

is not charity then to receive men's profession, while it is manifestly opposed to the general course of their actions. It is, on the contrary, a wilful blinding our eyes to a truth which the word of God has clearly and fully decided. "They profess that they know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable and disobedient, and to every good work reprobate." There it is very plainly declared, what is the value of that profession, which the actions contradict. To professing Christians the will of Christ is clearly revealed. They know what He would have them believe, and they know, with equal certainty, what He would have them do, and how their life and their actions should be directed. Those who disregard the directions given, while they know well that they are given by Him, manifestly disown His authority and plainly declare that He is not their Lord, and that they are none of His. When we take the Word of God in our hands and judge as it directs, what is the fact which meets us? Is it not, that by far the greater number of those who compose our professedly Christian congregations, are yet dead in sin and to God, and their own souls? In delivering the message of Christ to the multitudes who occupy this fearful position, professing Christ, but by the whole course of their actions proclaiming that they will not have Him to rule over them, outwardly perhaps observing certain forms and showing some respect to certain duties, but satisfied with their hearts under the entire dominion of the world and sin; in preaching to men, whose character is thus described, it must be borne in mind, that the first step, if their souls are to be saved, is the conviction, thorough and heartfelt, that this kind of religion is no religion at all. Somewhat similar to this state, was that of Judea, when John, the forerunner of Christ, appeared among them. There was no visible idolatry. The Temple and its services were scrupulously attended, and all the forms and ceremonies of religion were duly observed, but the spirit of religion was almost entirely gone. The faithful Messenger of God sternly declared, that what they called religion and in which they placed their confidence, was no religion, but a sure delusion, and that as certainly and as much as the heathen, they required

to repent and be washed from their sins. The ambassador of Christ is charged with the same message to the professedly Christian community, where religion has been handed down to them by their fathers, and are satisfied with it as such. We are called to preach the Gospel, but in doing so, we must represent to men the real features of their hearts and lives, in order to convince them of their need of the salvation which the Gospel offers, and of the certain ruin that must follow the rejection of it. We must show professing Christians what are the sure fruits of faith in Christ, and what the aims and desires of that heart must be, in which the love of God is shed abroad by the Holy Spirit, and what the outward character, which that love of God in the heart, will form in the life and conversation manifest to the world. We are bound, as we would be accounted faithful and would desire to be free from the blood of immortal souls, to bring home, with solemn earnestness, to every individual man and woman, the question, what does your faith in Christ do for you? Does it produce in your heart the love that makes His name, His cause, His ordinances, and His people dear and precious? Has it created the desire, honest and determined, to act in all your dealings with your neighbors, as you would they would act towards you? If not, and if these fruits are wanting, it must be evident in reference to that man, whatever his standing, his profession, and the esteem in which he may be held, that his religion is a fatal delusion, a solemn mockery, and which will terribly fail in his hour of need. If we neglect this, we are not faithful stewards of the treasures of the Gospel. Our hearers are all professing Christians. There is no reproach now attending such a profession. On the contrary it secures esteem and credit from men. It is agreeable enough, then, to come up to the House of God and listen to what is called the Gospel. There are few who will object to listen to a sermon of ordinary length, on the mission and death of Christ, and on the virtues and excellencies of his character, and in expounding the great doctrines of the Gospel, provided the wickedness of men's own hearts and lives is left alone. But, if the inconsistency of the life and actions, with the