

self-examination an important duty of church members : especially when, as stated communicants, they are about to approach the table of the Lord.

By faithfully comparing ourselves with Scripture standards of faith and practice, we may test, not only our general spiritual state, but the degree of our spiritual growth. It was to professed followers of Christ that the Apostle said, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup" (1 Cor. xi. 28). Now the things that were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. The Word of God speaks both to our understandings and hearts. It offers abundant consolation to the weary and heavy-laden, affectionate warnings to the tempted, and to any who walk incautiously ; gives directions to Zion's pilgrims, lest they mistake their way ; strong and cheering promises to establish our faith, and confirm our hopes ; a faithful record of the trials, weaknesses, sins, sorrows, conflicts, and joys of saints of old ; forcible representations of the spiritual foes that beset our path, through time, and terrible revelations of the doom of those who reject the counsel of God against themselves ; and to the professed followers of Christ it presents, as a duty, the practice of self-examination. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith ; prove your own selves" (2 Cor. xiii. 5). Other words of similar import may be found. Yet, amidst the various topics of gospel ministration, how seldom, perhaps, is the one before us made the subject of pulpit ministry. It is much needed, however, and can never be out of season. If faithfully performed it will either give spiritual consolation and higher enjoyment of the means of grace (if our self-scrutiny should prove, on the whole, satisfactory), enabling us "to read our title clear" to the blissful inheritance above,—or, if unsatisfactory, will do us good, by faithfully showing us our deficiencies ; our true spiritual state ; will check presumptuous self-esteem,—and, while revealing to us our errors and imperfections, will cause us earnestly to seek that spiritual life, which is the pledge and earnest of life everlasting.

When we draw nigh to the table of the Lord, and partake of the elements that symbolize the atoning sacrifice and finished work of our adored Redeemer, with what preparation of heart and mind do we approach ? The Saviour, who beholds us at His table, and favours His people with His gracious presence there, beholds our daily walk, and understands our thoughts afar off. What assurance have we, what inward consciousness, that we are indeed followers of the Lamb ? And what evidence does our *daily life* impart ? Is it only *this*, that you can remember a time when you had convictions of sin—felt excited about your spiritual state—saw truth more clearly—embraced, with your understanding, the doctrines of the cross,—felt their importance, and resolved that you would profess yourself His follower, and that, having united with His people, you feel secure, because you are numbered with them in profession, and attend with them the customary means of grace ; and are calmly waiting till earth shall be exchanged for heaven ? But is this all ? Where, then, is the Christian conflict ?

In connection with due observance of the Lord's Supper by His professed followers, two things are enjoined : Preparation and Celebration. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." Let the professed Christian then examine himself (or herself) as to the state of the heart, the mind, and the life,—the life, social and spiritual, as to the general bent of his thoughts and passions, and the workings of his mind, "for, as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Do the thoughts dwell upon heavenly themes ? What subjects occupy the mind most frequently ? Is the Saviour chief ? Or is the mind occupied almost entirely with things of earth ? Are sinful thoughts cherished in the mind ? Or, while diligent in business, is he fervent in spirit, serving the Lord ? Are his plans and purposes in life such as will meet the divine approbation ? What is the foundation of his faith ? Is it confidence in a creed, or does it rest on Christ alone ? Let each inquire what is his or her conduct as a member of a gospel church ? Is such a one a faithful member, fulfilling the obligations involved in church-membership ; studying to promote the peace, prosperity, in-