

tions. It increasingly purifies his heart. It prepares him for acting his part in all the circumstances and relations in life in which he is placed. Its origin is the love of God to mankind: it manifests God's love to mankind; it produces in the hearts of those who embrace it, love to God, and so prepares them for doing their duty to God and man. Man does not live aright without it. Destitute of it, he is estranged from God; and, where depravity developes itself unchecked, is estranged from man too. With it, he is united to God and man in love.

We must beware of taking our ideas of Christianity from professors of it. This is a mistake committed by the world to its own detriment, from which the church is not altogether free. Many professors of Christianity have nothing more than the name. The best of those who have the reality have imperfections: and so if we take our ideas of Christianity from those who profess it, we run the risk of misapprehending it, or of being prejudiced against it. Many who ignore Christianity do so because of the inconsistencies of professors and show their hatred of Christianity by ridiculing professors. We should take our ideas of Christian doctrine from the New Testament, of Christian practice from the character of Christ.

We do not mean to throw a shield over the inconsistencies of professors. We would not shroud them in darkness, we would rather expose them that we may see them and hate them. Truly if we look at professors, we shall see glaring inconsistencies, woeful departures from true Christianity; or rather sad evidences that many are nothing more than professors. It is important to be a Christian at all, it is important to be really a Christian. It belongs to every Christian to resolve that he will, by the grace of God, be a Christian not less really than professedly in his circumstances and relations of life. Many Christians act as if eminent piety were a work of supererogation—something they are not under obligation to seek—are content with a *passable* piety. But if religion be anything at all, it is all-important.

WHAT IS IT TO BE A CHRISTIAN ?

1. A person is not a Christian because he was born in a Christian country. Many have this idea: and so they think that conversion does not apply to them at all, but to countries professing false religions. This is an erroneous notion. It is disproved by the fact that men are sinners wherever they dwell. We see ungod-