

THE RICHES OF DIVINE GRACE UNFOLDED DIALOGUE VI.

By Samuel Eyles Pierce 1822

On what is contained in the Knowledge of Christ, and how the Saints, are brought to know him, are the subject of this discourse.

A CONVENIENT season being come for **Junior** and **Senior** to converse with each other, their discourse thus began.

Senior. I am glad, my friend, on the return of a suitable opportunity, of renewing our further improvement on the most important of all subjects. I have lived many years in this world, in the course of which I have enjoyed many mercies, both temporal and spiritual, and experienced many miseries, both of

body and mind. I ever found but one grand catholicon and complete cure for what I have been, and still am, the subject of; and that is the knowledge of the Lord Jesus. I remember one, who said, a son being born to him, whose name he called Noah, This same shall comfort us concerning our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. He found none but Christ could comfort him, and bear up his body and mind, under the views and experience which he had in himself, of the evils contained in his fallen nature.

Junior. Your last discourse has so wrought on me as most sincerely to desire this present season, to obtain an interview with you. I have been lately soaring high in heavenly contemplations on the doctrine of the blessed Trinity. I see all flows from their free, sovereign, and immutable love. I long to have more free and full communion with them in all the blessings thereof. I really long to be leaving past views and attainments even in spiritual things, and to be pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, What say you of this?

Senior. It is very pleasing to hear this from you. I know spiritual views of Christ, beget fervent hungering and thirsting after Christ; and discover the state of the mind, and the spirituality thereof.

Junior. I want to be swallowed up in Christ, to be personally, and practically, and experimentally, and intuitively, acquainted with him.

Senior. This is most truly blessed; but you, are in a measure acquainted with him. You don't mean to deny this surely? Let us speak the truth in Christ, and lie not.

Junior. Your discourses with me have, in the hands of the Lord the Spirit, done me much good; yet, when I hear and attend to what you say, I perceive so much in Christ, which lies, as yet undiscovered unto me, as makes me most truly desirous of hearing you declare more and more of him.

Senior. Whilst I find a real heaven in conversing with Christ, and in conversing with you of him and his great salvation, yet I cannot go further than to speak words to you; it is the Holy Ghost who alone can glorify Christ in your understanding, and give you soul satisfying and heart warming apprehensions of his love. You must not look, my good Sir, to me for this; you must look wholly to him.

Junior. I do, I do; yet, to the honor of his name, I must say, he has made your conversation an ordinance to my mind; I must, therefore, request you will at this time entertain me with a conversation altogether concerning Christ. I have been reading these words of the Apostle, That I may know him. I perceive a depth in them, which I cannot fathom. I want to know more of the Person of Christ. I request you to inform me what is contained in the knowledge of Christ, and how saints are brought to the knowledge of Him. Let this be our present subject.

Senior. The knowledge of Christ is a vastly comprehensive subject. It contains in it eternal life; and a variety of particulars. I am myself a very babe in this. It is the utmost perfection of Christianity. I may truly here adopt the words of Jeremiah, who, when the Lord called him to speak in his great name, cried out, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak: for I am a child.

Junior. I only want and request you to speak in a very plain way and manner, of what you know of Jesus, of what you have seen of him, and all this from and agreeable with the word: it will do your soul good, as it will also mine.

Senior. Well, I will do my best; but who either in earth or heaven, can speak his worth? One says of him, His name, is exalted above all blessing, and praise, another says, His glory is above the earth and heaven a third, His name is as ointment poured forth; a fourth, His name is from everlasting. Indeed, the whole scriptures are full of his praise. His glory is beyond conception, His love exceeds all which can be expressed of it either on earth or in heaven. His work of salvation is most truly divine His offices are worthy of himself: such as none but himself can fill. His titles are most glorious; yet they add no honor to his person: it is his person adds honor, dignity, majesty, and glory, to them. His power is Almighty. His fullness inexhaustible. His wisdom is infinite. He is the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the

fullness of him that filleth all in all. He is the head of nature. He is the head of grace. He is the head of glory. He is the Father's beloved: the beloved of his church: the praise of all his saints. He is their salvation on earth. He will be their glory within the veil. He will be their heaven of heaven of heavens, in the ages of eternity. What can. I say more? Will not this satisfy you?

Junior. I deny not, 'but what you have said, is heart-warming and soul-cheering; yet it does not satisfy me.

I make no objection to what you have delivered.

Christ is all this; yea, he is infinitely more, above, beyond, and transcendently excellent: so as that the minds of saints can never have any tolerable conception of what is; yet I want you to say who and what he is.

Senior. Should I take upon me to declare his glories, it would then be necessary to set bounds to our conversation. His person is God-Man. His glory is as the glory of the only begotten of the Father. He hath an essential glory: he hath a personal glory. He is the head of his church. He hath the glory of it. He is the saviour of his church.

As such, he hath a glory given him, which He wears and shines forth in. He hath a mediatorial glory. He hath a relative glory. He is the head of his body the church; she is his glory: so that He is the Lord of Glory. He is the glorious living Lord, who is the glory of heaven. The fountain of living waters. Their all in all.

Junior. My soul is all on fire, and nothing will Content me, except you will kindly go over very briefly some of these subjects. I want a sight of my beloved. I think I should gain, by your conversation on these most sublime verities, some conceptions of him whom my soul loveth, so as to be more completely enamored with him.

Senior. Surely, He is altogether lovely; and such as have seen him in the glass of the gospel, must confess He outshines all description. He exceeds all on earth and all in heaven. All the perfection of the whole creation, and all the excellency which is, or can be enjoyed in glory, are but as a drop, compared with Christ. If you would have me to go over, and give you an account of his glories, how would you have me proceed? We must have some order. It is so necessary on a subject of this importance, that without it, we ourselves shall be losers. Think, therefore, and Say, shall I give his glory in some general expressions? Or shall I enumerate the same? that is, shall I say He God, and He is Man, God and Man in one Christ, and there leave it! or, would you have me give an account of what is contained in the knowledge of Christ, and how saints are brought to know him, and then close?

Junior. If you would oblige me, by acting according to my wish, I should request you to give a short statement of each of these subjects. 1. Of the Essential and Personal Glories of Christ. 2. The Glory

of his Headship, including therein his relative glory. 3.

His Mediatorial Glory. 4. His Glory in which he shines forth now in Heaven. I could wish to obtain some scriptural view of these. You could after this cast in some thoughts on the subject of what is contained in the knowledge of Christ, and how saints are brought to know him.

Senior. Truly, Sir, you have found a sufficiency of employment for my mind and tongue. However, I will speak of the glorious honor of my Lord's majesty, as he may be pleased to give me utterance. Ist. Of his Essential and Personal Glories. His Essential Glory is this: he is one in Essence with the Father and the Spirit, true and very God.. He is Jehovah God over all, blessed for ever. He is God and Man. His glory, as such, is set forth in the 8th chapter of the Proverbs, and in the Ist chapter of the Colossians. In the former, he says, I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was. When there were no depths I was brought forth; when there were no mountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: while as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world.

When he prepared the heavens, I was there; when he set a compass upon the face of the depth: when he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: when he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when, he appointed the foundations of the earth: then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him. Then it was Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. See verses, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30. Here is the first place in all the written word, in which we have Christ speaking as the first-born of all Jehovah's thoughts, views, purposes, and designs: as the man in God, who was with God, and was God, the Fellow of the Lord of Hosts; for Christ, as God-Man, is not one in the Essence, but he is taken up into personal union With one in the Essence.

Junior. Sure, Sir, could I convey to you the glories which break in upon my mind concerning Christ, from this scriptural account, you would think yourself well rewarded for your trouble; but, pray let me hear more of this most sublime subject.

Senior. You shall, for I have not finished it. In the first chapter of the Colossians, verses 15, 16, 17, you have the personal glories of

Christ thus expressed and set forth: Who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature: for by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. Here an account is given of the ancient, personal, primordial glories of Christ, God-Man. All the fullness of the Godhead

dwelleth in him. He is God manifest in the flesh. The Son of the living God dwelleth by personal union and inhabitation, in the Man Christ. He is heir of all things the Image of the Invisible God the Brightness of Glory. In him, Jehovah in all his persons and perfections, shines forth to the very uttermost manifestation thereof. Hence he is styled the Image of the Invisible God. This is Christ's personal glory. He it is in whom my soul delighteth, says Jehovah the Father. Isaiah. 42: 1. If Christ were not in his divine nature and person as one in the Essence, God essentially, he had not been in our nature God and Man truly. The one is the foundation of the other. & so that you may look on him in his essential and personal glory, and behold him who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

Thus I have given you a glimpse of our Lord's personal glory: that is, I have spoken a few words concerning it.

Junior. Thank. you, Sir. I cannot but conceive, from the faint apprehensions I have received concerning the subject, that it must be the uttermost perfection of heaven, to see Christ in his personal glory.

Senior. It is so. Our Lord expresses himself on this subject, thus: Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. John. 17: 24. This is the very ultimatum of eternal glory and blessedness.

Junior. So it must indeed be. But glorious as it is, how came it to pass, that our Lord revealed none of his personal glory to his

disciples? It really seems next to the doctrine of the Trinity, the greatest of all subjects.

Senior. Our Lord shone forth in his personal glory once, and but once, in his incarnate state on the mount of transfiguration. John and Peter, who saw him in his glory, thus speak of it. We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father. John, I:14. We were eye-witnesses of his majesty. For He received from God the Father honor 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. 2nd Peter. 1: 16, 17. But let us proceed to the other subjects you proposed, or our time will be up ere we are aware of it.

Junior. Truly I could dwell on what you have related from the scriptures concerning the essential and personal glories of Christ, with real delight for a long season; but proceed, if you please, to enter on the subjects in connection with this, as proposed.

Senior. The next glory that belongs to our Lord, which we are to speak of is, 2dly. The Glory of his Headship, including therein his relative glory. He is God-Man, the, Lord, the head, the proprietor of every creature,

visible and invisible. All things were created by him and for him: he is, therefore, Lord of all. He is the beginning of the creation of God: the first-born of every creature. All were made by him: all were made for him. He is the center of all; he is the glory of all; and a glory ariseth out of all, to shew forth the majesty and greaten him in a manifestative way, who is Lord of all the glory of all the foundation of all who upholds all and filleth all in all. He, as the head of his elect bride, hath a relative glory, arising from his being to her the head of grace and glory. He is her Lord and husband: she is his bride and social companion; as such, she is his glory.

Junior. Well, this is glory upon glory, sure. Could you in one short scripture, give me a sight of Christ's view of the church from everlasting?

Senior. Yes. I conclude the following words contain this: 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 part of his

earth; and my delights were with the sons of men. Prov.,8:30,31, May the Lord the Spirit open these words to your mind, and your mind to apprehend what is here expressed and contained, you will then be admitted into the view and delights of Christ in his church, who is to be with him in heaven for ever, and be made perfectly like him, by seeing him as he is.

Junior. I more and more enjoy the benefit of conversing with you, as I see the propriety of what you say concerning our being entirely passive in all God's work within us and upon us. Whilst I have been attending to what you relate concerning the glories of Christ's Person and Headship, with his relative glory, he being the head and husband of his church, I have found such ideas and thoughts created concerning the Lord of Life and Glory, as I cannot express; neither can I relate the spiritual unction and perfume which have followed, and still accompany the subject; yet I am, and have been, under all this, entirely passive. I really conceive, I shall be so in the immediate sight of Christ in the state of glory.

Senior. You will be, in receiving all from him; and all your worship and bliss in heaven, will be the effect thereof. In the state of grace, the Holy Ghost operates on your spiritual faculties un-discernable by you. He lets in thoughts, and creates apprehensions of Christ in your mind, as fill it with holy wonder and admiration at the revelation of Christ, and the Father's love in him, so as there is nothing but this uppermost in your soul. This is the work of God. When you are most under it, you act nothing; but it so influences you, and leaves such divine effects on your mind, as draw out afterwards your whole soul into spiritual acts and exercise. You cannot be more blessed, than to be entirely under the teachings of the Lord the Spirit; and at such times you are entirely passive.

Junior. Do, Sir, proceed with declaring further the glories of Christ you have not yet spoken of; for I long to have a further account of him, and his dignity and honor.

Senior. It was proposed to give, 3dly. An Account of Christ's Mediatorial Glories. He is the Mediator of union, of communion, of

reconciliation. He wears the glory of putting away sin; of bringing in everlasting righteousness; of making peace by the blood of his cross; of reconciling all things to himself, whether they be things on earth, or things in heaven; of subduing Satan; of spoiling principalities and powers; of abolishing death; Of rising from the dead; of saving his people in himself, with an everlasting salvation: for all which he is crowned with glory everlasting. His mediatorial glories are his coronation in heaven; his session at the right hand of the Majesty on High his offices of prophet, priest, and king, which he is fully invested in, and He exercises them as now exalted to be a Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel, and the remission of sins. There is a wonderful variety in all these glories. They all differ from each other.

They all are his. He is worthy of them. He will wear these glories for ever. Yea, his saints will greatly rejoice in all which results unto him from it; as they will in casting their crowns at his feet, and saying, Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood.

Junior. Pray, Sir, I have read these words of the Apostle, Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among

the gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Ephesians. 3: 8. I always conceive he refers to the riches of Christ, which he displays in saving sinners, in healing their wounds, in supplying their wants, in bestowing himself and his riches, which are unsearchable, upon them, to make them rich to the ages of eternity; but I think you have been really opening the unsearchable riches of Christ's glory.

Senior. If Christ is glorified in your mind, all is well. If the Holy Ghost hath been pleased to shew you the glories of Christ, and made the conversation the medium of it, all the glory is his. My desire is, that he should receive all the praise and glory.

Junior. Pray, Sir, finish the discourse concerning what further remains on this subject, as proposed; then, if you can add to it, do.

Senior. Christ's personal glory, and the glory of his headship, in which was included his relative glory, have been touched on. We

have glanced at his mediatorial glory. It was proposed, 4thly. To speak of the Glory in which he shines forth now in Heaven.

This, I conceive, must comprehend all his glories. The glory he shone forth in at his Transfiguration, is the same glory he will shine forth in at his second coming.

He shines forth in his personal glory now, at the right hand of the Majesty on High. He must of necessity shine forth as the head of his body, the church. He cannot but shine forth in all the honors and glories of his mediatorial person and office in all the glories of his victories and triumphs; and He will one day so shine forth, as we shall have a most blessed sight of him by sense and vision. The beloved John says, in his first epistle, Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth, us not, because it knew him not. 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.

Chapter. 3: 1, 2.

Junior. My dear Sir, will you kindly enumerate our Lord's glories, and just mention his appearances in his kingdom and glory which have taken, and are yet to take place; after which I shall only request you to say very briefly, what is contained in the Knowledge of Christ, and how the Saints are brought to the knowledge, of Him; as I do View and consider the subject to be of the greatest importance to saints as saints.

Senior. According to the order in which Christ's if glory is set before us in the word of the gospel, we have, 1st. His Essential Personal Glory, which he had with the Father before the world was; 2d. He had the glory as God-Man, to be the Head of the whole creation of God. He was before all: He created all: he was the universal head of all: He was the end of all; 3d. He was the Head of the Elect, and of all Principality and Power, which, as I understand it, comprehends elect angels. The church is Christ' s body; he therefore stands as head to it, in a different relation to what he does to the whole creation. He is the creator of the one; He is the husband of the

other, This is, therefore, 4th, a distinct glory which belongs to him, and which I style his Relative or Relation Glory. He is so one with his church, That we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

See Ephesians. 5: 30. 5th. He hath a Mediatorial Glory, which consists in the glory due to his, person and office. This he is fully invested with, of which the Apostle speaks in these words, When he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high. Hebrews. 1: 3. It might, 6th, be said, Christ hath the glory and honor of being the Judge of quick and dead. As to his appearances in his personal and mediatorial glories, he shone forth in his personal glory on the holy mount. He shines forth in it now in heaven; so he does in his mediatorial glory. He will shine forth in his glory at his second coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. He will shine forth in the New Jerusalem State so gloriously, that it shall be said, Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. And they shall see his face, and his name shall be in their foreheads.

He, will shine forth in the full meridian of the glory which he had with the Father before the world was, before all his saints, in the ultimate state of glory.

Now, my good friend, I have done as you requested me. What have you more to say?

Junior. I only wish you to say what is contained in the knowledge of Christ, and how saints are brought to apprehend it. You have given an account of his person, of his glory. I am now where you never left me before. I see you can do nothing for me. I want to take every particular you have notified on this subject.

I need, therefore, the Lord the Spirit, to give me such clear and distinct apprehensions of this subject, as that I might go over in my thoughts every part of it. I do indeed now apprehend you, concerning the doctrine of the Eternal Three in the One Incomprehensible Jehovah: that you would have me learn it, and all connected with it, in the Person of Christ. Is it not so?

Senior. Yes, it is. I would not have you plunge your thoughts into the contemplations of absolute deity, nor into abstracted thoughts of the persons in Godhead.

No. The Lord himself keep you from this. But I would have all your knowledge of Godhead, and of the Persons in the Trinity, confined to Christ God-Man, in whom alone you can approach God, worship him, have communion with him, and live for ever.

Junior. I am very highly indebted to you; but give me an account of what is contained in the knowledge of Christ.

Senior. Life and salvation are contained in it. Our Lord says in his great prayer to the Divine Father, which is recorded in the 17th chapter of John's gospel, And this is life eternal, that they might know

thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent, We have not eternal life in our souls, if we have not the true spiritual and supernatural knowledge of his person in our minds. The apostle John, speaking after his divine Lord, says, God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. 1st John. 5: 11, 12. I prefer the knowledge of Christ, beyond all the enjoyments of him: yea, I absolutely do prize the knowledge of the God-Man, the object and subject of the love and delight of all the Persons in the Essence, beyond heaven and eternal glory. I conceive of nothing in heaven, beyond seeing him as he is; and I am sure this will so perfect my knowledge of him, as will fix my mind immutably on him for ever and ever: and in this all true blessedness consists. There is also salvation, and all the blessings of life everlasting, contained in the knowledge of the Person of Christ. There is none other name given under heaven among men, whereby we must be saved One said of old, Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides thee. Psalm. 73: 25. The Apostle says, Yea, doubtless, and I count till things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him. That I way know him. All this gives full evidence of

what is contained in the knowledge of Christ, and also how highly he is prized

by such as know him. I know not what to add to this, as I conceive it must be satisfactory.

Junior. It really is so. Every thing is contained in the knowledge of Christ which can enrich it, and give it complete satisfaction. In it is contained eternal life, which is the greatest blessing we can enjoy. In him we have every grace and blessing. In him we have eternal redemption. In the knowledge of him, we know our personal interest in him; and in the same knowledge of him, we have fellowship with the Father and the Spirit. Now, my good Sir, just to close the conversation, only say how saints are brought to the knowledge of Christ.

Senior. By the word, and by the Spirit. The word contains the revelation of Christ; the Holy Spirit from the word reveals Christ. In a spiritual apprehension of him, everlasting life is begun in the soul, which issues in all the acts of it up into life everlasting. We cannot know Christ but by the word, which, whilst it is full of Christ, yet we do not see, know, and believe on him to life everlasting, until the Lord the Spirit become our teacher and instructor.

Junior. Then you conceive Christ is as fully revealed in the word before we have eyes to see him, as when we are blessed with that faculty.

Senior. Yes; most undoubtedly I do. There will never be any other or clearer revelation of Christ, than is made already concerning him in the everlasting

gospel. I look on it, the proper title thereof is, The revelation of Jesus Christ. In it he is expressed to the very uttermost of his heart and bowels of mercy, and above and far exceeding all our sin and misery. When the Lord the Spirit is pleased from the word of grace, to give us to conceive rightly of Christ, we receive the true knowledge of him into our minds, and this is life eternal.

Junior. I conceive from what you say, that the least true knowledge of Christ, is as great an evidence of being in him, as the most enlarged and comprehensive acquaintance with him.

Senior. Yes; it is even so. Indeed, the first view received into the renewed mind, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ, is that of a Saviour. He is generally at first looked on and at, as able and mighty to save.

Hence it is a real truth, if our Lord in the preaching of the gospel, was to be set forth in the glories of his person and majesty, the poor awakened and enlightened sinner would find no real delight in him.

Junior. How so? I thought faith was one and the same, whether in its infancy or in its maturity: that it had no other object but the Lord Jesus Christ; that it centered alone in him.

Senior. All this is the truth of the case; yet the eye of faith is opened to take in Christ in a gradual way and manner. When it is first opened, it sees Christ as having been crucified: as having died for sin and

sinner. It finds all its peace and happiness in the blood and righteousness of Christ, who came into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. It closes with Christ in the full belief of his own word, Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out; and it looks wholly at, and trusts simply in, the wounds and blood of Jesus Christ. This is agreeable to the preaching the gospel of salvation to what is first experienced in the mind at our first believing on Christ; He saith Look unto me, and be ye saved all ye ends of the earth for I am God, and there is none else. It is also agreeable to what the apostle John says, I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake. 1st John. 2: 12.

Junior. I must certainly subscribe to this. It was so in my own personal case; but then I really cannot trace the progress of this. I now find myself most blessedly enlightened and enlarged. I was therefore ready to conclude I never believed in Christ before. Will you kindly explain this to me? It will most certainly be advantageous to my mind, and it may be to others also.

Senior. I will. As the eye of faith is afresh illuminated, and we are favored with more glorious discoveries of Christ, we naturally forget our former apprehensions of him, because the present are more

enlarged, and in this sense more glorious. Yet you were as truly a believer when you first trusted in Christ, as you are now; but you had not the same conceptions of him then, as you have now. When you were a babe in Christ, you were chiefly attentive to his love and salvation: as you advanced and came to be a young man in Christ, you were then chiefly concerned to look to him for strength against sin, that you might not fall to the dishonor of his most holy name. To be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, was then the most principal thing with you as now, the most sublime mysteries in the book of God, are become your one grand study; and this is but one and the same faith, only more distinctly and immediately exercised. I hope this clearly opens the case. It is the highest stage in Christianity, to be taken with the spirituality of the gospel; and the study of Christ's, Person promotes this beyond all other meditations whatsoever. But we must now part.

Junior. As you have explained the matter, I see it all to be just as you have stated it. A right statement of every gospel truth, is of very great consequence to the enquiring mind. I sincerely thank you. The Lord bless you. Farewell.