

examination. "Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves." The great cause for this, as you are aware, arises from the deceitfulness of our hearts. Through the medium of our wicked hearts, Satan would very often make us believe that we are almost anything but what we really are. His great object is to make us lose sight of our real state, and get us to slip quietly and easily down the stream, until perhaps it is entirely too late to recover ourselves, and we are his forever. Nothing, therefore, can be of greater importance in the Christian life than to be always on the alert, ever searching and prying into the recesses of the heart. It must be a duty constantly and carefully attended to, a means which must be ever used to keep us close to God. Our daily prayer should be, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me: and lead me in the way everlasting!"

But besides these private means, God has also taught us to profit by, and has afforded us, the public means of grace. And these must be likewise duly used, if we would have a happy meeting at the judgment-seat. They are, principally, those which the sanctuary affords,—public and united prayer, hearing God's word, and the Holy Communion or Lord's Supper.

To the latter we have so lately had our attention called, that we shall not stay to comment on it. But a few words must be said on public prayer and the hearing of God's word.

With regard to the latter, great things are stated in the Bible about it. It is said indeed to "save" us;—"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." "It pleased God, by the foolishness of preaching, to save them that believe." So that we can hardly value too highly the preaching of the gospel as an ordinance.