

of view of succeeding generations and different races. *There is a transient element in Christianity which is inseparable from it as held by mundane beings, who grasp ideas only in concrete and partial form.* So much do men find their own mode of thought as conditioned by their time and surroundings to them a necessary part of the religious conception, that it is almost impossible for many of them to regard the man with a different fashion of thought about a particular truth as holding the same religion with themselves. This is what leads to sects and religious wars. The *divine truth* may be in each sect, but it is so identified with the various wrappings of human conception, that to each sect it seems hardly possible that it should really be in more than one.

"The Christianity of the first century in Palestine was very different from that found a few years later in Rome. The *central truth* was in both, but one was presented in the garb which suited Hebrew thought and the other in the fashion which the Romans could understand. The great successes of Christianity were in adjusting itself to the mutable fashion of secular thought, in being an oriental religion to Orientals, a Greek religion to Greeks, a Roman religion to Romans. It was only when it ceased to be so adaptable and insisted on crystallizing its philosophy, that it at times temporarily weakened its hold on the life of the people. Some of the wisest foreign missionaries now are frank to say that the greatest obstacle to Christianizing the East is the attempt to make Chinese and Japanese and Hindoos American and English Christians, with Western conceptions of philosophy and theology, instead of helping them to translate the *Christ idea* into Chinese, Japanese and Hindoo feeling, thought and character. The Church of Rome is often thought of as the type of the immutable in theology. But, as a matter of fact, Rome has been peculiarly given to adaptation. Her theology on many, to her, essential topics has changed

much even in four hundred years. Immaculate Conception and Papal Infallibility and Transubstantiation are illustrations of this. At one time Platonic and at another time Aristotelian philosophy has been the prevailing fashion of thought in the Church, and the resulting *structure of theology* built about an identical religious truth is something vastly different in the two cases. The most orthodox Congregational theology prevailing to-day would have many apologies to make to Cotton Mather or Jonathan Edwards. They saw religious truth with their secular minds, and men of this generation see it with minds trained in the fashion of to-day.

"The fact that the *same truth* can be so differently interpreted and still be of vital significance, is one of the most convincing revelations of its divinity. Living things change their bodily form and outward aspect. It is only dead things that are crystallized and immovable. Men respect Christianity, and it is of value to them because it can be adjusted to their changing ideas in spite of men like those who, having tied it up to the Ptolemaic conception of the universe, insisted that 'the faith once delivered to the saints' would be wrecked utterly if it was reconciled to the views of Copernicus. If Christianity were to-day what it was in the Middle Ages men would not respect it long. It is because it sets forth totally different conceptions of this world and the next from what the masses of that time could in the least have appreciated that it holds the respect and influences the lives of the men of this later day."

The clear recognition this article gives us of the great facts that religion is a changing and progressive thing, and that it can only be saved from entire disintegration by adapting itself to new ideas and new facts, is important, and will doubtless cause thousands of its readers to enter upon a new line of thought. It would be demanding too much from men just