

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE.

BY REV. E. H. CHAPIN.

IF the spirit of intolerance is unamiable any where, especially is it when found in connection with the name of Christ. And yet I know of no sphere where it seems rooted so deep, or where it kindles so high, as upon the subject of religion. This excommunication for a difference of opinion, this perfect hatred that *seems*, at least, to exist not only towards *opinions*, but *men*, this dividing of the Church of Jesus into hostile sects — is it like a manifestation of that Teacher, who came to gather men to a knowledge of one Father — to the fold of one Shepherd? And yet, where will you find more bitter warfare than that which is waged for religious doctrines? Where see more ridicule and aspersion than in the columns of the religious newspaper? Where find more coldness or alienation than among christians of different views? Now there must be some cause for this intolerance. And it appears to me that it may arise in part, at least, from a misconception, and this misconception seems founded on the idea that a particular *belief* is essential to christian character. Now I wish to be understood upon this point. All must agree that faith in Christ is absolutely necessary to entitle a man to the name of Christian. But within this avowal of christian faith how wide may be the diversity of knowledge, of reasoning power, of disposition! These may all lead to different views of the Saviour's doctrines, and to different perceptions as to what are and what are not his teachings. And yet I affirm that no one can truly see Christ, and drink in the influence of his