

## THE TEST OF TRUE FAITH.

is that it works—"Faith which worketh," saith the text. To that end it must first of all live, for it is clear that a dead faith cannot work. There must be heart in our faith, and the Spirit of God breathing in it, or it will not be the living faith of a living child of God.

Being alive, true faith must not sleep, but must arouse itself as a child of the day, for a slumbering faith is matter for heart-searching, since sleep is cousin to death. A wakeful faith becomes active, and in its activity lies much of its proof. "By their fruits ye shall know them," is one of Christ's own rules for testing men and things, and we are to know faith by that which comes of it, by what it does for us, and in us, and through us. Faith is not worth having if it is fruitless; it has a name to live and is dead. If it works not at all, it lives not at all, and cannot justify its possession.

A dead God may be served by a dead faith, but living, waking, working faith can alone please the ever-living, ever-working Jehovah. God saves us from a dreaming faith and a talking faith, and give us "faith which worketh."

"Not words alone it cost the Lord  
To purchase pardon for his own.  
Nor will a soul by grace restored  
Return the Saviour words alone."

A further distinction it also set forth, that true faith "worketh by love." There are some who do many works as the result of a kind of faith who, nevertheless, are justified, as for instance, Herod, who believed in John and did many things, and yet murdered his minister. His faith did work, but it worked by dread and not love; he feared the stern language of the second Elijah, and the judgments which would come upon him if he rejected the Baptist's warnings, and *his faith worked by fear*.

The great test of the working of saving faith is this, it "worketh by love." If you are led by your faith in Jesus Christ to love Him, and so to serve Him, then you have the faith of God's elect, you are undoubtedly a saved man, and you may go your way and rejoice in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. It shall be joy to you to serve the Lord,

since love is the mainspring of your service.

That is the point we are going to speak upon this morning—the connection which exists between faith and love: "Faith which worketh by love." We may be helped to test both our faith and love while we are speaking of the intermingling and interwisting of the roots and branches of these two graces, and it will do us good to perform a thorough self-examination. *It never does a man harm to overhaul himself* and to see in what a state he is, whether he really is right or no: whether he is prospering in soul or no. I am afraid of our taking our good estate for granted, but I am not afraid of the most self-searching self-inquiry. May God the Holy Spirit bless our ministry to this end this morning!

## 1. Our first observation will be this:

## FAITH ALWAYS PRODUCES LOVE.

"Faith which worketh by love." When faith has anything to do, she walks to the field with love at her side. The two graces are inseparable. Like Mary and Martha, they are sisters, and abide in one house. Faith, like Mary, sits at Jesus' feet, and hears his words, and then love diligently goes about the house and rejoices to honor the divine Lord. Faith is light, while love is heat, and in every beam of grace from the Sun of righteousness you will find a measure of each.

1. This happens by a necessity of faith's own nature. The moment a man believes in Jesus Christ he loves Him as a matter of course. It is possible to trust in another person and not love him, but from the peculiar circumstances of the case, our Lord having loved us and given Himself for us out of the infinite charity of His heart, we are compelled to love Him the moment we repose upon Him. To trust the bleeding Lamb and not love Him is a thing not to be imagined. Faith is a gold ring which, in every case, the heavenly jeweler sets with the beryl of love. Water faith with a drop of God's own dew and it blossoms into love.

The first steps of the prodigal when he comes to himself are all toward his father's house and heart. When he gets home he may take many steps hither and thither about his father's estate, but at