

familiar intercourse in disseminating the truths of the Gospel, it is not to be inferred that we seek to lessen the great benefit of public preaching, as that term is now commonly understood; on the contrary, we assert that this private conversation is likewise a mode of preaching, and each is useful in its place. When a large assembly of Christians meet together to worship God, it is proper that this worship should be conducted with order and decency. That this may be done, one person, set apart for that purpose, leads the worship, unites the prayers and praises of the worshippers, and makes them, as it were, one voice, one supplication. He then explains to them a passage of Scripture, and applies it to their several wants and necessities. This general exhortation may be blessed with the most glorious effects; but it arises in a great measure from the impossibility of conversing with each individual. Here the preacher is confined to general remarks, and even in his application he can speak only to classes and seldom to individuals. But this method of preaching was never intended to supersede that of private intercourse. The Disciples would feel more what our Saviour said to them in private than in public; it would sink deeper in their hearts. Is it to be imagined, that the affecting conversation which our blessed Lord held with his Disciples at his last passover would have interested them so deeply had he pronounced the same words in the presence of the people? The little incidents which took place at the table; the grief and anxiety of the Disciples heighten our interest and excite our sympathy. And are we to suppose that the new converts satisfied themselves with hearing St. Paul at intervals when he preached in public? No, they followed him to his lodgings; they conversed with him; proposed their doubts and scruples, and had them satisfied. He preached and explained to them the Scriptures daily, receiving all that came unto him. It was not sufficient, therefore, to assemble themselves together to be instructed publicly by the Apostles and elders, to unite in prayer and to join in celebrating the holy Supper in remembrance of Christ, of his death and sufferings, and the salvation offered to mankind through him; these were all excellent and necessary duties, but yet many wants, many doubts might not be reached by these public ministrations, and therefore, the Apostles were ready, at all times, to attend to the calls of the converts—to feed them with the word of truth indivi-