

conduct, and to tell them that by reverently and carefully attending to these rules they will honor His name, and secure their own happiness, terrible is the guilt, and most certain the ruin consequent on throwing them aside, or permitting them to lie neglected.

The object which Christ had in view in his mission to our world, was to destroy the works of the devil—to gather from the midst of a polluted race a people holy and pure, zealous of good works, avoiding every appearance of evil, and showing forth the praises of Him who called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. For this purpose are the great doctrines of revelation given. It is not that men may believe them, and be satisfied and secure by merely so doing; but that being thus believed, they may pervade the inner man, diseased and weakened by the inroads of sin, restore its health and strength, and enable it to act as a child of God. When men are called and invited to Christ, it is not merely to believe in Him, but also to be like Him; to “be holy, and harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners,” as He was. The man who contents himself by believing in Christ, while he walks according to other rules than His, will find, if he continues so, that his faith was a fatal and a dreadful delusion. As certainly as one precept of Christ is despised, or disregarded, or which just means the same thing, as certainly as one sin is spared, and one sinful habit persisted in, is the ruin of the soul undoubted. Be its faith what it may, it will avail him nothing. The faith that would shelter or spare one sin is not the gift of God. It is an empty form, which Satan is well able and very willing to frame, and with which he would persuade the blinded soul to rest satisfied, and sleep its day of grace. As surely as it is the command of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent, so surely it is and as clearly revealed that this is the will of God, even your sanctification. The truth of God is not faithfully declared, unless both these are, with equal prominence, held forth to the view of men. And among a people constituted as our communities are, there is a special reason for continually urging the fact, that unless the fruits of holiness are produced, religion there is but an empty form. The profession of faith in Christ is general; but alas! that that profession is false in multitudes, if not in most of cases, cannot, if we believe what the Bible teaches, for a moment be questioned. This faith, however, while it allows men to pursue their own ways—to disregard the precepts of God’s word—to profane the Sabbath, and in their dealings and intercourse with their fellow men, to do what they would complain of in a tone loud and hard were it done to themselves, and also to live in neglect of religious duties not likely to be noticed by men; this faith, while it permits all this, yet preserves to them the name of Christians, and together with that, some

vague hope which enables them to rest satisfied with their condition, and to imagine will be well with them in the end, and that death Christ will save them. That such the fact to a large extent among ourselves, too manifest to be doubted. Very rarely indeed is to be met the individual who will not acknowledge his faith in Christ; and most as rarely will be found the parent who will not advance to ask the privileges of the Church, and in so doing is not ready, in the most solemn manner, to declare himself disciple of the Lord Jesus, that he love Him, and will henceforth labor to be and do what the word of Christ enjoins. But abate but one glance around, and what may you be constrained to conclude? It is too evident to be doubted, that generally there is no truth in the profession thus so solemnly made.

Before any change for the better will take place, it is quite certain there must be produced the heartfelt conviction that the faith and the profession which are thus characterized, are utterly worthless. Men must be rendered sensible of the fact; they must see and feel that while their religious profession allows them to disregard the example of Christ, and to rest content with any attainments short of the purity and holiness exemplified in the life and conversation which He left as their pattern for imitation, they are whatever their gifts and their zeal for many religious duties, without part or lot with his real disciples, who, in the great approaching day, will be owned by Him. This must be felt in order to change the cold and formal worship and the discharge of duty with the crowd, and for custom’s sake, to the earnest cry for mercy, heard from the Philippian jailor, “What shall I do to be saved?” That this, with the blessing of God, may be effected, the fruits of faith must be insisted on by the servants of Christ, and the question urged home to the conscience of every professing Christian, whether these fruits are produced. It may indeed be looked for, that in the discharging fully and faithfully the solemn duties of their office, the ministers of Christ will frequently give offence; for it is well known there are not a few who will be well enough pleased to hear of faith and the other graces of the Spirit, because a deceitful heart and a conscience scared and darkened by the god of this world, will tell them they possess all these, but, when the fruits of faith are searched into, they feel the mask is suddenly dragged off; and hence there is no alternative but to be displeased with themselves, or with him, who would thus disturb their pleasing fancies; and alas! but too frequently there is no hesitation in refusing to admit the truth, which would cast aside their gifts and their righteousness as filthy rags, and bring them as miserable sinners prostrate in the dust, to cry, “Save me, perish!”