

character, so that looseness of thought in matters of belief is almost the most striking characteristic of the age in which we live. Certainly, it is becoming every day more common to hear men,—and not irreligious men,—speak lightly of Christian doctrines as though they were simply human in their origin, instead of being the gift of God in Jesus Christ. More and more, it seems to me, men are setting aside as insignificant and small truths upon which Jesus Christ and His apostles laid the most solemn and insistent stress. That is really the most disquieting thing about the world's religious life to-day,—not the denial of fundamental doctrines, though that, of course, is serious enough,—but an attitude towards them of sheer indifference,—the seeming assumption that their acceptance or rejection does not really matter. I seem to see something of that assumption everywhere. It is evidenced in the popular impatience with what are called doctrinal sermons. It is manifested in the easy and shifting standards of undenominational religion. It stands naked and unashamed in countless arguments for Christian union,—arguments in which purely economic considerations are conceded the place of chief importance. Everywhere one sees this spirit of indifference. That is the real point of danger. It is not that men do not know the truth, but rather that, knowing it, they are letting themselves think of it as something that is really not worth while, as something that does not matter. Thus it happens that the Christian world is coming to mistake looseness of belief for liberality of thought, and to make a mixed medley of undefined odds and ends of doctrine do duty for the clear, coherent conception of the truth that belongs only to the rational and reverend acceptance of the Catholic Creeds. I do not know how else one can account for the extraordinary multiplication of sects and schisms in the Church,—a disintegrating process that time seems powerless to check, and which is more and more making the faith of our common Christianity little less than a caricature of that which was once for all delivered unto the saints. I have heard it said that schism is only an organized eccentricity, but even that definition does it too much honour, for everywhere in the Church to-day there are a multitude of schisms that lack even the poor merit of being organized. But, as a matter of fact, there can be no apology for schism, and that is what the Protestant Church to-day fails so utterly to realize. For a man to make it his boast,—and only too often it is heard,—that to him all denominations are alike, argues not breadth of sympathy as he assumes but shallowness of thought. If the saying is in any sense true, and not simply an excuse for systematic shortcomings in the direction of religious duty,—often that is all it implies,—then it means at least these three things:—It indicates first of all an absolute failure to recognize that "the Divine purpose of visible unity among Christians" is "a fact of revelation", it means, secondly, that the apologist for undenominationalism has failed to find for himself anywhere a real religious home; and it points, in the third place, to the speaker's sheer inability to understand that there must be "clear intellectual conceptions as the basis of strong, consistent, and effective feeling." Much to-day is being made of the