

used as a store-room for public property. In the Churches sacred and even secular, plays were performed and public processions marshalled, such as the street displays of modern benefit and trades societies. Sometimes the transept was used as a free grammar school, as a library room, an organ chamber, even to store grain and wool, and in times of trouble the Church was a place of refuge.

It is not possible for a thoughtful person to see one of those old parish churches, without being deeply impressed with the marvellous skill exhibited in their construction. How varied are the details, how widely dissimilar in style and plans, yet alike they are, there is no slavish copying, no machine-made ornaments, no "cheap and nasty" workmanship, they have the bold and stately look of buildings built by and meant for freemen. Every workman seems to have been a master of his craft, and to have given up out of the abundance of his skill and gifts, the choicest to honour the Temple of the Church of his beloved native land. That Church he knew to be the old Catholic and Apostolic Church of England—not the Church of Rome—in this respect being more enlightened than those who are so fond of depicting England as semi savage before the Reformation. The Church was England—the Church he and his forefathers, from King to peasant, had been ever ready to champion against the Pope, centuries before their determined spirit found a voice in Wycliffe, before their like minded descendants saw finished the ancient struggle of England's Church against Rome, when the Spanish Armada dashed its wrecks against the shores of Britain—a fitting symbol of the ruined cause it was sent to uphold! Thus ended a battle that had lasted one thousand years.

Men in olden days were doubtless superstitious, but no more so than many now living, who are distinguished in the fields of science, literature, politics and art. When the mediæval Englishman spoke of papal tyranny, he knit his lips, put his hands on his sword hilt and meant it. He was a true man, too enlightened, and brave to display such double dealing, as those were guilty of who use the word "mediæval" as a scare crow to excite the bigotry, and awaken the stinginess of Churchmen upon whose illiteracy they work their party game. The mediæval times were times of the germination of great ideas. We get our idea of free public schools from the dark ages, the large freedom of our municipal self-government comes to us from the dark ages, we are just learning that the Church is the home as well as the sanctuary of all the people from the dark ages, our artisans get their trade unions from the dark ages, they inherit too those priceless blessings, benefit societies from the dark ages, in very truth to these much slandered times, we are greater debtors for "light and leading" than our descendants will be to us.

The nineteenth century should not throw stones at the past. Considering our advantages and theirs, the civilization of these days is woefully behind "the dark ages." Let who

will befoul the glorious story of the old land and its Church, by picturing the mediæval Englishman as an illiterate barbarian, we thrust the slander back into their throats with the noble mediæval motto—"Evil be to him who evil thinks." If men would look around, they could find bitterer poverty, viler social degradation, denser ignorance in modern cities and villages, than existed amongst the poor in "the dark ages."

WANTED—A NEW GOSPEL.

A "Missionary Correspondent" of the *Christian World* contributes a paper entitled "Wanted—a Re-statement of Christianity." This is no new cry and we fear it is only a euphemistic way of saying—"Wanted—a New Gospel." As the writer puts it—"It seems hard that other kinds of truth should be privileged to wear a new dress, to be re-stated in such forms as necessity and experience demand, while Christian truth for ever continues tricked out in Hebrew or mediæval old clothes."

On consideration, however, it will be obvious that no truth is capable of being really restated while it remains in its old condition. What is meant by the restatement of a truth is really its statement in some modified form. If what was once thought to be true and complete has been found to be inaccurate and imperfect, it becomes necessary to make the necessary amendments and additions; but if the truth remains where it did, no material change can be made in the terms of its formulation. For instance, to the end of time it will not be possible to restate the truth that "three times three are nine" in any new form worth the trouble of devising. It is notorious that whatever depends on the accumulation of human knowledge constantly needs re-editing; but it is not less true that the faith was delivered once for all to the saints, and is absolutely incapable of addition, diminution, or variation upon any point of vital importance. It is a pure mistake to suppose that in the Constantinopolitan Symbol by the words—"And in One Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of His Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not made, Consubstantial with the Father; by Whom all things were made; Who for us men and for our salvation came down from Heaven, and was Incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made Man"—we mean no more than was understood in the days before Arius by the simple phrases "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary."

To demand a re-statement of the Gospel, then, is to ask for a new revelation, and there is no reason to think that one is necessary, or will ever be given us. The "Missionary Correspondent" has, however, thrown some little light upon his desires. Science, he says—

Has grown up and has a testimony to bear, and to science the English mind has an attitude, while the Hebrew mind had practically none. The faiths of the ancient world have in

part been unveiled and their literature made partially accessible. The place which Christianity occupies in the great system of manifold truth, and among the faiths of the world is now more clearly seen, and should be capable of something like exact and new definition. And we cannot hope to see the present drift away from organised Christianity ended, nor even arrested, until Christian teachers are able to exhibit Christianity as welcoming new affinities and uninjured by new relations.

Now we venture with the utmost confidence to assert that science has not, never has had, and never can have anything to say to religion beyond what was placed in the Creed centuries ago—"I believe in One God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible." A desperate attempt was once made to show that the Bible contained statements that were not reconcilable with the facts of science, but after a while the dust of battle cleared away and it was seen that what science impugned was not Moses but Milton. As to "the faiths of the ancient world," our Lord Himself has categorically declared what is the place they occupy with regard to His Gospel—"Verily, verily, I say unto you I am the Door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers." The notion of Christian men consenting to discuss the place which Christianity ought to occupy in a Pantheon of the faiths of the world is ridiculous. In fact, the bare thought savours of scandal and impiety. It may be quite correct to say that heathen sages have had glimpses of truth, but to suppose that Christianity can receive any elucidation from them is as if a student of architecture instead of devoting himself to a great minster within his reach wherein he would find a perfect museum of every kind of Gothic, and that of the highest excellence, should spend his time in hunting about the neighbourhood for odd stones on which there were, or on which he fancied there might be, traces of mediæval work, and should suppose that they would help him to understand, or to describe, or create a public interest in the majestic church which was known and admired of all men.

No doubt it may be expedient and right for missionaries to study false religions for the sake of finding points that they may utilise; but that is quite a different thing from representing the Gospel as one of a family of religious faiths. Thus, St. Paul made a telling allusion to the altar which he had observed at Athens dedicated "To an Unknown God; but he would never have dreamt of troubling himself about the ideas of the founder of that altar. And, again, though he quoted Greek poetry for the saying, "For we are also His offspring," we may be quite sure that he had no idea of going to Aratus and Cleantes for information as to the Father "from Whom every family in Heaven and on earth is named." In a word, the notion of re-stating the Gospel as if it were one amongst the ruck of false religions is an outrage and a folly.—*Church Times*.

The happiest time of a man's life is when two bright eyes look lovingly into his, and two sweet lips are ready to be kissed, and a warm white hand rests trustfully in his.—*Florence Marryat*.