

not enjoin them to give less sacrifice however. What he asks is more mercy. Hence we find here no sanction for relaxing our religion's observances but only an exhortation to throw greater life into them, and in addition to this to let the spirit of justice and love govern all our dealings with our fellow men. The tendency toward this latter error was perhaps never more pronounced than at the present time. There seems to exist in many quarters an antipathy to all existing religious institutions. A disposition to belittle doctrines, creeds, prescribed forms of worship and all positive obligations. I do not refer to infidels and agnostics. I speak of a class of nominal Christians. Not a few popular writers belong to this class, much of the lighter literature of the day is saturated with this idea and in consequence is doing untold mischief among immature and illbalanced minds. Altogether a considerable element of society is possessed more or less with the infatuation. It is, however, for the most part confined to persons who should be denominated "feelers," rather than thinkers, who are wont to determine the articles of their creed by their "refined sensibilities," not by "thus saith the Lord;" who know more of novels than they do of scripture; and whose ideas of theology are the vaguest imaginable.

Much is talked about the essence and spirit of Christianity. Its moral precepts are greatly admired. Its founder is actually given precedence to Buddha, Confucius, Zoroaster, etc., as a great teacher of truth. The form of his system, however, is calmly set aside. It is not to be thought of for a moment. It is quite beneath persons with such profound spiritual insight, and capacity for dissociating essentials and non essentials, to be hampered by positive enactments. These are only the setting in which truth is placed for less cultured minds.

Some relieve themselves of anything like formal worship, declaring that the highest worship man can give is to deal mercifully with his fellow men. Others make profession of great reverence, adoration, and love, but what mode of expressing it they adopt remains a mystery. All unite in going into raptures over a gospel of "humanity" and underrating existing religious organizations.

Before such, an orator has simply to talk about "brotherhood," "kindness," "charity," "freedom," and contrast these with "scholastic doctrines" and "lifeless forms" and he is applauded to the echo.

There is a decided craving for this kind of thing in certain quarters. Even ministers of the gospel, I blush to say it, are sometimes found pandering