

and so perilous, consciousness ought not to be relied on, apart from other evidence. It requires a faculty of subtle analysis, greatly more astute than most of us possess, to enable us to determine whether our love be genuine or only counterfeit. And happily there are other quarters to which we may repair for evidence. Love to Christ, wherever it exists, has signs following it, to certify its presence. It is not a mere glow of feeling, which warms the heart for a moment, and then vanishes, leaving no trace behind. It is an affection, a settled mood of mind, an active sentiment, which cannot but tell on the temper and the life. Where it is present, it must make its presence felt. Like Mary's box of fragrant ointment, it must fill the house with its odour.

We may know whether we love the unseen Saviour, by the *general tenor of our thoughts*. That which is uppermost in our heart is sure, as the proverb truly teaches, to be also uppermost in our thoughts. And hence if Christ is really the object of our love, He must be the subject of our frequent and spontaneous musings. It cannot be that we love Him, if we think of Him only when His name is mentioned, or His redemptive offices obtruded on our attention. What would you say of the mother who seldom or never sent her thoughts after her sailor-boy on his distant voyage? What would you say of the plighted maiden who never, save when his name was mentioned, had a thought to bestow on her absent lover? Would you admit the love of either to be more than a name? And why then suppose that a Saviour, who is seldom or never in our thoughts, can have his rightful place in our affections?

We may know whether we love Christ, by *our treatment of His Word*. When I receive a letter from an absent friend, containing important intelligence about his affairs, and breathing the warmest affection towards myself, how do I treat that letter? Do I leave it unread, or read it with reluctance? If I should so treat it, could I pretend to have any real love for the writer? Or suppose, after so treating his letter, I should write him in reply, that I valued his correspondence and reciprocated his friendship, how could I avoid despising myself as a contemptible hypocrite? Yet exactly thus do many professing Christians treat that precious letter which Christ has sent us in his written Word. They call Him Master and Lord, and they profess to lament His absence and long for His return; yet they allow the Book which acquaints them with His "work and labour of love," and instructs them how to demean themselves till He come again, to lie from week's end to week's end unperused; or, if they now and then glance at its contents, it is only in the most perfunctory manner, and with ill-concealed

aversion. Can such neglect of Christ's Word consist with love to Christ himself?

We may know whether we love Christ, by *our feelings and conduct towards His people*. For Christ has a people upon earth peculiarly his own,—a people broadly distinguishable from the rest of mankind by their manifest likeness to Himself. How do we bear ourselves towards *them*? Do we value and seek their society, or do we stand coldly aloof from them? This is a decisive criterion. For if we love not our Christian brother whom we have seen, how can we love Christ whom we have not seen? If we love not the *visible* copy, how can we love the *unseen* original? Christ has appointed his people to be his representatives during his absence; He has declared them to be so identified with Himself, that whosoever toucheth them toucheth the apple of His eye: that whosoever giveth unto one of them even a cup of cold water, shall in no wise go without the meed of that precious acknowledgment, "Inasmuch as you did it unto me." And if, then, instead of loving and helping His people, we dislike and avoid them, how can we rebut the charge of disaffection to their Lord?

Prove yourself, my reader, by these tests of character. Do not assume, without trial, that you love the Lord. Do not even conclude that you love Him, after only a slight trial. The matter is too vital to your well-being to be safely left in any dubiety. And if unhappily you discover that you do not yet love Him, oh, then lose no time in going to Himself, that you may lay your hapless case before Him, and implore Him to win and warm your heart by showing you His own wondrous love for you.—Rev. J. M. McCulloch, D.D.

LIVING FOREVER.

I must live forever—not this body, but I. The body may be consigned to the flames and reduced to ashes; or it may lie down in the old family burning-ground and moulder back to its original dust with the dear ones who have gone before. *I must live.* *I must live* when the names of Alexander, Washington, Wellington, Solferino, and the rebellion of '81 shall have perished; when the morning stars that sang together at creation's birth shall have sung earth's requiem, *I shall live.* Nay, when those stars themselves shall have been blotted out, I shall only have *begun to live*; and I must live *forever and ever.* A *feverful trust* is committed to me, which I can never lay down.