

How many, alas! profess to be christians, who are but slightly acquainted with the motives, the laws, the aims and the end of the christian life. Such individuals, even supposing that they are genuine in their profession, must be unstable and unsuccessful in their efforts;—change of local residence, change of circumstances; the fluctuation of worldly opinion, sentiment of fashion; a change of society or companionship; all and each conspire to make these persons “like waves of the sea, driven with the winds and tossed,” or like “children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive.”

They are “ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth:”—“A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.”

But those who by the study of the word, and the teaching of the Spirit, have arrived at clear and intelligent conclusions in these matters, are enabled to hold on a straightforward and consistent course; and “like the tree planted by the rivers of water that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; their leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever they do shall prosper.” To such there is the comforting assurance, “Behold I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God: and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God: and the name of the city of my God; which is a New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God; and I will write upon him a new name:”—“To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.”

How important then, brethren, that we have clear and correct views of what our profession, as christians, is; and how important that we hold it fast! How necessary that we clearly apprehend what is implied and involved in this:—what are the motives, laws, aims, and end of the christian profession; what, in short, are the doctrines and duties of the life of faith. It is to this that the apostle exhorts. The grand central truth of which is, viewed in any way, the cross,—Jesus the great High Priest, making atonement and intercession. It is around this central truth that the apostle places the doctrines, and from it he enforces the duties of the christian profession; “seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.” “And having an high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water; let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)” The apostle not only enjoins it, but he has set us a noble example. He held fast his profession of faith, and hence when contemplating his departure from this world he could say, “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand; I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

It is surely highly proper and very important, then, especially in present circumstances, that we should consider first, what our profession of faith is: and second, how we may best hold it fast. It is due to ourselves to set this forth on this occasion; it is due to the other denominations, among whom we are known by a distinct name.

FIRST.

Consider what our profession of faith is, as belonging to what is known