

What of him who talks so loudly about faith and assurance ; who is so extremely devotional in prayer and class meeting, yet so slippery and unreliable in business, who is more concerned about abstinence from wine, tobacco, card playing and dancing than he is about the possession of Christian graces and manly virtues.

What again of him who well nigh makes immersion the condition of salvation, who allows it to bulk more largely in his mind than matters of character and life, who can scarce conceive of anyone entering heaven without first going under water.

And what about this other who is so steady going and decorous, so orthodox in his faith yet so barren in his life ; so pious that he will not shave on the Sabbath day, yet, as someone has said, systematically "shaves his neighbours all the week ;" who adheres so loyally to the Psalms of David, and gets so worked up over the use of hymns and organs, yet is by no means so agitated about elements in his heart and life equally discordant to God's praise.

We wish it to be understood that we do not speak disparagingly of anyone's theological tenets considered in themselves. We should be the last either to champion the cause of wine drinking, card playing, etc., or to say a word to detract from the sanctity of the Lord's days. All we desire to say is that when by anyone externals are given precedence over internals, when positive enactments, however important, are dissociated from spiritual life, when a man's zeal for religious observances overtops his regard for moral precepts he is guilty of a violation of the principle of the text. He has a "form of godliness," but is "denying the power thereof."

Some people imagine that only those are in danger of doing this who hold erroneous doctrine, or have an elaborate ritual. Not so. Doubtless ritualists stand in special danger, yet they need not necessarily be formalists. True love in the heart will give life to the most imposing service. Its absence will render the simplest dead. Even the most purely spiritual exercises, however, private prayer and reading God's word for example may be perverted from their original design and regarded as ends in themselves. What is this but exalting sacrifice above mercy.

This text with many others in Scripture brings out in bold relief the place which love to man and regard for the common obligations of life occupy in the scheme of religion. Were its spirit imbibed it would speedily remove the