

Now the sources of belief are numerous and varied. Amongst these are predilection, parental influence, general environment, self-interest, superstition, sentiment, consciousness, and sometimes evidence. The two last named, consciousness, and evidence, may be safely said to be the only legitimate sources of belief; and yet they are the least productive of all the sources I have named. One writer has gone so far as to say, that "Beliefs originate never in evidence but solely in their apparent profit." Although such a statement is too strong, it is true that our judgments are so warped by the other influences named, that we either cannot or will not interpret our own consciousness correctly and our prejudices are so strong that evidence is almost entirely set aside in the formation of creed. It may be said by way of palliation that a creed based solely upon consciousness and evidence would be a cold and heartless thing. But on the contrary, consciousness when properly interpreted and obeyed will leave upon our lives the impress of all the warmest and noblest impulses of our being; while evidence, as a source of belief, will bring before us great fields of unexplored truth which, if once thoroughly seized upon as motives, will set the whole being in a blaze of enthusiasm for God and humanity. No—belief does not need to be based upon sentiment in order to be warm.

I do not propose here to discuss in detail the influence of particular theories or systems of doctrine in the production of specific types of character. Questions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy are apt to be only too welcome, especially if there be any uncertainty as to which side a man will take. But I desire rather to call attention to some essential qualities of Christian character and to show that these can only be developed by the most assiduous and painstaking effort to discover truth and to formulate a creed in strict accordance therewith.

The first that I shall name is earnestness of purpose. It will, I think, be generally admitted, that this quality is essential to success in any sphere of life, and especially is it so with the Christian. His activity and consequent usefulness will be almost exactly proportionate to his earnestness. Now indefiniteness in creed or the absence of a creed is invariably accompanied by indifference in life. The man who has before him no clearly defined ideas of truth cannot be and is not actuated by the strong motives which