

just and holy vengeance "that will by no means spare the guilty," until by faith we have laid hold on Jesus Christ, felt that our sins have been borne "in His body on the tree," and that through Him alone we can have life. Christ alone must save us. This is the groundwork, the great foundation-stone;—and "faith in Jesus and repentance toward God," the starting points, from which all preparation must begin, through which it must all continue, and in which it must finally all end.

What, then, (may be asked,) are some of the subsequent points in this preparation, arising from and involved in these? The preparation—(you understand, of course)—is simply a constant striving, by use of the means of grace, to grow in tune for heaven, and ready to appear with humble confidence before Christ's judgment-seat. And the more direct question, therefore, is,—what are the means we are to use? Why, there are, first, what are commonly called the private means, as also, secondly, the public means of grace. And to all of us, brethren, God has afforded both.

Among the private,—there is first and foremost, secret prayer. "Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." We must find time to be alone with God, to hold communion with Him as a child with its parent. We must know what it is to look up to our God in childish confidence, to feel that He is our Father and our Friend, and that without His constant help we can never grow in grace. This is what we may call the first step, the very first means to be used in entering upon the Christian life. Any who content themselves with anything short of this; who have no desire for devotion strictly private; who have nothing to say to God, to which He alone must listen, and feel no impulse to speak