

the tree: green leaves and blossoms, indeed, look well, and promise fairly, and they may represent to us the common outside of a religious profession; but good works are the grain and the fruit, without which, plant, tree, leaves, and blossoms, are all worthless and unavailing. Therefore, in the judgment—the harvest of souls—Christ speaks of works only, not because it is possible to save us without a living faith, but because the only unquestionable mode of proving that we had this faith, is by shewing the good works produced by it.

2. Seeing, then, through this simple analogy, that the passage before us is in no respect inconsistent with the doctrine of salvation by grace, through faith, but rather confirms it; we proceed, in the second place, to consider how it is that Christ considers himself personally interested, whenever we assist or neglect his people. ‘Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, my brethren, ye did it not to me.’ Now this is easily explained, on the same principle with one of the most common feelings of human nature, in cases of family connexion, or strong attachment, or even in the union of national partiality.

Thus, for instance, suppose my child to be in danger or in want, and one of you should step forward to protect or relieve him, do not I acknowledge the benefit, as if it were done to myself? So of my brother, or any other near and dear relation. Again, what is more universal than to introduce our friends by letter, to strangers at a distance, asking their kind offices, for our sakes; and in all such cases, are not the acts of attention or benevolence felt by ourselves as a personal favor; do not we say, Inasmuch as ye did it to this, my friend, ye did unto me? Again, consider the character gained by the man, who, in foreign lands, exerts himself to shew kindness to our countrymen, though they may be personally unknown to us. Even in