thus:

*Senior.* My good friend, by the good hand of our God upon us, we are once more admitted to see each other: may the Lord sanctify and bless our meeting. Pray, how is your mind disposed, and what are the present subjects on which you may now be ruminating? I only ask, as it may lead to a fixation on a certain subject for our present discourse, and that may be the more acceptable unto you.

*Junior.* I cannot but most sincerely thank you, my good Sir, for your great kindness and friendship which you have shewed me, in aiming to improve my mind, as you have already done, and in being so affectionately disposed in addressing me as you now do. As to my present thoughts, they are exercised with pleasure in looking forward to the subjects before us, that we

proposed to converse on, which are—On Communion with Christ; on the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; on Church Fellowship; on Death; on the Entrance into the Invisible State; then, on Heaven, Glory, and Eternal Life. To have you speak on, and unfold these subjects to me, with the apprehensions which by the light of the Lord the Spirit, he may be pleased to let in upon my mind concerning these important things, is what is at present uppermost with me.

*Senior.* I cannot but bless the Lord for keeping up your mind, and giving you a spiritual relish and appetite for truths so inestimable and divine.

*Junior.* Blessed be his name, the subjects we have before conversed on, have sunk into my mind: they are not only remembered, but they have been realized in my soul by the Holy Ghost. I do esteem them more than my necessary food: the reason for which is, because my understanding is more enlarged, my affections more raised, and I am more engaged in delighting greatly in the Lord Jesus Christ, and God my heavenly Father in him: all which I do ascribe to the Holy and Eternal Spirit.

*Senior.* Then you ascribe nothing to me, for opening the subjects we have before conversed on, or may in those we propose still to pursue?

*Junior.* No, Sir, I do not. I must acknowledge, unless these subjects had been opened and explained as you have opened them to me, I had not had the views of them which I now have, nor had I been raised up in heart and affection to the Lord as I really am. It is these subjects spiritually explained, and rightly understood, and received into the mind, that make way

for the true exercise of all spiritual affections and aspirations after God; and it is the Holy Spirit's operation on these supernatural subjects, which fixes the thoughts, the mind, the will, the affections, on the Lord. All this I can say from what the Lord hath taught me whilst conversing with you, and more especially when I have been considering over in my own mind, what was contained in the subjects you had delivered to me.

*Senior.* All you say is right. There is nothing to be attributed to me. I only proposed the question merely to hear your reply. When you make use of a pen, you attribute none of your thoughts to it, whilst it is the mean of your committing the same on paper, and communicating the same to others; just so it is in the case before us: I am willing to impart my mind to you on the best of all subjects, yet you cannot receive nor be profitted by the same, much less quickened, and raised up in heart and affection to the Lord thereby, but by the power of the Holy Ghost. But let us now enter on what that particular subject is you would have discussed on at this time.

*Junior.* Sir, I wish it to be on communion with Christ. I hope to receive much light into this subject, from your discoursing with me on it; let me therefore request it to be our present.

*Senior.* I consider it a very interesting one; more especially if we, for the whole of our subject, state it thus: *On Communion with Christ, in which fellowship the Lord is pleased, in an especial manner, to open his heart most freely to his beloved ones.*

*Junior.* This, Sir, will be an additional advantage, which will be most highly acceptable.

*Senior.* Union to Christ is the foundation of all communion with him; and this was from everlasting, and is the fruit of eternal election. The elect were chosen in him before the foundation of the world, consequently they were in him by this act before the world began. They could not be in Christ, but they must be one with him; they could not be one with him, but they must be in union with him; he could not be their head, and they his members, but they must be united to him as members in an head; nor could he be their head, but he must be united to them as his members. It is from the grace of union to the Person of Christ, all his communicable blessings flow forth towards them. All the communion the saints on earth or in heaven have and enjoy with Christ, and Christ has and enjoys with them, is the sole and entire fruit of his union to them, and their union with him.

*Junior.* I thought communion with Christ was the greatest blessing in earth or heaven, as I conceive it is therein and thereby we enjoy communion with the Father and the Spirit.

*Senior.* Union to Christ is the blessing of blessings. It far surpasses all the communion we shall ever enjoy with the Lord, either in the state of grace or glory. It is the grand original and cause thereof. It is one of the blessings of election. It flows from the Father's everlasting love. It is immutable. It cannot be dissolved. The fall of all the elect into a state of sin, in Adam their nature head; their total loss of the image of God, in which they were created in him; their own inherent guilt, sinfulness, and apostacy from the Lord, the fountain of living waters; their own actual rebel-

lions in the course of their lives—can by no means dissolve this union. No: nor death itself; for the elect, each and every one of them, die in Christ, in union to him, and with him: nor can the grave dissolve it, for Christ himself says, *This is the Father's will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me, I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.* John, vi. 39.

*Junior.* I never thought union to the Person of Christ, to be of any such vast importance, so that I never gave myself any consideration concerning it; all I wanted was communion with him. From what you have delivered, I am led to see this to be a subject of great importance indeed.

*Senior.* Verily, it is so. Our being united to Christ, and related to the Person of Christ, and interest in him, with his union to us, his relationship to us, his interest in us—these are some of the deep things of God: from the knowledge of which, everlasting consolation flows into our mind, and intercourse with Christ is hereby most spiritual, and more easily apprehended.

*Junior.* I really conceive it must be so; I could therefore wish and request the favour, that you would briefly name the several unions there are between Christ and his people.

*Senior.* I will, as you desire it. There is an election union, which comprehends the Person of Christ, and all the elect in him. The soul and body of Christ, are united to the souls and bodies of all the elect; for we are his body. *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.* Ephes. v. 30. Their is a representative union. Christ represented the church

in his own person, and as one with him, from everlasting; and they were set up in him as his bride and social companion, as one who was to share and be a partner with him in all his communicable titles, honours, riches, glories, and excellencies. There is likewise a marriage union between Christ and his church. There is also a manifestative union, which was evidenced by the Incarnation of Christ, who came thereby into our world, *to save his people from their sins*. There is, lastly, a glory union, which will openly shine forth in the New Jerusalem State, as also in the ultimate glory for ever, when all contained in the following words, will be fully realized, and most fully evidenced—*That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them: that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.* John, xvii. 21, 22, 23.

*Junior.* I find this benefit in your conversation, it sets me on thinking; and, whilst so employed, the Holy Spirit is pleased to create light in my renewed understanding, so as for me to receive the subject. But I long to hear you on that of communion.

*Senior.* My friend, where would you have me begin this subject? What must I say now on this point? Shall I begin with Christ's communion with us, or our communion with him? say which.

*Junior.* Sir, I freely confess, I never thought of any other communion with Christ, but what was wholly

on our parts, and enjoyed by us in the ordinances of worship, I have never been in the least led to contemplate this grace any higher.

*Senior.* Yet, my friend, the subject must, if entered into, and properly stated, lead us to consider Christ's communion with us, to be of more and far greater consequence than our communion with him.

*Junior.* Pray, Sir, give me some general apprehensions of what Christ's communion with us consists in.

*Senior.* The communion of our Lord's fellowship with us, must consist in all his views of us; in all the outgoings of his heart towards us; in all his delights in us; in all the expression of his love to us; in all that he hath done for us; in all his communications of his grace to us; in all the open and free manifestations of his good-will to us; and also in that free and full communion he will hold with us in the world of glory—this is what our Lord's communion with us, must most certainly consist in.

*Junior.* Say you so! Why, then, wherein consists the communion with our Lord?

*Senior.* I reply, in real spiritual intuitive views of him; in the outgoings of our minds, thoughts, hearts, and affections after him; in our real delights in him; in being pleased with all the expressions of his love to us; in all that he hath done for us; in rejoicing in all the open manifestations of the same to us. Herein it is our communion with him consists. It is of the same nature on both sides, yet not to the same degree: that is wholly impossible; for in all things our most precious Christ must have the pre-eminence,

*Junior.* The longer I converse with you, the more I am filled with wonder and surprise. The subjects you converse with me upon, I have the highest esteem for; yet you enter on these in such a way and manner, as seem to add dignity to them. I see plainly, what I have conceived to be communion with Christ, falls vastly short of your views of the same. For my part, I really have swallowed up, and made but one subject of it, Christ's communion with us, and our communion with him.

*Senior.* You have always considered, when your heart was truly happy in the love of Christ, and you had spiritual delight in him, this was communion betwixt Christ and yourself. It never came under your spiritual reflection, how Christ held fellowship with you, and how he admitted you to hold fellowship with him, and it gave you no concern to be admitted into this secret.

*Junior.* Indeed, indeed, it did not; yet, from what you have now dropped concerning our Lord's communion with us, and our communion with him, it seems to me I have no real apprehension of the subject.

*Senior.* My good friend, I do not want you to be either encouraged or discouraged, by any thing I deliver; all I aim at is to convey right apprehensions of truth, and especially on those most important points we are now upon. I have actually had communion with Christ, when I really knew not wherein it consisted; and, when under sacred opportunities in preaching, this great mystery of grace hath been opened, and put into proper words, I have been led to see, if what was



described in the sermon was real communion with God, I had been favoured with it years before. I would not, therefore, have you utter any hasty expressions, and say you know nothing of it; but, as I really conclude you do, put any questions on the same you please, and I will, so far as it is given me, give a reply to the same, according to the best of my ability.

*Junior.* I must say you are exceedingly kind. Will you, Sir, be pleased, in a very particular manner, to explain all your words have expressed, concerning our Lord's communion with us?

*Senior.* I will, with the greatest readiness. My dear Sir, I love you in the bowels of Christ Jesus. I have been in the same state of mind you are. I was never quick in apprehension, but was always thoughtful; so that a word of importance of Christ and eternal things dropped, led me, as one of a contemplative turn, to consider over and ponder on the same; and I now live to be a witness it is better to be so, than of a more quick and lively disposition.

*Junior.* Pardon me, Sir, I do not know what to make of this. I am sure I think such are the most blessed, who are of a quick and lively frame: it is what I covet.

*Senior.* You may, I do not. I prize a sound judgment in the truths of God, above all the liveliness and vivacity in the world. I consider and look upon much called life and liveliness, to be nothing more than nature, and natural exertions; as such, there can be no spirituality in them. I have found many, who are looked on to be very dead in spiritual things, to be fuller of spiritual life, than such who have run them down; but

then I would wish you to understand me, I look on all spiritual life as brought into the renewed mind by the knowledge of Christ, and increased and maintained by renewed acts of believing on Jesus.

*Junior.* But, my dear Sir, do oblige me in my request, concerning what you have expressed respecting our Lord's communion with us, for I really never yet considered the subject, and can be confident I never heard such an account given of it in words before.

*Senior.* I said communion with our Lord, and his fellowship with us, consist in his views of us; in the outgoings of his heart towards us; in his thoughts of us; in his delights in us; in all the expressions of his love to us; in all the open and free manifestations of his good-will to us; and in the free and full communion he will hold with us in glory. This you want me very sentimentally and particularly to set before you, which I will most cheerfully; but I must request your particular attention.

*Junior.* That, indeed, Sir, you need not demand. I do perceive the subject requires that you be correct in enumerating each of the particulars you have expressed, as I am desirous to receive them very distinctly and clearly into my mind; for I more and more see, without a right knowledge of the same, they cannot have their proper effect within and upon me.

*Senior.* I said that communion with Christ, and his fellowship with us, consist in his views of us. He beheld the elect, before all worlds, as the objects and subjects of his Father's everlasting love: as his beloved bride and spouse. He took into his own mind his Father's love to

them in him, and his own love to them. He expresseth himself thus: *Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Rejoicing in the habitable parts of his earth, and my delights were with the sons of men.* Prov. viii. 30, 31. Thus Christ had communion with them by his views of them, by his rejoicing in them, by his delights in them, before the foundation of the world. His views of his church, drew out his heart towards them. He expressed this in his covenant engagements on their behalf. His communion with them was manifested in his becoming one with his people, in taking hold of their nature, and becoming like them in all things, sin only excepted. *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil.* Heb. ii. 14. This was to have fellowship with his church in her low and lost estate. Herein he exercised his love openly and manifestatively: as he also did in his whole life of humiliation and passion; by which means he *purged their sins, and sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high.* He has also communion with them in all his free and open manifestations of his good-will to them. This is further displayed in the fellowship he holds with the saints who are already admitted into the kingdom of glory; to which same state he will admit all his saints in his own appointed season.

*Junior.* What you have said is most truly wonderful. If I understand you, the love of Christ towards them from everlasting, must have been an active love.

His rejoicing over them and in them, proves it so; yet I cannot conceive how this should be any part of our Lord's communion with them, seeing then they could by no means have the least apprehensions of the same. I cannot conceive that Christ can have any communion with us, and we not be sensible of it, and we not be sensibly affected by it. Can you, Sir?

*Senior.* Indeed I can; not that I may be able to give you my thoughts on this subject, so as to convey clear ideas of the same to your mind; but I must tell you, Christ could not have quickened us with spiritual life, if he had not had communion with us; yet, when he put forth his resurrection power within us, we perceived it not. The effects continue to the present moment, and will last to eternity; yet we ourselves, when Christ first held communion with us in this way of communication, perceived it not; we were dead, and he gave us life; all that has followed this, is but the evidence thereof. As to what you say, *you cannot conceive Christ can have any communion with us, and we not be sensible of it*; why, my good Sir, Christ puts forth many acts of his grace within us, and holds communion with us, where we perceive nothing of it. If this were not the case, the new creation wrought within us by the Lord the Spirit, must sink and die.

*Junior.* You make Christ's communion with us, the cause why we are admitted to have communion with him, do you not?

*Senior.* Yes, verily. I told you before, communion is the fruit of union. I may also add, communion is commensurable to this. It is so on the part of Christ: he imparts his life, his light, his spirit, his grace, his

holiness, his righteousness, his purity, his salvation to us; so as that we receive and enjoy the benefit of the same, and we are hereby made partakers of Christ: all which, in the essence and perfection of it, is by imputation and communication. The Apostle says, *God is faithful, by whom we were called unto the fellowship of his son Jesus Christ our Lord.* 1 Cor. i. 9. He also says at the 30th verse of the same chapter, *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* All is bestowed on us, and made known in us, and received by us, out of the fulness of him who filleth all in all; of whom the Apostle says, *And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.* John, i. 16.

*Junior.* If I understand you, we are entirely passive in all the communion the Lord Jesus Christ is pleased most graciously to hold with us. Is it so?

*Senior.* Yes. He is pleased to inhabit, to dwell in, and make his abode with and in us. He *hath the key of David.* He opens to the view of faith, all the riches of grace and glory. He possesses the whole mind with the knowledge and enjoyment of the same; and hereby we have communion with him, and can say in our measure, what the Apostle does in his own, and in the name of others, and to a far greater degree, *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bare witness, and shew un'to you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was mani-*

*fested unto us:)* That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. 1 John, i. 1, 2, 3.

*Junior.* Be pleased now to enter on the subject of our personal and particular communion with Christ, and what it consists in.

*Senior.* Our communion with Christ consists in the various outgoings of our minds towards him. We are sometimes engaged in spiritual conversation about him: the unction of the Holy one descends on us: Christ is very present to our minds; his fragranciness and perfume fall on us; and he is the most precious one in our esteem. This is communion with him. At other times we are led into spiritual contemplations on him, in which our hearts burn with love, and there is an outgoing of our souls towards him. This also is communion with him. There are seasons when the mind is very specially and particularly drawn out in prayer, in praise, in blessing him; in which acts we have real and actual communion with him, and he becomes our centre, our all; we getting hereby into more personal and particular acquaintance with him.

*Junior.* What you say concerning communion with Christ, is on some very special and highly-favoured seasons. It is not to be expected in the ordinary course of my daily walking with God, is it?

*Senior.* My good friend, every good thought you have of Christ, is communion with Christ. Every good word you speak of and concerning Christ, proves you have communion with him. Communion with Christ is carried on in our souls by the Holy Spirit. It is by

his taking of the things of Christ, and shewing the same unto us, and realizing the same in us.

*Junior.* I am certainly very tiresome to you, but if you would set before me the very exercise of the mind in the act of real communion with Christ, I should have abundant cause to bless the Lord on your behalf.

*Senior.* I have endeavoured throughout all my past, as also in my present conversation with you, to express myself in the most free and easy manner I possibly could. I remember I stated to you, the subject should be on communion with Christ, in which it would be clear it pleased the Lord, in an especial manner, to open his heart most freely to his beloved ones. I will, so far as the Lord shall be pleased to assist, give you as full an account of all this, as I possibly can. The Lord admits his people most freely to converse with him, to call on him, to pour out their hearts before him, to converse with him as their friend. He opens his heart to them; he shines in upon their minds; he fills them with a sense of his mercy and compassion; he gives them some very particular apprehensions of his righteousness and sacrifice; so that their hearts dance for joy. As it respects the exercise of the mind, in real and personal communion with Christ, it is as follows:—The soul looks simply unto him; prays he would grant his most gracious presence; implores some peculiar access unto him; it bewails its inward and actual sinfulness; it begs to be favoured with some blessed intuitive knowledge and apprehension of his glorious person—of his loving heart—of his matchless worth—of his holiness—of his righteousness—of his oblation—of his death, burial, resurrection, ascension,

glorification, and coronation, as may swallow up the mind, and fix it wholly on him. The believer entreats to be remembered with the favour he beareth to his people. The mind longs to have a blessed inward conception of the dignity of Christ—of the worth of Christ—of the representation which he makes of all the elect in his own person before the throne of the Majesty in the heavens. Whilst thus engaged, the heart of Christ is opened; and, under the teaching of the Holy Ghost, the believer takes in such conceptions of Christ, as put down every thing below Christ. Thus, in an especial manner, the Lord Jesus Christ is most fully made known; and we see and taste how good and gracious the Lord is. I have found in my own case, in this immediate and personal communion with God which I have been opening, the person, glory, heart, salvation, and grace of Christ, have been most wonderfully opened to my spiritual apprehension; and I have had more of the knowledge of the Lord imparted, and of the Holy Ones, than in any other way or means whatsoever. How does all this appear to you? I hope you will acknowledge I have been very simple and easy in the statement of this most experimental subject.

*Junior.* I must confess, so far as words can make the subject clear and plain, you have done it: so that what darkness may remain on my mind concerning the same, must arise wholly from the greatness and majesty of the subject itself. But, pray, Sir, have not real saints fellowship with the Father and the Spirit, in their accesses to the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious head, and only mediator of his church?



*Senior.* Most assuredly they have. We approach the Father in the Son, through the Spirit. Truly, says the Apostle, *Our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* And we read expressly, that *we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* Ephes. ii. 18. And the Apostle in his benediction, makes express mention of the communion of the Holy Ghost: *The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.* 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

*Junior.* How, or in what way, am I blessed with communion with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ?

*Senior.* You have immediate access in the person of Christ, and come in his name, person, righteousness, sacrifice, and intercession, before the throne, and you pray the Father to look upon you, and manifest himself to you in his Beloved; and there are seasons when it pleases him to fill your mind with such views and apprehensions of his love, as afford you a real heaven. This is communion with the Father on his part, and on yours also, as you are at such times filled with the high praises of his love.

*Junior.* I really have had this which you speak of: the Lord be praised for it. If I understand you, when at any time my mind is drawn out immediately to admire and praise the Father for his everlasting love to my person in Christ, and he is pleased to favour me with a sense of his love, this is to have distinct and personal communion with him. Is it not?

*Senior.* Yes. We can have communion with the Father no other way. We converse with Christ, and

with the Father in him. When we have fellowship with Christ, we have at the same time fellowship with the Father and the Spirit; yet there are seasons when we have particular fellowship with each of the Divine Three, and that agreeable to their covenant acts, and their interest in us, and relation to us.

*Junior.* Pray, Sir, wherein consists communion with the Holy Ghost?

*Senior.* The Holy Ghost dwells in us. He exalts Christs in our minds; he sheds a sense of God's love abroad in our hearts; he carries on all the blessed fellowship we have with the Father and the Son. There are seasons when he gives us to consider his own personal love to us. He leads us to love him, for what he hath taught us; for what he hath been to us; for what he hath wrought in us; for the views he hath given us of Christ; for the discoveries he hath made of the Father's love to our minds; for the real fellowship we have had with the Father and the Son, through his indwelling grace and influence. We love him for it: we worship him in prayer and praise. Thus he hath fellowship with us, and we have fellowship with him. He, *The Living God*, dwells in us. We are his temples. He consecrates our souls and bodies, and teaches us how to enjoy the blessedness of communion with him, and also with the Son and with the Father.

*Junior.* I see we must now part. The Lord be with your spirit. Amen.

## DIALOGUE VIII.

*On the Ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper: these are the subjects of this Discourse.*

*Junior* and *Senior* being admitted to a fresh interview with each other, and having expressed their mutual satisfaction in being so favoured, enter on their favourite conversation. *Junior* addresses *Senior*, thus: Sir, it seems to me, from what you last said, in our former discourse on Communion with Christ, that when the saints of the Most High are favoured with real fellowship with God and the Lamb, through the Spirit, it may then be said, *the Lord makes all his goodness pass before them, and proclaims his great, glorious, and fearful name, the Lord thy God*; as he gives them such evidence of his interest in them, and of their interest in him, as causes them to say, Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, are my God.

*Senior*. It is even so. The Lord conversed with Moses as a man with his friend; and it is so in mental and intuitive converses with Christ: he is pleased to open his heart to his beloved in intellectual communion; he reflects his glory on the mind; he creates such con-

ceptions of his salvation in the soul with whom he holds fellowship, as are next to what is actually enjoyed in glory.

*Junior.* You make communion with Christ to consist in an intellectual knowledge and apprehension of him. Do you not?

*Senior.* Most assuredly I do. All real spiritual worship is an act of the mind.

*Junior.* But there are outward ordinances in which we worship God with our bodies as well as with our souls. You cannot deny this.

*Senior.* No; nor do I desire so to do. The Apostle, exhorting saints to the practice of church worship in a congregational way, says, *I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* He also exhorts to a drawing near unto God, and entering into the holiest, even into heaven, whilst on earth in the body, in acts of worship, thus, *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God: Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.* Heb. x. 19, 20, 21, 22. Here is the body as well as the soul, engaged in the worship of God.

*Junior.* Then I conceive, in the external worship of God, the mind is not so swallowed up in divine con-

templations in a mental, intuitive manner, as it may be in secret and retired worship.

*Senior.* It cannot be; because, when and whilst we are worshipping the Three in Jehovah in outward ordinances, such as prayer, singing, preaching, hearing, our bodies being exercised as well as our minds, and our minds being exercised by the outward ordinances, there is not that most immediate fellowship with Christ, as in the simple exercises of our minds when alone in private.

*Junior.* Yet many persons are more taken with public ordinances, and think they profit most by them. I confess I have often found more free and simple access to the throne when in private; yet I apprehend the Lord God should be acknowledged by the observance and waiting on him in every part of his own instituted worship.

*Senior.* It is our bounden duty and service so to do. Every ordinance, as appointed by the Lord, is for the improvement of our renewed minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to increase our communion with him; and his blessing in the use of them, is all-sufficient for us: he will render them effectual to answer his own grand end and design.

*Junior.* What am I to think concerning Baptism and the Lord's Supper?

*Senior.* That they are positive institutions of worship; as such, they are immutable, and will be continued in the church of Christ until he descends from heaven to put an end to time, and swallow it up in eternity,

*Junior.* How is Christ worshipped in these institutions by his church?

*Senior.* In baptism, a solemn act of worship is performed in the name of each of the persons in the Godhead: this is followed with the sacred memorial of the sorrows, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. In the observance of the Lord's Supper, in which a solemn memorial of the sufferings, bloody sweat, passion, and death of our Lord Jesus Christ is recorded, he is worshipped in our shewing forth his death according to his command, *Do this in remembrance of me.*

*Junior.* Will you give me an account of the ordinance of Baptism, with its spiritual nature, end, and design, agreeable with what is recorded of the same in the written word?

*Senior.* I most readily will. Baptism is an ordinance of Christ, it was appointed by him after his resurrection from the dead. It was in his resurrection state, he gave out the following royal command to his apostles, saying, *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* Matt. xxviii. 19. To baptize is to dip, or plunge, or cover, the whole body in water, and this *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* It is the whole essence of the ordinance, to plunge the whole body in water. It is not the mode of baptism, but it is baptism itself. It is so clear in scripture, that it seems astonishing all believers in Christ do not see this. The body of our Lord Jesus Christ was under water when he was baptized, or it could never have been recorded, *And when*

*Jesus was baptized, he went up straightway out of the water.* If he had not been in the water, he could not have come out of it. Mark says, *Jesus was baptized of John in Jordan:* that is, John plunged Christ in the river Jordon. Plunging is, as hath been said, baptizing. At our Lord's coming up from having been baptized, the heaven was opened, the Spirit descended, and a voice from heaven was heard, saying, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Matt. iii. 16, 17. In the Acts of the Apostles, we read of three thousand baptized in one day. Chap. ii. 41. In the 8th chapter of the same book, we read, that upon Philip's preaching at Samaria, on the hearers believing, they were baptized, both men and women. The Lord the Spirit sent Philip to baptize the lord high treasurer of the queen of Ethiopia; it is recorded in the same chapter which hath been mentioned. In the 9th chapter, we have Saul of Tarsus baptized by Ananias, at the express command of Christ. In the 10th chapter, we have Cornelius, and those with him, on whom the Holy Spirit had fallen, commanded by Peter to be baptized in water, in the name of the Lord. In chapter 16th, we have Lydia and her household baptized; and the jailor at Philippi and his household, baptized at midnight.

*Junior.* Do you find any particular expressions in scripture to strengthen you, as it respects dipping the whole body in water?

*Senior.* Yes, Sir, very many. It is expressly said, *John was baptizing in Jordan:* that he *baptized in the river Jordan;* that he *was baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water, and they came*

*and were baptized. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.* I cannot conceive any thing can be more clear, that the baptizer and baptized were both in the water, or they could not come up out of it. Those scriptural expressions concerning the ordinance of baptism, respecting our being buried with Christ, baptized into his death, baptized into Christ, buried with him in baptism—whilst they most clearly confirm this, that the whole body was covered or buried in water when the person was baptized; yet I conceive they principally are designed to express the end and design of the ordinance itself.

*Junior.* Pray, Sir, give me an account of the nature, use, end, and design of this most holy institution.

*Senior.* It is a solemn commemoration of Christ. The water is expressive of trouble and sorrow. Christ our Lord was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs. He was overwhelmed with all the sorrows due to imputed sin. He was implunged in the whole storm of divine wrath. He was surrounded with the whole curse due to the sins of the elect. He says, *All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy fierce wrath goeth over me.* Now, in this ordinance, the sorrows of Christ are recorded. The death and burial of Christ are recognised, and his resurrection. The baptizer and baptized go both of them into the water. The person who is to be baptized, is put



under water; he is buried in it; he emerges out of it; which are a solemn and sacred memorial of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. The Apostle says, *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. We have here more of Christ than at his table. Here are the sorrows, the death, the burial, the resurrection of our Lord. The language of it is, *Come, see the place where the Lord lay.*

*Junior.* I must acknowledge, I see a majesty, glory, solemnity, and importance in this ordinance. Pray, were there any types or figures of it?

*Senior.* Yes; two: Noah's salvation in the ark from the deluge of waters, or, if you will, the ark, in which he was saved, was the first type given of this ordinance: and the second, was the passage of the Israelites through the Red Sea. Of the former, Peter says, *The long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* 1 Peter, iii. 20, 21. Of the latter, Paul says, *Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under*

*the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.*  
1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

*Junior.* Be so good as to shew how these were symbols of baptism.

*Senior.* The ark was like a coffin. It was surrounded with water. Torrents of rain fell on it, so that it was overwhelmed and covered therewith: Noah and his family in it, were thus baptized. The Israelites, with Moses at their head, passed through the divided waves; the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand and on their left; the cloud covered them: so that they were buried. Thus they were baptized. In both instances a solemn symbol of baptism was expressed, which is the ordinance of humiliation.

*Junior.* Will you kindly sum up the substance of what you have delivered concerning baptism.

*Senior.* I have spoken of it as an ordinance of Christ. It consists in putting the whole body under water: this is done in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. It is a solemn commemoration of the overwhelming sorrows, death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. Its use, end, and design are to keep him up in remembrance amongst his churches. It is to express how all his members are so implanted into him, as to partake from him all the blessings and benefits of his life, death, burial, and resurrection. As he lived, suffered, died *once for sins, the just for the unjust, to bring us unto God*; so we are baptized once into him, and are never more capable to return to our former state. But being alive unto God by the resurrection of Jesus

Christ, we now live unto God. This, I conceive, is most accurately expressed in these words of the Apostle, *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ, being raised from the dead, dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.* Rom. vi. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. Baptism is a most solemn commemoration of Christ: of his sufferings, death, burial, and resurrection. Its use is to make a public confession of the same. Its end is to lead such as are believers in Jesus, to center in him alone; and to teach them that he was delivered for their offences, and was raised again for their justification. I call it the ordinance of humiliation, because Christ could not descend lower than the grave; and when we are baptized, it is really like descending into the grave. In the very act of being plunged, it is a kind of temporary suffocation; so that we are as it were dead. When we are emerged out of the water, it is as though new life were given us; there is, therefore, in the whole, a transacting over on us, when we are baptized, of what took place in our Lord, who actually died, rose again, and revived, as our Almighty Saviour and representative.

*Junior.* Will you be pleased to give me an account of the Lord's Supper?

*Senior.* I conceive you cannot be better informed, than by observing our Lord's institution as variously recorded by the evangelists and the apostle Paul. There is some little variation in them all, yet not material; so far from it, that what difference there is, only serves to cast the more full light upon the subject.

*Junior.* I have always been led to overrate these ordinances of our Lord, by conceiving some inherent virtue and efficacy in them. This, I perceive, must be altogether wrong. According to your statement of baptism, to which our Lord himself submitted, whilst there is a majesty and importance in it, yet it has, notwithstanding, a vast simplicity. Pray tell me how you understand that ordinance was administered by the apostles in their day. It is true this is breaking in upon the present subject. I should have mentioned it before, but it escaped me.

*Senior.* I apprehend nothing was said or done, but the baptizer, and the person to be baptized, went down *into the water*, and the one pronouncing these words, *I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, and immediately dipped or plunged the other under water.

*Junior.* Do you suppose this was all that was necessary?

*Senior.* I do; for this was all which belonged to the ordinance. It was the ordinance itself; not that I conceive it unnecessary or unedifying, for us to preach and pray before the administration of it; yet it should ever be remembered it is no part of the ordinance.

*Junior.* Sir, be so good as to recite the various

accounts given by the evangelists and the apostle Paul, relative to the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

*Senior.* *And, as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it: For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28.—And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Mark, xiv. 22, 23, 24.—And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. Luke, xxii. 19, 20.—Paul says, For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat; this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. 1 Cor. xi. 23, 24, 25. In all these accounts we have the institution most clearly set before us. It*

is commanded to be observed by the churches of Christ until his coming again: it is in remembrance of our Lord's death: to commemorate the everlasting efficacy of Christ's one offering of himself, by which he hath perfected for ever the putting away of sin, and the bringing in an everlasting righteousness, which reflects glory on the throne of God, and light and majesty on all the redeemed within the veil.

*Junior.* What is all that is necessary to be done at the Lord's Table, as it respects the institution simply and alone?

*Senior.* Bread and wine being placed on the table, the words of Christ, when he appointed it, are to be read; then the bread is to be set apart; a thanksgiving is to be offered; the bread is to be broken; and then to be distributed; each communicant is to take a piece and eat it—this is to shew forth the death of Christ. Then the cup of wine is to be taken, and set apart to be the cup of the Lord; the name of the Lord is to be called over it; then it is to be distributed, and given into the hand of each communicant, who, having drank of the same, have thereby been engaged in remembering the death of Christ: and this is all contained in the institution, which may be fully confirmed by these words of the Apostle, *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

*Junior.* You seem to make the Lord's Supper consist in very great simplicity. I have been led frequently to conceive some ideal holiness in the ordinance itself, abstracted from its use, nature, end, and

design. I plainly perceive I have had some mistaken views herein.

*Senior.* Most undoubtedly, as an ordinance of Christ, it is holy in relation to him who hath appointed it; yet it is not more so than preaching, hearing, praying, praising, or blessing God. It is a peculiar ordinance, it being wholly and altogether designed, to point out the manner of Christ's sufferings and death. It differs from the former ordinance: water is the outward element there; bread and wine are the elements here—there, the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are recorded; here, the sorrows, crucifixion, and death of Christ are declared and set forth. The former is to be attended unto once for all; here is to be a reiteration of this frequently, *Do this, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

*Junior.* I have always been led to look on it as a very devotional act. I plainly discover I never yet had clear views how the Lord's death is set forth in it. I want you to be very explicit, and recite what those acts and actions are and how performed, by which the Lord's death is recorded.

*Senior.* The shewing forth the death of our Lord Jesus Christ, is openly done by the following acts and actions:—In taking the bread, in blessing the bread, in breaking the bread, in giving the bread, in receiving the bread, in eating the bread; in taking the cup, blessing the cup, giving the cup, in receiving the cup, in drinking the cup—the death of the Lord Jesus Christ is recorded and shewed forth.

*Junior.* If it be so, I must confess I have always

overlooked it. It has frequently been a question in my mind, and which I could not clearly resolve, *How Christ's death was shown forth in the holy supper?* The uttermost of my conception hereof, went no further than the devotion I wished myself and others to be filled with at the solemnity. There is another expression I wish you to explain, What is meant by *discerning the Lord's body?*

*Senior.* The ordinance itself is a shewing forth the Lord's death. The bread and wine are expressly called *the bread of the Lord, and the cup of the Lord.* In eating and drinking the same, we are said to be partakers of the Lord's table; and the Apostle asks this question, *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? 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.* He gives also the title to this ordinance, *The Lord's Supper,* it being ordained by him: then put all this together, and I conclude, *discerning the Lord's body,* must consist in the exercising the spiritual mind on Christ in the use of this institution; attending closely to the end, use, and design of the same; considering the bread and wine in this ordinance, as blessed and broken, to be emblems, symbols, and memorials, of the broken body and shed blood of the Lord, and eating and drinking the same in remembrance of his complete obedience unto death, even the death of the cross: I conclude this is properly *to shew forth Christ's death, to eat the bread of the Lord, to drink the cup of the Lord, to discern the Lord's body;* this none can do, but such as are real and



spiritual believers in our most precious Lord Jesus. I refer you to the 10th and 11th chapters of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, without any further quotations. The design of the Lord's Supper in every part, act, and throughout the whole observance of it, is to bring Christ to remembrance; to record his wonderful death to be the only sacrifice for sin; to declare our dependance on it alone for our everlasting purification, and discharge from all sin before the Lord; to bless the eternal Three for their inestimable love manifested therein. Thus I have given you the best account I can, concerning what it is *to discern the Lord's body*. Are you satisfied concerning it?

*Junior.* You say, to discern the Lord's body in the observance of the Holy Supper, and worshipping Christ therein, is to have the mind spiritually exercised on Christ, as becoming incarnate, and substituting his whole person in our room and stead, and bearing our sins in his own body, and making an end of them, by the offering of himself as God-Man, in the flames of everlasting love. Agreeable to what the Apostle says, *Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour.* Ephes. v. 2. Is not this your meaning, and the substance of what you have delivered unto me on this very important subject?

*Senior.* It is; and as you have the true idea of what I have spoken, I will withdraw, as thereby you will have an opportunity to dwell on the same by deep meditation. Farewell.

## DIALOGUE IX.

*This Discourse is on Church Fellowship.*

THE former conversation having made way for deep reflection on the mind of *Junior*, he longs for the season to return, when he shall again be favoured with another intercourse with his friend, which, taking place, he addresses *Senior* thus:—My good Sir, I have been considering and reconsidering what you delivered in our last conversation with each other, on the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. I have certainly received much real information into the nature, use, end, and design of them. You have cast such light on these, as hath been very relieving to my mind. I could now wish you would give me some little account of a Church of Christ, and discourse with me on Church Fellowship. Of the one first, and of the other next.

*Senior.* You seem willing to keep me employed. I am not unwilling to communicate, out of my little stock, any thing you may require of me, so far as I am able.

*Junior.* You have been, and are, very kind. I would ask you concerning what a Church of Christ is, as considered as his own institution; and where we are

to look for the first gospel church of Christ after our Lord's ascension.

*Senior.* I will give you an account first of the institution of a gospel church. We must look for it after our Lord's ascension: and, I conceive, we find it for the first time, in the 1st chapter of the Acts of the Apostles; where, after the account given of our Lord's ascension, we read thus—*Then returned they unto Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is from Jerusalem a sabbath day's journey. And when they were come in, they went up into an upper room, where abode both Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew, Phillip, and Thomas, Bartholomew, and Matthew, James the son of Alpheus, and Simon Zelotes, and Judas the brother of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.* These gave themselves up first to the Lord, and then secondly to each other, by the will of God. Their number were about one hundred and twenty. The foundation of their church state, with all its ordinances, together with an account of all the officers in it, and the matter of it, with the whole form and order of the same, I consider as given to these persons by Christ himself, in those conversations he held with them in his resurrection state. The evangelist Matthew tells us our Lord commanded his disciples to *Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things (says he) whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.* Mark says

our Lord said, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Luke tells us our Lord said unto them, *These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures, And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.* And the evangelist begins his book concerning the Acts of the Apostles, thus: *The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, Until the day in which he was taken up, after that he through the Holy Ghost, had given commandments unto the apostles whom he had chosen. To whom also he shewed himself alive after his passion by many infallible proofs, being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God.* From these scriptures, it appears our Lord settled the whole order of his church—that the apostles, and holy men and women, who assembled together, having his word for their directory, formed themselves immediately into a church, and were the first instituted church of Christ: from them are true

churches descended. This church entered not on the observance of any other ordinances but prayer and supplication, and choosing one to fill up the number of twelve apostles, which being done, they all waited for the coming of the Holy Ghost, who descended on them; after which they had and enjoyed all the ordinances which belonged to them as a church.

*Junior.* What are they?

*Senior.* Baptism, the Lord's Supper, preaching, prayer, church fellowship. We read, *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* Acts, ii. 41, 42.

*Junior.* What am I to understand of any particular organized church of Christ?

*Senior.* That it is the body of Christ. The whole universal catholic church of Christ in and throughout the whole world, is the body of Christ. This is declared by the Apostle, who says, *God hath put all things under Christ's feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* Ephes. i. 22, 23.

*Junior.* Do we read of any distinct churches at Jerusalem after the first forming the church there?

*Senior.* No, we do not; but we read of distinct churches in Judea and Samaria. It is expressly said, *Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea, and Galilee, and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.* Acts, ix. 31.

*Junior.* What title is proper to an individual church, and such as is really scriptural?

*Senior.* *The church, churches of saints, an holy temple, the body of Christ.* Paul says to the saints at Corinth, *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ: i. e. the church.* Again, in the same chapter, *Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular.* 1 Cor. xii. 12. 27. It is styled *an holy temple, an habitation of God. In Christ all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord. In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.* It is styled *the house of God, the church of the living God.* 1 Tim. iii. 15.

*Junior.* I confess I should like to have further light into this subject. Pray how were the apostolic epistles entitled? I understand they were addressed to congregational churches.

*Senior.* They are addressed to saints: *To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints.* Rom. i. 7. Thus to the Corinthians, *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints.* 1 Cor. i. 2. *To the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia.* 2 Cor. i. 1. The epistle to the Ephesians is directed thus, *To the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus.* Chap. i. 1. So to the church at Philippi, *To all the saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi.* So the epistle to the Colossians, *To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ, which are at Colosse.*

Chap. i. 2. The epistle to the Thessalonians is thus addressed, *Unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Epistle, Chap. i. 1. The second epistle is just like it, *Unto the church of the Thessalonians, in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.* Chap. i. 1.

*Junior.* Then the matter out of which the churches of God and Christ are formed, are saints, who unite together in distinct bodies, according to the command of Christ, and his gospel order. These have their proper officers, which, I apprehend, are pastors and deacons, and all the ordinances of Christ dispensed amongst them. Is it not so?

*Senior.* Yes; it is even so: and these as variously subdivided into separate bodies, are so many distinct churches of Christ; each of them having their own proper order and officers, appointed for them by Jesus Christ. Each church is the seat of worship. All ordinances are administered in the name of Christ unto them; and whilst they walk in Christ, with Christ, and according to his rule, peace is on them, and on the Israel of God. I think I have given you a general idea on these subjects, from whence you may form some conception of them. As to entering particularly, and to discuss the whole minutely, concerning the matter, form, order, government of a true gospel church of Christ; and to treat of the laws, ordinances, officers, rules, and commands given by Christ, the king of saints; with their use, end, and design, would not suit our present conversation; therefore, I would wish you to consider what you first proposed at the opening of the present. Was it not to give you an account

of a church of christ, and then discourse concerning church fellowship?

*Junior.* It was. I think you have answered my request in this first particular; and, on looking over what you have related concerning the first gospel church at Jerusalem, I conceive it must be saints who only can be fit matter to constitute a particular church of Christ; that they must be first united in the truths of the everlasting gospel, before they can be united in the order of the gospel; that they ought to see eye to eye, concerning the ordinances of it, that they may worship the Lord with one consent in their observation of these; that they should be united in heart and affection to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to each other in him.

*Senior.* All you have spoken is most certainly what should be the case. It is of great consequence to an individual church of Christ, to be favoured with spiritual and judicious members, with such as shine like lights in the world, holding forth the word of life. It is a real blessing to be favoured with a fit and judicious pastor, who preaches Christ, and rightly divides the word; and with deacons, men agreeable to the description given of them, and qualified for the discharge of their office, so as to suit with what the apostle says to Timothy, *Such as are grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.* 1 Epistle, iii. 8, 9.

*Junior.* My good Sir, I do request you would proceed to that part of the subject, Church Fellowship.

*Senior.* You have heard that it is saints and faithful brethren in Christ, who are members of churches;



at least you have had it recited to you, that the churches of God and Christ at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, and Thessalonica, were thus addressed: and most assuredly, if such were only fit to be the body of Christ then; most certainly such only can be fit to be the body of Christ now. I am speaking of the church which is Christ's body. On this very same subject, I say church fellowship is a fellowship of saints. The Apostle says to the members of the church at Corinth, *God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.* 1 Epistle, i. 9. Church fellowship is a communion of saints; hence in the creed, commonly called the Apostles Creed, (I now refer to the Church of England Common Prayer Book,) it is therein said, *I believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints:* now this which is made a matter of faith in the creed, is what we have in conversation before us. God's called ones are saints; they have fellowship one with another; it is concerning spiritual things; they are united to one and the same eternal, life-giving, and life-maintaining head; they are partakers of him and his great salvation; they have all one and the same spirit: so says the Apostle, *For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free: and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.* 1 Cor. xii. 13.

*Junior.* But as it is a fellowship of saints, called and knit together by the order and bonds of the gospel, I want to know what this fellowship consists in. I know the Apostle says to the members of the Corinthian

church, *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.* 1 Cor. i. 10. No church can be at peace amongst themselves, and enjoy the peace of God ruling in their hearts; nor can any church state be secure, where there is not an unity in judgment concerning *the truth as it is in Jesus*; yet I conceive there must be some peculiar way in which this fellowship is kept up, and by which it is expressed. I know it is said, *And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul.* Acts, iv. 32. What should hinder it from being the same now?

*Senior.* The same knowledge of Christ, and the same faith exercised on him, must produce the same effects then as now, and now as then; but such as are members of what we style churches, are swerved from the apostolic faith, as they are also from the old apostolic practice. We receive persons as members, into the churches of Christ now, on a declaration of a work of grace on their souls; whereas, they were admitted into the ancient churches of Christ, upon a profession of their faith on Christ, and every article of faith connected with him and his salvation. If we are born of God, the work of God upon us must be equal and alike the doctrine of faith professed by us; yet in the way persons are admitted in our day into the real churches of Christ, a devout and sincere Arminian may as easily become one with us, as the soundest predestinarian in the world.

*Junior.* How so? I understand all who call them-

selves Christians, of the Baptist, the Presbyterian, and Independent, or, as you otherwise call them, the congregational churches, and which, I think, they should be always called, will admit none into membership with them, nor sit with them at the table of the Lord, but such as declare, or have declared, a work of God wrought on their souls. I think the term which they all express it by is, *a work of grace wrought on their souls*.

*Senior.* What you say is true; yet as there is an obscurity in the phrase, *a work of grace wrought in or upon their souls*; so a profession of Christ and the truths contained in his blessed, glorious, and everlasting gospel, is too much neglected. As to the expression, *a work of grace wrought on my soul*, does it not take off from faith in Christ entirely? Does it not lead the mind to conceive thus, The Lord hath wrought so and so on my heart, I am a changed person, I shall never want any thing now but to look to myself, to be very careful and watchful. I ask you, my friend, if it does not tend to think very little of Christ, and to substitute this work of grace inherent in me, in the room and stead of Christ and his salvation? If it does, must it not be substituting the work of grace, in the room and stead of Christ, his righteousness and grace? and, if so, is there not cause for complaint?

*Junior.* I must confess, your conversation is such, as constrains me to say, I am very greatly indebted to you for conveying light and instruction to my mind. What you have just delivered, would never have been thought of by me, concerning the phrase, *a work of grace in and upon the soul*. As you have opened it, I

freely acknowledge I have thought it a very good and most important expression. In your explanation of it, I see it altogether wrong. It takes off from Christ: I will not deny it, for sure I am, I have been more concerned about this work of grace within me, than about Christ who hath died for me. I have been always setting up my rest and confidence therein. But you will acknowledge there are many young persons who are admitted into the open visible church of Christ; do not you therefore think such an expression suits them, and is more and far better suited for them, than it would be to require a confession of their faith?

*Senior.* I confess I do not. When the eunuch wanted to be baptized, the question whether he believed in Christ or not, is to be answered. *See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayst. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* When the jailor said, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* the reply was, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* When our Lord Jesus Christ himself met with the man who was born blind, and whose eyes he had opened, he put this question to him, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* Here is no enquiry concerning any thing wrought internally within him. No. He is asked concerning an act of his mind: did he, or did he not, *believe on the Son of God?* He knew not whether he did or did not; therefore he puts this question, saying, *Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?* Our Lord rejoined, *Thou hast both seen him, and it is he*

*that talketh with thee. And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him. John, ix. 35, 36, 37, 38.*

*Junior.* I have observed throughout all your conversation with me, that you speak a good deal concerning Christ the object of faith, and the exercise of the mind on him. You do, as I understand, state it as utterly impossible, without a revelation of Christ be made to the mind, that there should be any outgoings of the heart after him; therefore you conceive a real spiritual apprehension of Christ to be necessary, ere a person be admitted a member into the visible church of Christ; as without it they can have no actual fellowship with him.

*Senior.* These are precisely my thoughts of the subject.

*Junior.* I cannot doubt but you are right in your judgment herein; but let me, if you please, know wherein church fellowship consists.

*Senior.* It consists in loving each other in Christ, for Christ's sake, and as he hath loved us. This is expressed in receiving each other, as Christ also hath received us, to the glory of God. It is evidenced in bearing each others burthens, in feeling for, and sympathising one with the other. It consists in a mutual communication to each other, of what the Lord hath done for our souls; in a communication of the gracious experiences he hath given us from time to time of his love to us; in bearing and forbearing with each other.

*Junior.* All this seems very consistent with a church state. I remember the Apostle says, *Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it: or one*

*member be honoured, all the members rejoice in it.*  
**1 Cor. xii. 26.**

*Senior.* Church fellowship consists very much in mutual prayers and praises offered up for each other, and in mutual meetings and converses in church assemblies. In a very particular manner, church fellowship consists in the communion of saints, who belong to the same particular church or body of Christ, when they come together to celebrate the Lord's Supper; and to hold fellowship with each other, and Christ their head, by sitting at the same table together with him. The Apostle hath very special and particular reference to this most blessed fellowship of saints congregated into one body, and Christ as their one most complete saviour, when he says, *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? 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 Cor. x. 16, 17.** The Lord's Supper is a family feast; to which all the members of the church are expected. They should all be present at it, because it is a church ordinance; and one grand design of it is, to unite and cement each of the members more closely to each other in the bowels of Christ and bonds of the gospel. This is very beautifully expressed in these words, *For we, being many, are one bread, and one body: for we are all members of that one bread.* Here we, who were sometime afar off, being brought nigh by the blood of Christ, sit down together, being made kings and priests unto God, to feed on the commemorative emblems, symbols, and

memorials of the one complete sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which *he hath reconciled all things unto himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven.* The Apostle shews how our Lord reconciled all his people in himself, by his most precious blood. In every age and period, elect saints have had their bickerings, and, if I may so say, their animosities one with another. For some ages the Jews were against the Gentiles, and the Gentiles against the Jews. The Apostle on this subject, speaking of Christ, says, *For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.* Ephes. ii. 14, 15, 16, 17, 18.

*Junior.* I am greatly pleased with the information you have kindly given me concerning what church fellowship consists in. Surely a gospel church, walking in the faith and order of Christ, as given in the sacred word, must be a most noble sight; and to belong to such an one, must be to be blessed indeed.

*Senior.* It is so; yet at present, the churches of Christ are in a kind of deranged state. Our Lord threatens the whole of them, saying, *Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before*

*God.* Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard; and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

Rev. iii. 2, 3.

*Junior.* I am very greatly obliged. I know I have detained you beyond your seasonable time for retirement; I therefore bid you, Farewell.

*Senior.* May the Lord bless you, by giving you a sound judgment in all things. Peace, mercy, and truth, be with you. Amen.



## DIALOGUE X.

*A Discourse on Death: what it is, and what it prepares for, are enquired into.*

*Junior.* Sir, I am exceeding glad to meet you once more in the body. You are drawing on towards the close of life; as such, I conceive you are well suited to converse with, about death, heaven, glory, eternal life, and a blessed immortality. I should therefore be much pleased, if agreeable, to enter on these subjects, having conceived in my own mind, you are the only person in the circle of my acquaintance, I can converse with on such subjects to my real and spiritual advantage.

*Senior.* I believe, according to what you said in our first conversation, such subjects as you have just hinted, were to be closing ones in the interviews which were to be improved by us to mutual advantage; therefore, state them in your own order, and as you would like to have them brought forward.

*Junior.* I should like you to discourse on Death: what it is; also what it prepares for. They are doubtless grave subjects; yet my conception is, your mind is so fully possessed with views of the glory which is to

be revealed in you, when you shall be called to be absent from the body, and present with the Lord, that I conclude your mind will by no means be discomposed, by elucidating such subjects as these.

*Senior.* I may most certainly say, I should be greatly ashamed, if death gave me any sort of concern. It is appointed unto men once to die. I have for many a year felt the sentence of death in myself; and have been accordingly looking out for it, and expecting it. I have many a time really wished for it, as it will put a stop to all sin within me. This will be such a great deliverance, as I can at present have no adequate ideas of.

*Junior.* Then, Sir, your discourse on the proposed subject, will administer support to your own mind, as well as convey light and instruction to mine. It is said, *He that watereth, shall be watered also himself.*

*Senior.* I am willing to contribute to the uttermost I am capable of. The increase of your knowledge in every spiritual subject, and with the increase of God, is what I most sincerely long to promote.

*Junior.* You are exceedingly kind. The subject of mortality I wish now to be treated of, so that I may have some true knowledge of, and insight into it.

*Senior.* I hope you do not look on this as a spiritual subject. I do not. It is a serious one. It may lead to great solemnity of mind. It may serve to raise many observations which may be of real importance, and most truly beneficial. As we proceed, an opportunity may open, to point out the only cordial for the mind, and the alone antidote against the fears of death. But

our mortality, or death, is a natural subject. I conceive the wise man glances on this when he says, *For that which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts; even one thing befalleth them: as the one dieth, so dieth the other; yea, they have all one breath; so that a man hath no pre-eminence above a beast: for all is vanity. All go unto one place; all are of the dust, and all turn to dust again.* Eccles. iii. 19, 20. This is a very humbling truth; yet it is not a spiritual truth, nor such an one as may be profitable for you and me to enter very fully into.

*Junior.* Sir, I am really startled at your saying death is not a spiritual subject.

*Senior.* It may be you are. Death is a solemn, awful subject; yet it hath nothing in it which is spiritual. A mind enlightened by the Spirit of God, cannot but be lifted up above and beyond it, so as to fear no evil from it, and not to shrink at its near approach; yet this alters not the nature of death, which is a natural evil, and falls on the body as such, it being the sentence of the Lord over all flesh, in consequence of the sin of the first man: of whom we read, *Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Rom. v. 12. Death came into our nature and world by sin. Now sin is not a spiritual act: it is an evil one. It hath produced every evil. This is one—death. The death of the body is a temporal evil. Whilst Christ can turn our death into life everlasting, by his making it to us who believe on him, the very passage into eternal glory; yet this does not alter the nature of death, nor make it a spiritual subject.

*Junior.* But, Sir, are not the minds of many saints very spiritual in their dying moments, so that their very last breath is richly perfumed with the love and salvation of the Lord Jesus, and they most truly blessed and happy even when heart and flesh fail?

*Senior.* Most assuredly it is even so: but the acts of the spiritual mind on Christ, do not make the act of death spiritual. I conceive natural death is one and the same in all. I think, in the very act of dying, what is felt in one, is alike in all. Some suffer more, some less, before death doth its office; but when it has completed its sentence, by disengaging the soul from the body, I conceive it is, for the act of it, the same in every one.

*Junior.* What is death? How would you describe it? Can you point out the process of it? You say it is a natural subject; yet you allow it to be a solemn and important one. We should never have died, should we, had it not been for sin? We enter by it into an unseen world, do we not? We fall by it into the hands of the Holy Lord God, do we not? Is not our state then settled for eternity to come? And will you, under all these considerations, say death is not a spiritual subject?

*Senior.* My good friend, let us understand each other rightly, it will be the means of removing all prejudice from the mind. Nothing can be more pleasing than a right understanding of each other's mind on every subject we converse about; and most especially this now before us, as you seem to boggle at this assertion, that death, or the dissolution of the body thereby, is not a spiritual, but a natural subject. You ask me,

do you not, what is death? I reply, it is a suspension of all animal, sensitive, and rational life from the body. The blood stagnates, the heart ceases all motion, the senses are closed, the rational soul leaves the body, the pulse ceases, and the man dies—this is death. Thus the body is dissolved, and it is fully proved to be in itself but a dust heap: it turns to corruption: it is reduced to its primitive dust, out of which it was originally formed. Thus the original statute of heaven is executed on it, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.* Gen. iii. 19. I cannot myself describe its process, but the Holy Ghost hath done it very expressly in the 12th chapter of the Ecclesiastes, where, having given a very full portrait of old age, he proceeds to speak of what takes place in the body at the article of death, *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God that gave it.* Verses, 6, 7.

*Junior.* I should much like to have this explained.

*Senior.* What is out of my power, you can have no right to expect from me: this is; but I will, if you please, endeavour to quote from an excellent man, what will, I conceive, cast great light on it.

*Junior.* Pray, Sir, do so; for though you say all this is but a natural subject, yet I really find it a very interesting one.

*Senior.* I say nothing against this: most assuredly it is so. The Holy Ghost, who is the creator of man, and formed the spirit within him, has given us a full account of the whole man in his first formation. He

also gives us the account of the conception of man, and his state in the womb: of what he is at his birth: of the anatomy of his body: of his life: how he lives; it is entirely by breathing: what death is: how man dies; and were we to attend to the revealed account of all this, we should have all that wisdom which is profitable to direct us in the care and economy of our bodies, so as to enjoy comfort in and from them, until we are called to lay them aside by death for a season, and to sleep quietly in the grave until the morn of a glorious resurrection.

*Junior.* How is it then, if, what you say is true, that we know so little of our bodies, and the diseases which befall them, and manage them so poorly?

*Senior.* Because we neglect the Creator for the creature: we all prefer human help to divine; hence all of us go to doctors and physicians, more than to Christ. The body is made up of the four elements: earth, air, fire, and water. It is inhabited by an immaterial spirit, which we call the soul; which, though, immortal, yet the body is not in which it dwells: that is kept up and sustained by the air, which is the grand vehicle of its life. We live so long as we breathe, and not one moment longer: so soon as we cease to respire, we die, and are turned unto dust. We are so constructed in our bodies, that our life depends moment after moment upon the will of God alone. When we have fetched one breath, we are not sure we shall ever fetch another.

*Junior.* But was not Adam's body before the fall immortal?

*Senior.* Adam would have been what he was by

creation, had he not sinned: yet his body was not immortal by creation. The Lord God might have endowed it with immortality if he had pleased, but he did not. His body was a mortal one, and whilst he sinned not, he felt no decay; yet he would have needed that to recruit it, which would have kept it in perpetual vigour. To this very end the Lord God created and made to grow out of the garden, *the tree of life*. This would have been the means, had not man fallen, of continuing his body in the most perfect state, so that he would have enjoyed the blessedness of immortality in his body, and never have known death in it: otherwise, the very elements of which the body is composed, needed a perpetual poise. *And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life: and man became a living soul.* Gen. ii. 7. Life was infused, and set agoing by the Creator himself, through the nose, respiration being principally through it; and on this action depends life or animal motion; as also the continuation of the immaterial soul in the body.

*Junior.* You have most certainly given me many views on these subjects which I had not before the least apprehension of.

*Senior.* Then I hope our mutual conversation will tend to each other's profit.

*Junior.* It most certainly does to my mind; but I want you to explain that passage concerning *the silver cord, its being loosed, the golden bowl, its being broken, the pitcher broken at the fountain, the wheel broken at the cistern*. I think you would endeavour to quote from another to assist me to a clearer idea.

*Senior.* If you will at your leisure read from the beginning of chapter 12th, to the end of verse 7th, you will have a most exact portrait of old age, and also of death. “The hoary head resembles an almond-tree, and the bald pate that tree when its flowers are dropped off; and the skeleton is like a grasshopper, *or ever the silver cord be loosed*, which fails in old age, and it is broken at death. It is the pith or marrow of the back-bone, which, descending from the brain, goes down to the lowest part of the back-bone, and produces the various tendons, nerves, and sinews of the body. This is round as a cord, and white as silver, and by it the motion of the body is effected. One asks the question, May not this silver cord be the union between soul and body? The golden bowl is the head: it is called the golden bowl, for the same reason the other was called the silver cord. The wheel is the great artery, which being joined to the left ventricle of the heart, sets the blood in motion, and keeps it in perpetual circulation. One explains the whole thus: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel be broken at the cistern. Here are three things said to fail after the silver cord: a golden bowl, or bason, a pitcher to receive a flowing liquor, to convey it into the house for the uses of it, and a wheel at the top of the well to draw it up. The heart is a bason or bowl, a double bason within; the *aorata* is a pitcher at the fountain, to catch the running stream in; and the lungs a wheel, that draws up the water out of the pit. The air, by its pressure, turns this wheel. The belly is the pit, which we render cistern. Out of the belly flows the water of



life, i. e. it runs by the arteries into the outer parts, but the wheel draws it up, that this pitcher, the arteries, may receive it; it must, therefore, return into the belly again, before the wheel can draw it up, as water circulates into the well, and supplies its spring, The spring that flows into the pitcher, is supplied by liquor drawn up out of the pit, by a wheel at the top of the pit; and when the silver cord fails in old age, the spring runs weak, and the wheel turns heavily, and little is drawn up, and that slowly." Thus the circulation becomes so languid, as to leave the body motionless, and life expires.

*Junior.* Sir, be pleased to say what death prepares for. I understand from what you say, the process of death on the body begins with the silver cord being loosed, with the golden bowl being broken, or a membrane about the scull being shrivelled, the pitcher being broken at the fountain, and the wheel being broken at the cistern; the blood is congealed, the pulse stops, and all the animality of the body expires. Now I want to ask, What does this prepare for?

*Senior.* For the grave, the house appointed for all living; what you could most certainly conceive without my replying.

*Junior.* I have been before led to understand from you, that death is but a natural subject, and you still continue the same idea. I should have conceived you would have made at least the issue of it a spiritual one, and said death fitted the soul of a believer for a glorious immortality.

*Senior.* If I had so said, I should have expressed myself wrong. Death sets the soul at liberty from the

body, but it by no means fits it for another world; it only affects the body, and turns it into a dust heap, whereby it is fitted for the grave. The body by death begins to corrupt: it is in the first stage of it. When laid in the grave, it is in the second state of corruption, and the office of the grave is to swallow up all the corruption of it. The soul is with God, who gave it. The preparation for its entrance into eternal glory, consists in the indwelling of the Lord the Spirit in it, in his work of regeneration, and his own operation on it. Death hath nothing to do with this subject. It finds a believer a saint, a child of God in Christ. It cannot touch his immortal part. Its sole commission from God himself, only concerns the body; to loosen its pins; to take down the frame; to destroy all the mechanism of it; to reduce it to a breathless corpse; and there it ends. The body is then fit only to be covered over with putrefaction. There is therefore no place fit for it but the grave, which having received it, there it is reduced to its primitive particles out of which it was composed, and from hence it is to be raised at the last day. Surely you are not at a loss to comprehend what I have delivered unto you concerning this, are you?

*Junior.* I freely acknowledge you have delivered yourself on the subject of death, and what it is, beyond what I conceived of it before. I also must confess, I see a great deal of excellency in what hath been said all I am surprised at is, that you say death and the grave are not spiritual subjects. I can assure you, that what has been stated in the course of the present discourse, hath brought a great solemnity upon my mind.

I want to know what you will think of this. Pray, is not this spirituality? or what else will you call it?

*Senior.* I have not said that death and the grave are not solemn subjects, neither do I say that a spiritual mind may not improve them, nor that the Lord's people may not profit by them; but it is as they are carried above and beyond these, up to Christ himself, in the views of *his* death, burial, and resurrection. It is not by thinking on death as death, that we are spiritual: we must have spiritual minds, or we cannot be fitted for spiritual subjects; and we must have spiritual subjects suited to our minds, or they cannot be exercised. Now it is the person of Christ, the love of Christ, the righteousness and sacrifice of Christ, and the everlasting love of the Father to us in him, that are truly suited to make us more spiritual and more heavenly. I do not look on a solemnity of spirit, to be spirituality; neither do I conceive very awful thoughts of death and dying, to be spiritual acts: I know they are not, by what hath passed in my own mind. When I look at death out of Christ, and consider what it is, I find I either tremble at it, or grow hardened, careless, and indifferent about it. When I look at death in Christ, as conquered, destroyed, and abolished by him, I find my mind very differently affected: I am not afraid of it; I see I have nothing to do with it; I go beyond it; I triumph over it: all which is the entire fruit of believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not by looking at death, at what it is, nor at what it prepares for, nor at the grave. No. Death and the grave are but natural and common subjects. The death of Christ, by which he hath destroyed death; the burial of Christ, by which he hath sanctified

the grave; the resurrection of Christ, by which he hath proved and proclaimed his conquest and triumph over death and the grave: are most divine, glorious, and sublime subjects; in the knowledge of which we shout victory in Christ over our own deaths, and our laying in the grave; as the Apostle says, *If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.* 1 Thess. iv. 14. Now I do not like too much solemnity of spirit; I do love real spirituality; I do love, and most earnestly covet, supernatural communion with the Three in Jehovah: but I do not love to be taken off this by a solemnity of spirit which makes me stand in fear of death and the grave.

*Junior.* I find what you say requires deep thinking. I conceive without it, I may be led to stumble where there is no cause for it. I always thought there could be no looking off death to Christ, as I do with respect to sin. You will give me leave to say, from what you have just delivered, I consider the substance of it thus: you look off sin just as if there was none in you, and look wholly to Christ as having died for you; and you look off death as though it was not in you, and look wholly to Christ's victories over death and the grave, as your resurrection and life. Is it not so? And do I not conceive rightly in thus expressing it?

*Senior.* You do. I am not without sin, nor without the perceptions and feelings of it; nor shall I be, so long as I am in the body. Yet this does not take off my eye of faith from Christ. It is kept fixed on him, because I know it would be unsafe to look one single moment at myself or sin. I have found in past

experience, when not so fully acquainted with Christ as now, that thinking on sin, death, the grave, and damnation, never weakened one single corruption in my fallen nature. I find, looking at Christ, the only antidote against every evil. So, with respect to death, I have found, looking at it, I am startled—I am alarmed—I want to avoid it—I shrink and tremble at it. All this is void of grace and spirituality. Not that I mean by this that there are none of the Lord's people have these views and fears; yet these views and fears spring not from faith, but from unbelief. Now, the Lord the Spirit hath taught me to look away from death, as truly as he hath taught me to look off and away from sin, wholly and alone to Christ. I feel the sentence of death in me. It works and operates upon me. There is no one day in which I do not expect it. If it should be ever so long postponed, yet it cannot but do its office. I give myself no concern about it. I know I shall die with the whole body of sin inherent in my fallen nature. I know death only can dissolve my mortal frame. I look to Christ as my perpetual friend. I commit myself wholly to him: to be with me in the article of death; to receive my soul to his everlasting glory. I look off death, as if it were not in me; and expect, in a dying moment, to have no more to do with it, than if it were not. I do not expect my animal frame to feel it; but give myself no trouble about it. I know it will have to do with me, but I will not have to do with it. I do not expect to find that in it, which I have found in sin. If, therefore, Christ is a complete Saviour from the one, he will be a complete deliverer from the other. These thoughts do my mind more good, than

thoughts of death and the grave. I therefore aim to live on Christ, and in views of my conquest of death and the grave in him, just as if I were in heaven. I say I aim at this, because, let the outgoings of the mind be what they may, it is but an effort. The Apostle says of himself, *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* Philip. iii. 13, 14. I cannot more freely open my mind, nor explain myself on this head more fully.

*Junior.* I confess myself very greatly indebted for your conversation on the subjects before us. I apprehend, in a measure, what you have delivered. Having been always led to consider death and dying a very serious, solemn subject, I now plainly perceive I have been led off Christ thereby. I looked on death as a spiritual matter, and thought the more I really contemplated it, so much the more spiritual I should become; when you therefore said there was nothing in death spiritual, it hit the nail on the head, I knew not what to think of the assertion. I have, on your opening the subjects, some views which I never had before, and hope to profit by them. The profit of mind I might reap from conversing with you, was my great motive in seeking to have these particular intercourses we have enjoyed one with the other.

*Senior.* If such ends be answered, as for us to be edified, and the Lord glorified, then all is well. Whilst I would by no means take state to myself, God forbid,

yet I would say, most freely would I impart to you all I know, which might increase your knowledge and spirituality. I am no loser thereby; as I have found many a time, in conversations like those we have together, the mind is quickened and enlarged by some questions put: they serve to set the thoughts on fresh exercise; and it is hereby we often get real good from the subjects discussed.

*Junior.* I have most certainly found the truth of this. May the Lord give me to look off death as you have spoken; then I clearly see I should walk comfortably. I really think one cannot live as becomes the gospel without it.

*Senior.* Indeed, this is true. I do not know, in the sense we are now speaking, that there is any person fit to live or die, but such as see themselves saved in the Lord with an everlasting salvation, and enjoy the blessedness of the same in their own souls, by faith in the Lord Jesus. And such are fit to live and safe to die, whose minds are clothed with the knowledge of Christ; whose hearts are fixed on him as their treasure, portion, and everlasting inheritance; who are living by the faith of the Son of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus-Christ unto eternal life: such can have no fears of death. These truths realized in their minds from the word and by the Spirit, must lift off their hearts from sin and death, so as for them to live down the guilt of the one, and the fears of the other, by living continually in the belief of the truths of the everlasting gospel of the blessed God. But, I hope enough has been laid before you for

the present. I feel it seasonable for me to retire. May the Lord give you understanding in all things and bless you, by shedding the Holy Ghost richly upon you, and bestowing his own divine unction, which teacheth all things, and leadeth into all truth. Amen. The Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.

*Junior.* Thank you, Sir. May the love of God be shed abroad in your heart. Amen.



## DIALOGUE XI.

*A Discourse on an Entrance into the Invisible State, and the same opened and explained, so far as the written Word of God gives us warrant for.*

*Junior.* Mr. *Senior*, since it hath pleased the Lord to admit us to see each other once more in the flesh, I cannot but express my joy, whilst I also add, that your last conversation has been of real advantage to me. I think I conceive more properly concerning death, than ever I did before. I consider now with you, that it is altogether a subject which may well be entitled a natural one, seeing it is the sentence of the Lord over all flesh. I also, from attending closely to what I consider the progress of death on the human frame, find myself very greatly relieved from the natural fears concerning dissolution. I now speak after you; for, though I could not at first understand your meaning, when you said death was not a spiritual subject, I now do: so, when I say, I am relieved by your discourse from the natural fears of dissolution, I am not speaking spiritually: I now speak as a man. Will you be so good, in as brief a manner as possible, to repeat the substance of what you have delivered concerning the progress of death.

*Senior.* I suppose you mean the explanation of these words, *Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.*

*Junior.* Yes, Sir, I do. I must acknowledge you have done it in the last conversation, but I wish you just to recapitulate the same.

*Senior.* The silver cord is the pith or marrow of the back-bone, which is round as a cord, and white as silver. The head is the golden bowl, it is the vessel in which the brain and animal spirits are contained. The fountain is the heart. The *aorata* is a pitcher to catch the running stream in. The lungs are the wheel. Now, before the union of body and soul is untied, the pith of the back and nerves give way; the vessel in which the animal spirits are contained, is rendered unfit for use; the nerves and arteries which conveyed the blood from the right to the left ventricle of the heart, can perform this office no more; the pulse ceases; all the animality of the body is entirely exterminated therewith: it becomes a breathless corpse—this is death, and its process on the body, ere it hath completed its office, which, when fully done, the soul departs, and no longer remains in it.

*Junior.* Can it be ascertained the moment when the soul leaves the body?

*Senior.* I think not. All that can be ascertained concerning death, only concerns the body, which, as it is kept alive wholly by respiration, so it entirely sinks

when the act of respiration ceases, *The silver cord being loosed, the golden bowl being broken, the pitcher being broken at the fountain, the wheel being broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.* Thus the body is deprived of all its senses, life, and motion, and fit only for the grave, where it is to be consigned, and remain under the power and dominion of death until the second coming of the *Great God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ, Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.* Philip. iii. 21. This is all I can say of the subject: I hope it may give you satisfaction. I would refer you to our last conversation: it may be, by putting both together, you will reap all the satisfaction on this point you at present wish for.

*Junior.* I conceive, from the whole you have said, that death, in its own nature is, to saint and sinner, one and the same. I know, to die in Christ, is life everlasting; to die out of Christ, must be eternal damnation. Can you kindly now enter on this, as the subject of our present conversation; what may be conceived concerning the soul's entrance into the invisible state?

*Senior.* You would not have me to be wise above that which is written, surely?

*Junior.* No, I would not; as this would answer no good end. I know you think on some subjects very deeply and peculiarly; I should therefore like you to express yourself concerning the soul: its departure

from the body; its entrance into the invisible state; so far as the written word of God gives light into it and warrant for.

*Senior.* We cannot expressly conceive of the soul. We say it is the mind which conceives thought. I suppose we may understand *soul*, *mind*, and *thought* are all one. It is an incorporeal existence in our bodies. Its seat is considered to be the *brain* and *heart*. All our conceptions are formed in the *brain*, and our life seems to reside in the *heart*, which is the last part in the body that dies. I apprehend the *brain* to be the seat of residence in which the soul or mind is seated: that it is diffused throughout every part of the body, and animates it. I conceive we are to distinguish between the soul and its faculties and affections. The essence of the soul is spirit. It is wholly void of matter; yet it is implunged in a body of matter. Its faculties are, understanding and will. Its affections are love, delight, memory. The soul is one and the same in all. It cannot die. By death it is driven out of the body, so that it can no longer reside in it; yet the death of the body can by no means make any alteration in the soul. That it is distinct from the body is evident, by what is recorded concerning our Lord Jesus Christ at his death. It is said, *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* Matt. xxvii. 50. Also, from what our Lord said to the thief, *Verily, I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* Luke, xxiii. 43. From what the Apostle says concerning his rapture into heaven, that he knew not whether he was in the body or out of the body, is a full proof that he needed

not his body then and there. He also says he had *a desire to depart* (that is, to leave his body by death) *and to be with Christ.*

*Junior.* What you say is full proof indeed, that the soul exists when the body drops: that its faculties and affections exist in it in the separate state. I think, from what you have expressed, the soul is the mind, and the mind is the soul; that it wholly and altogether consists in thought; that its will, understanding, memory, and affections, are but so many exercises of the conceptions of one and the same mind, which, as they will exist in it for ever, so all these must, and cannot but be exercised, according to the state and place it will be in to its everlasting continuance in being and existence.

*Senior.* You express this very clearly, as it respects my own views and apprehensions. Death can make no alteration in the soul, either in its essence or faculties or affections. Its understanding, will, and memory, will not be impaired by its removal from the body, though they will not be exercised by the body. At death *the spirit returns to God who gave it.*

*Junior.* I want you to convey to my mind, what you conceive concerning the departure of the soul from the body at the article of dissolution.

*Senior.* Truly I can only speak by way of conception. I would make the written word of God my rule in all things, especially on such a subject as this before us. But why are you so very inquisitive?

*Junior.* Not for fear of what I shall feel in the article of death, but because I might so apprehend it, as to be filled with holy joy. I very clearly perceive

we shall be altogether passive in the article of death. I am certain there must be a suspension of the exercise of the faculties, or death could not do its office, and dislodge or disembody the mind. I want you to say what you conceive concerning the actual departure of the soul from the body. We read of Rachael, *And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died,) that she, &c.* Gen. xxxv. 18. Now, my good Sir, I want you to give me some general account of this, if you please.

*Senior.* I have informed you what death is. It consists in the separation of the soul from the body. I have, as well as I could, spoken of the process of death; in which the solids and fluids being wasted and dried up, the pulse ceases; at which the soul being disunited from the body, departs from it. This is all I conceive of it: this is all I can say concerning it. The soul is what it was, yet not in the body. Its state before God is the same that it was; but it hath now objects and subjects to think on and be exercised with, which it had not before. What the medium in which it will exist, and by means of which it will converse with other disembodied spirits, cannot be said. It may be, there will be a clothing for it, so as that it shall have a vehicle to be in, and by which it shall conceive of the objects and subjects in the unseen and invisible state. Some have so conceived, as thinking none but God himself, who is invisible, can be without some kind of vehicle for the mind to act in. Angels are not without forms, though without bodies. Saints in heaven are not without a distinction in their forms, so as to be distinguished

one from the other, and to know themselves and each other, though they are without their bodies; but we can never rightly conceive, so as to apprehend the subject, until we are admitted into the world of spirits.

*Junior.* Doubtless, we cannot; yet I must confess, what you have dropped concerning this subject, gives me real pleasure and satisfaction.

*Senior.* I am very ready to impart my mind freely on it. I consider myself as one who is shortly to enter on this world of spirits, to be gathered with them into the garner of everlasting rest. Whilst I go no further than I have already done, and keep myself to the written word, I consider I am safe, and cannot do you nor myself any injury. I conceive the mind of the believer in Christ when disembodied, raised up to such apprehension of Christ, and God in him, as is suited to the state entered on.

*Junior.* What is the state of a saint after entrance into the invisible state, think you?

*Senior.* A state of glory. Stephen, when he was dying, cried out, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit*: a full proof he was going to be received by Christ, and admitted to glory. Paul says, *For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. We are confident, and willing I say, rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.* 2 Cor. v. 1. 8.

*Junior.* I should like you to express your thoughts concerning a saint's entrance into the invisible state of glory.

*Senior.* I look on death as the passage into it, as we cannot enter it in our bodies, until they are prepared and fitted for it by the resurrection of them from the grave and power of death by our Lord Jesus, and his making them like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself.

*Junior.* Will there any further change pass on the soul in the article of death, to fit it for glory? I know some conceive the soul will at the article of death, or as soon as it hath done its office, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, be delivered from the whole body of sin, yea, from the very inbeing of it. What think you of this?

*Senior.* You know, Sir, the souls of the elect will be found in Christ. Such of them as are born again, have their whole meetness for heaven and glory in their regeneration; whilst their union of soul and body will be dissolved by death, yet it cannot in the least touch nor affect what the Holy Ghost hath wrought in them. This being the case, the Holy Ghost who dwells in them will, by his mighty power, as soon as their spirits are disengaged from their bodies, deliver them from all the inherency of sin. We say sin and grace in the same mind are so distinct, that they can never coalesce. Now, when the souls of the saints are unclothed of their bodies, they will be immediately without all sin.

*Junior.* But will there be nothing more wrought in their souls, to fit them for heaven and glory, think you?

*Senior.* I conceive not, unless it be a raising up



the mind to a suitability to the state of glory. The mind will be clothed with immortality and eternal glory; as, without we were renewed in our minds, we should have no suitable faculty to converse with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and have converse and proper and scriptural apprehensions of the grace revealed in the holy scriptures; so, except the same mind be raised up, so as to be suited to the state of glory, that state would not by any means suit us, nor we it. Here we converse with Christ by faith; there we are to converse with Christ by sense. Our minds therefore will be raised up to such a degree of immortality and glory, as will fit us for the enjoyment of the state of glory and immortality: in all which we shall be passive. It is the Holy Ghost will perform all this; not by communicating any thing unto us which we have not already received; but by enlarging, strengthening, and immortalizing our faculties, so that they may be as truly fitted to be perpetually exercised on those wonderful subjects they are to be engaged on in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb by sense and vision, as we are now by faith fitted to Christ's church militant on earth.

*Junior.* Do you think we shall be immediately introduced into the presence of God and the Lamb?

*Senior.* I believe all saints conceive, and all divines affirm this.

*Junior.* But will it not be overwhelming, to be admitted into the immediate presence of the great and incomprehensible Jehovah, to see him face to face, to see him as he is? I tremble at this view of the subject.

*Senior.* You need not tremble at entering into

heaven, if you consider who is to admit and present you there. Our Lord Jesus Christ is to admit you; he is to present you; he is to bid you welcome to all the glory and blessedness of heaven. Take into consideration the words contained in the following doxology, *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen. Jude, 24, 25.* It may be, you have conceived, as I once did, that in glory we should be implunged into absolute and incomprehensible Deity: my mind used to tremble at the thought. Blessed be the Lord, I do now understand from the scriptures, we shall be with Christ. It is he we shall see face to face. It is he we shall have immediate communion with. The Father, Son, and Spirit, the Three in the one Incomprehensible Jehovah, will never admit us to any other sight of their glory, than as it shines forth in the God-Man; nor shall we ever have any abstracted communion with them in their distinct nature and persons, but in our most precious and glorious Lord.

*Junior.* Really, Sir, this is very relieving to my mind; yet I think an immediate introduction into our Lord's presence, will be most wonderful: to see him in his glory; to see him by open vision. You say all saints conceive we shall immediately at death be admitted into his kingdom and glory.

*Senior.* The scriptures give us so to conceive of it; yet I have sometimes thought on Moses' case, when he was called to come up into the mount with God, we

read, *And Moses went up into the mount, and a cloud covered the mount. And the glory of the Lord abode upon mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days: and the seventh day he called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud. And the sight of the glory of the Lord was like devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel. And Moses went into the midst of the cloud, and gat him up into the mount: and Moses was in the mount forty days and forty nights.* Exodus, xxiv. 15, 16, 17, 18. I have, from observing this great saint being six days in the mount before he was immediately admitted into the presence-chamber of the Most High, thought within my own mind, whether it might not be so with disembodied saints, to be by degrees, and in a gradual manner, received and admitted into the state of glory, and to the open vision of Christ. But you are to remember, I speak this to you, only as a thought of my own, on which you are to lay no stress, I do not myself, we are to be confined on this subject to the written word.

*Junior.* My dear Sir, what you have delivered in this present discourse, hath done me good like a medicine. I think I shall never be afraid of death, neither shall I tremble on entering into the invisible state. I perceive I shall be passive, and not active. When death comes, it will soon be over. When out of the body, I shall have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My intellectual faculties and senses will be most exactly suited to the state, the place, the sight, vision, and enjoyment of Christ, and communion of the Father in him, through the indwelling of the eternal Spirit in my

soul. I bless God for the light and knowledge I have received on these subjects, through your instrumentality.

*Senior.* To be delivered from the whole body of sin, to be raised up intellectually, and to have every spiritual faculty and sense so perfected, as to be fitted for the state of eternal glory, and to be admitted by Christ himself into it, and presented by himself before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, are all-sufficient to fill our minds even now, in this present time state, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But I must now break up our present interview. May the blessing of the Three in Jehovah rest on you. Amen.

*Junior.* Thank you, Sir. May all contained therein, be yours also. Amen.

## DIALOGUE XII.

*A Discourse on Heaven, Glory, and Eternal Life, as set forth to view, and revealed to our faith, in the word of inspiration.*

THIS is the last conversation we are to hear, and the last discourse we are to be favoured with between *Junior* and *Senior*, who, being again met together, the senior friend began thus:—Mr. *Junior*, I am really glad to see you once more, I am advancing in age, therefore my time will be short; let us try to make the present interview with each other as useful as we can; propose your own subject; let us both look to the Lord for a blessing on it, and on our discussion of it.

*Junior.* I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for all the past freedom you have indulged me with. I think your kindness for the continuation of the same, is very great. If you please, I could wish the present discourse might be on Heaven, Glory, and Eternal Life.

*Senior.* These are subjects most assuredly connected with former ones; and, as my time must be engaged in other services, so as for me not to attend on you after the present, I will very gladly do my best,

to communicate my views, as clearly as I may be enabled, on these sublime verities.

*Junior.* I have received into my mind from you, the clearest apprehensions of death, and of the entrance into the invisible state, I ever yet had; heaven, glory, and eternal life, being closely connected with them, I should think it would be keeping up the subject, if we were therefore to confer on these. Pray, Sir, what am I to apprehend of heaven, is it a state, or is it a place?

*Senior.* It is both a state and place. It must be the latter, because our Lord is there. He went thither when he left our world. He is now there. Angels and glorified saints are there with him. He speaks of it as a place, saying, *In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.* John, xiv. 2, 3. It is also a state. The saints in it are in a state of glory. Hence the Apostle says, *Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* 2 Cor. iv. 17. He also entitles it *an house: an house not made with hands, an house eternal in the heavens.* 2 Cor. v. 1. This is expressive of its being a place. It is said of Christ, that *he ascended up far above all heavens.* Ephes. iv. 10. That he is *gone into heaven.* 1 Peter, iii. 22. That he is *set down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* Heb. i. 3. That *he liveth in the presence of God.* Heb. ix. 24. That he is *received*

*up into glory.* 1 Tim. iii. 16.; which last is expressive of the state of glory our Lord is entered upon.

*Junior.* What ideas ought I to entertain concerning heaven? I have often heard where Christ is there is heaven; that he is as truly with saints on earth, as with saints in heaven; that they as truly enjoy fellowship with him here below, as they ever will above. Yet I read in scripture of *heaven*; of *the heaven of heavens*; of *the third heaven*; also of *the heaven of heaven of heavens*. What am I to conceive concerning these assertions, and various terms and modes of expression?

*Senior.* It is a real truth, that where Christ is there is heaven; but it is only in this sense, that where the king is there is the court: so Christ being spiritually present with his saints, they have real communion with him, they have the real enjoyment of him, which, as it respects the truth and reality of it, is as really so, as that the saints have fellowship with him in heaven. It is in nature and kind the same with theirs, yet not in the same degree. We have the word heaven for the first time, in Genesis, i. 1. This is the expansion or firmament, of which you read, verse 8, *And God called the firmament Heaven.* "This expansion, or firmament," says Mr. Julius Bate, "is the heavenly fluid or air; including what is in the condition of fire in and round the orb of the sun, as well as the streams of light from that fire; and the spirit, or grosser air, that continually flows into the sun, to keep up the action, supplies the waste of melted air, and extends the fire from the centre to the circumference of the heavens. This is *the heaven*, considered as expanding. It reaches

from the sun, in the centre, to the stars. God set the stars in the firmament, to rule the day and the night, in conjunction with the sun and other orbs. The scriptures ascribe the natural causes of every thing to the expansive power of the heavens. The cause and continuance of motion must be looked for here." Jehovah is called *the Most High God, the possessor of heaven and earth*. Gen. xiv. 19. To express his supreme and uncontrollable power over all things in heaven and on earth. He is styled *the God of heaven*, to express that he made them, that they are his creatures, the work of his hands. Moses says, *Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God*. Deut. x. 14. Heaven of heaven of heavens, may be expressive of the heavens every where: all the heavens, as divided to all the nations and people throughout the universe. The word *heaven* is applied to the place where Jehovah dwelleth in light inaccessible. Hence the prophet prays thus, *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory, &c.* Isaiah, lxiii. 15. Thus Solomon, in a parenthesis of wonder, breaks out before the Divine Majesty, *But will God indeed dwell on the earth! behold, the heaven, and heaven of heavens cannot contain thee*. 1 Kings, viii. 27. Our Lord directs us to pray thus, *Our Father, which art in heaven*. We heard before, that Paul was caught up into the third heaven; it is therefore consistent with the word of truth, to conceive heaven to be a place in the material heavens, where God is pleased to manifest himself in his glory and majesty, as more peculiarly and personally present to Christ, angels, and saints; that here God dwelleth in that light to



which no mortal eye can approach, whom no man hath seen or can see; that here he displays his uttermost manifestative glory in Christ, to the blessed in this tabernacle and dwelling place of his; that here Christ, elect angels, and glorified saints are. This is all I conceive, or can express to you, concerning heaven. Christ may be said to be the heaven of heaven of heavens, as it is a sight of him in his glory, is the beatific vision in which eternal glory consists, and immutable and endless blessings and blessedness are for ever enjoyed. What think you of all this?

*Junior.* I conceive thus of it: heaven, the airy heaven, the starry heaven, the heaven of heavens, the heaven of heaven of heavens, are all expressive of the majesty, the glory, the existence, the power, the immensity, the sovereignty of Jehovah; that heaven, as the habitation of his holiness, is where he manifests himself to the uttermost in the person of Christ. I conceive it is his royal residence some where in the heavens, and being seated there, is called *an house eternal in the heavens*. These are my ideas, which amount to what you have spoken of it, at least as I conceive, do they not?

*Senior.* Yes; they do so. Into this most glorious place elect souls are received and admitted, as soon as they are dismissed from their bodies by death. Here they see God in Christ, are glorified together with Christ, and live for ever.

*Junior.* But as you have told me what I may apprehend of heaven, I want you to tell me also how saints will be employed in heaven. Will it not be in worshipping God? What will that worship consist in?

*Senior.* Christ is the ordinance of glory. The saints are styled the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. Elect angels, and glorified saints, are, I conceive, formed into one glorious church state, worshipping Jehovah, Father, Son, and Spirit, who liveth for ever and ever, and ascribing *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.*

*Junior.* Wherein do the peculiar acts of worship in the elect angels, differ from elect men?

*Senior.* If there be any, it must be in praising the Eternal Three, in appointing Christ to be their head, by whom they were kept from falling; and when admitted to see him, the first-born of all Jehovah's thoughts, will, purposes, councils, and designs, were, by the vision of him, confirmed in a state of blessedness, and rendered impeccable for ever.

*Junior.* What does the worship of all the elect of Adam's posterity now in glory, consist in?

*Senior.* In giving glory to each of the Three in the one self-existing Essence, for all their will, thoughts, love, and vast designs in Christ Jesus concerning them, and also for their salvation by the incarnation, life, and death, of the holy and immaculate Lamb.

*Junior.* What does glory, or the glorification of the saints in heaven, consist in?

*Senior.* In the glorious forms they appear in. They have the very image of Christ so completely instamped on their minds, and they conceive of him so fully, by the sight which they have of him, that his glory will not only be reflected on them, but it will also be revealed

in them. Hence the Apostle says, *For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.* Rom. viii. 18. Christ lives in his saints on earth, as their everlasting life. He lives in his saints in heaven, as their everlasting glory. He is to them the Lord of glory: the fountain and spring of glory. They are glorified in him, and together with him. The rays of his glory reflected on them, put a shine of glory on them which will last for ever. It is out of the inexhaustible fulness of his glory, they will receive glory answerable to his glory. It is from him it will be communicated to them. They will be receiving from him for ever.

*Junior.* Then his fulness must be immense indeed! This is what I like your conversation for, it casts such light on my mind, that I really conceive more than I can express.

*Senior.* The fulness of Christ's grace cannot be exhausted in time, nor the riches of his glory to eternity. How should they? For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead. O, my friend, we have now a glorious subject, and we have a vast prospect before us. *The God of all grace hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus.* We are called to glory, unto his eternal glory, which is all in Christ Jesus. As sure as we are called into the kingdom of God's dear Son, we were, together with it, called to be partakers of eternal glory.

*Junior.* Pray, say out what eternal glory is: and in what it consists.

*Senior.* In the vision of Christ. In a real sight of

his person as God-Man, as the Man in God, who, as such, is the Lord of Glory. In him the Incomprehensible Three shine forth, to the uttermost display of their manifestative glory, before all the angels and saints in glory. It is this is the glory of heaven. It is the glory and blessedness of each saint there. What they behold of the glory of God in Christ, fills them with such conceptions of glory, as they can never express. It fixes them on Christ their centre. It excludes the possibility of their sinning for ever. They hereby partake of an exceeding and eternal weight of glory, which will so poise their minds, as will exclude every wandering thought from Christ. He will be their object, their centre, their circumference, their glory, their portion, their inheritance, their everlasting light, and their everlasting glory—their all. And God, in his divine Persons, in the Person of Christ, will be their all in all. In communion with whom, saints will be filled with all the fulness of God.

*Junior.* If I understand you, it is the vision of Christ that will be the perfection of glory.

*Senior.* It will indeed; and it is this will make us in our souls and bodies perfectly like him: so says the Apostle, *Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.* 1 John, iii. 2. It is the sight of his person is heaven, it will complete our knowledge of him, and continue the life of glory in our minds for ever and ever. We shall see him as he is. This will contain the very essence of our blessedness.

*Junior.* You lay a vast stress on *seeing Christ as*

*he is; why so? Pray explain this. Will not all the assembled world see Christ when he comes to judge the quick and the dead?*

*Senior.* Yes, they will; but they will not have an intuitive sight of Christ; they will not have a supernatural sight of him. His appearance will fill them with the utmost confusion. It will strike them with terror. Saints will see him to their everlasting joy and satisfaction. He will come to be glorified in them, and to be admired in all them that believe. It is now by a supernatural faculty and light, we behold Christ as revealed and set forth in the glass of the gospel. By the same faculty, elevated by the Holy Ghost, when we are raised up and admitted to be where Christ is, we shall see him as he is, we shall see him face to face.

*Junior.* You have set heaven before me. I think you cannot at present say more concerning it. The Lamb in the midst of the throne, I consider as the great ordinance of heaven. Saints and angels in their glorious forms worship him. They are glorified in him; they are glorified together with him. I want you now to say what eternal life is, then I will consent that you shall close the subject; for, whilst I am fully persuaded, that what you have delivered falls far short of the subject as it really is, yet I am sure you have said more than I shall ever fully enter into and live over, until I am admitted into heaven, there to behold my Lord. Tell me, therefore, what eternal life is, and in what it consists. I know, in a measure, what spiritual life is; and I want to have a glimpse of what eternal life consists in.

*Senior.* I know when on subjects like those we

have discoursed on, it is, and perhaps it cannot be avoided, that we run one subject into another; most assuredly we have touched on this, and said what eternal life consists in; not that I am unwilling, so far as I can, to give you a further account of what it is, and in what it consists. We have spoken of heaven as the seat of the church of the glorified; of Christ as living there, the Lord of Life and Glory. We have spoken of the glory of the saints in the house eternal in the heavens: of their perfection of blessedness in the sight and vision of the God-Man, which is the perfection of their eternal life. Spiritual, everlasting, and eternal life, are one and the same, only with these following distinctions. We have spiritual life imparted to us with our new-birth into Christ. This is expressed in and by our living a life of faith on the Son of God. Hence our Lord says, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* Our Lord says, *This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.* John, xvii. 3. The Apostle John says, *And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life.* 1 John, v. 11, 12. So that we understand eternal life consists in the knowledge of Christ, and of the Father in him; and such as know Christ have eternal life in their souls. Whilst they are out of heaven, the acts and exercises of this eternal life, are comprised in living a life of faith on the Son of God, and in living in real communion with him. When they are removed to heaven, their eternal life will consist in their knowledge of Christ by sense and open vision: it will be

perfected by seeing him as he is, and in perpetual communion with him.

*Junior.* Then you make eternal life in glory, to be the exercise of the mind continually on Christ, do you not?

*Senior.* Most assuredly I do. Life is activity. It is a blessing added to being. We had a being in Christ from everlasting, and we had life in Christ from everlasting. We must be with Christ in him: we must live with Christ. He is our eternal life. He communicates the same to us. He says because I live, ye shall live also. It must be eternal life to behold him in his glory: and views of his glory received into the mind, will be its life, its spring, its strength, its vigour; which will engage every act and thought of it for ever and ever.

*Junior.* Do you not think the soul will live on the enjoyments it hath of Christ in glory?

*Senior.* No; I do not. A believer in Christ lives not on its own acts now; he will not, most assuredly, then. Eternal life must be the fountain of eternal acts. The life of glory can be no other than the knowledge of Christ consummated. The acts flowing from it, must have God-Man for their object and subject. A sight of him by vision, seeing him as he is, and to behold his glory, must swallow up the mind, and fix it so immutably on him, as to make it entirely passive in receiving his glory. Its activity must consist in admiring his glory, in rejoicing in his glory, and in having communion with him in it, so as to give him glorious praise.

*Junior.* Surely, if this is eternal life, to behold

Christ face to face, to see him as he is, the subject may be far more easily conceived by a spiritual mind, than it can ever be expressed.

*Senior.* It is so. When Christ was transfigured on the holy mount, he shone forth in his glory. John says of it, *We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.* Peter says, *We were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* 2 Peter, i. 16, 17. Christ shines forth now in heaven, in a brighter display of his glory, before his saints and angels, than he then did before his three favourite apostles. I conceive eternal life in heaven, will consist in the intellectual mind being swallowed up and absorbed in intuitive views and apprehensions of the glory of the Lord. As here below, it is sometimes the case with believers in Christ Jesus, to be favoured with such intuitive apprehensions of Christ, as to be lost entirely to all enjoyments of him, the mind being entirely swallowed up in spiritual contemplations of him: so I conceive it will be in heaven. It will there be acknowledged by the whole election of grace, that what Christ is in his person, glory, blessedness, love, salvation, fulness, and immensity of perfections, can never be fully known: he will for ever be exalted above all blessing and praise. In this, and the glorifying him for it, I apprehend eternal life consists. Are you contented with what I have delivered? If so, I will conclude with a short prayer.

*Junior.* I am.

*Senior.* O, holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, look



down upon us in infinite grace : bless the conversation we have had concerning heaven, glory, and eternal life. Give us, Holy Father, to know the Son: give us, Holy Son, to know the Father: give us, Holy Ghost, to know thee as the Spirit of the Father and the Son, that we may worship thee with the same equal worship and glory. Glorify Christ in our heart. Give us an heart-warming sense of the Father's love in him. Let us worship the Three in Jehovah, as the Lord our God, now and for ever. Amen.

THE END.

