

occupied alike humbly the high and honourable position of worshippers—a position not only the most becoming, but the most exalted that man can occupy on earth or in heaven. Many family groups might be observed in that promiscuous assembly; some of them embracing three, if not four generations. Near to, and under, the watchful eye of the mother, were the playful and prattle-loving youngsters. Around were seated the elder-born, some of them “men and women grown;” and close by, might be seen seated the venerated grandsire, his body bent, his face furrowed and his head “silvered o’er with years.”

To a close observer there was something markedly different in the facial aspect of the worshippers, from that which met the eye on the previous days of the solemnity. This remark refers almost exclusively to those who had been communicants. On the fast day, and on Saturday, and especially on Sabbath, their looks indicated awe and anxiety, and in some cases fear. On Monday their features, on which the flags of feeling were hung out, told of calm content within—of gratitude, and even of gladness. All this can be easily accounted for without attributing any portion of it, as some would, to superstition, or self-righteousness, or vile hypocrisy. On the previous days they were approaching, and about to engage in, a very solemn and important work,—a work on the right performance of which depended the honour of the Saviour, and the weal of their own souls. And, as in duty bound, they were no doubt, earnestly engaged in the painful business of self-examination, letting the clear light of God’s Word fall on their past path. And would there not be discovered, even in the case of the best of them, more than sufficient of sins and shortcomings to prompt penitent sorrow and to sadden the countenance? Nor would this be all, the work of self-examination would be but half performed were we to stop short with a mere survey, however careful, of our past conduct, without regard to our present condition. There must be a fearless and full inspection of our desires and motives, the secret springs of our actions. And who is the man that can feel, and smile, complacency, after a rigid scrutiny of the arcana of his heart with the lamp of God in his hand? That man dwells not on this side the Jordan of death. There is more than enough of lingering depravity in the holiest heart, when revealed by the Word and Spirit of God, to flood that heart with grief, and to shroud the face in gloom. No wonder then that intending communicants, being engaged in the solemn work of self-examination, should exhibit deep anxiety or even fear. Self-jealousy is perfectly compatible with faith in Jesus Christ. Its very existence is an indication of love. Is it asked, Why the altered state of feeling and of feature on the Monday from what they had been on the previous days of the solemnity? Why! because an imperative command had been obeyed, an important duty had been performed, a precious privilege had been enjoyed;—the table of the Lord had been approached, and no judgment had fallen