

THE PULPIT.

FAITH WITHOUT WORKS.

"For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."—James ii. 26.

It is not saving faith of which the apostle speaks in this passage. The faith that is "of the operation of God," and therefore "unfeigned," always "works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world." It is as natural to true faith to produce good works, as it is to the shining sun to emit light, or a good tree to bring forth good fruit. The faith of which the apostle speaks is a speculative acquaintance with truths that find no lodgement in the heart. It is a rational conviction of the reality of certain doctrines that excite no emotion in the soul, and find no development in the life. It is a mere profession of christianity, without the animating principle of all true profession—faith in Christ and love to God—and without corresponding fruits of holiness in the life. Such a cold hearted assent of the understanding to truths that do not warm the heart, purify the conscience or sanctify the life is a "faith without works," and is dead. When one professes to believe the Bible and yet lives as if he did not believe it—when he professes to believe in God, and yet lives as if there was no God—when he professes to believe in Christ, and yet does not commit himself to Christ, or devote himself to the service of Christ—when he professes to repent of sin, and yet indulges in it—when he believes in a future state of rewards and punishments, and yet uses no diligence to secure "an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."—his faith is "without works," and it is dead. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

The similitude here employed to represent the state and character of the lifeless, unsanctified, and fruitless professor suggests the following thoughts:—

1. The body without the spirit, or the dead body, is *incapable of all enjoyment.*

Present the most beautiful pictures before a dead body, it is utterly insensible to their beauty—pour the sweetest sounds into the ear, it is not moved by their melody—place the choicest dainties on the table before it, it cannot enjoy or even partake of them. And as the body without life, so "faith without works" is dead to all enjoyment also. The mere formalist may come to ordinances, but he can derive no spiritual enjoyment from them—he may read the promises, but he can draw no comfort from them, "exceeding great and precious" though they are—he is as unmoved by the great and glorious realities of the kingdom of God, as the dead body is by the beauties, and harmonies, and all the varied attractions of the surrounding world.

There can be no doubt that this *incapacity for spiritual enjoyment* that characterizes those who have but a name to live is the great reason why such persons do usually, sooner or later, abandon even the "form of godliness." Strangers to that enjoyment which the service of the living God brings to all those who engage in it heartily, it is not to be