

others—effectually advance the soul in its heavenward course. *Self-communion* is the topic which will now engage our thoughts—may we give to it the devout and earnest consideration which a subject so closely intertwined with our personal advance in heavenly meetness demands! Oh that this portion of our work may be written and read under the especial anointing of God the Holy Ghost! Let us endeavour to ascertain what this sacred duty involves.

In the *first* place, my beloved reader, commune with your heart, *to know its true spiritual state as before God*. This will bring under your review the subject of *conversion*—a state which many take for granted without scriptural evidence of the fact; a great question in the matter of salvation, which, to speak after the manner of the schoolmen, too many beg—they assume the existence of their personal conversion without proof. And yet how vast the consequences of the most momentous question they take for granted! There is no statement clearer in God's Word than this, that to enjoy heaven we must become heavenly. God cannot cease to be God; therefore He could not make us, like Himself, perfectly happy, unless He made us, like Himself, perfectly holy. The Holy Ghost must make us new creatures—the subjects of a nature that is Divine—in order to fit us for the enjoyment of a heaven that is pure. The questions, then, which we must weigh are—Have I passed from death unto life? Has my heart been convinced of sin? Am I a subject of the new birth? and from a state of insensibility to objects, and feelings, and hopes that are spiritual, eternal, and divine, have I been quickened by the regenerating Spirit to walk with God, and before the world, *in newness of life*? These are personal and serious questions, which must not, which cannot, be evaded without imperilling all

that is most dear and precious to your everlasting well-being. Oh, give to your eyes no slumber until the subject of the new birth has awakened in your mind the profoundest thought. It is spoken by Him who is *the Truth*, and it is written by Him who is the *Spirit of Truth*, "*Unless a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*" Heaven or hell is suspended upon the issue! My reader! are you sensible that within you all things have been made new? that, whereas once you were blind, now you see? that your heart is in sympathy with objects that are spiritual, with enjoyments that are holy, with engagements that are heavenly?—in a word, that your views of sin and self, of God and of Christ and of the gospel, are radically, essentially changed, and that you seem to yourself the subject of a new-born existence, and the occupant of a new-created world?

Commune with yourself to ascertain *the existence and condition of the love of God in your heart*. Enmity or love to Jehovah characterise us; there is no modified state between these extremes. A careful inspection of our hearts as to this principle will enable us correctly to decide our spiritual condition before the Lord. Do you love God because He is holy? His law, because it is righteous? His government, because it is divine and just? His ways, because they are wise, and right, and sure? Do you love Him for sending His Son into the world to save sinners? Do you love Him as a Father, as a Friend, as a God in covenant relation? How stands your heart, O believer! with God as to its *love*? What is the warmth and vigour and ardour of your affections? Do you so love God in Christ as, under its constraining influence, to do what He commands, to yield what He asks, to go where He bids, to hate what He hates, and to love what He loves; yea, to embrace Him with an affection simple, single, and supreme, oblivious, if need be,