

to prove that by the Church he meant the Church of England:

"To say 'you will not leave the Church,' *meaning thereby all true believers in England*, is trifling—I do not mean so when 'I say, I will not leave the Church.' I mean, unless I see more reason than I ever saw, I will not leave the Church of England as by law established, while the breath of God is in my nostrils."—*Works*, XVI p 357.)

We feel very thankful to find our neighbour circulating such distinct and pointed proofs of John Wesley's loyalty to the Church of England. Whether the Methodists, as a body, will ever re-enter the Church, is a question hard to answer, but, as in the case referred to by the *Presbyterian Witness*, the conversion of Methodist ministers to the Church is of frequent occurrence; and with such language as the local Canon Farrar quotes, which he might have multiplied a hundred times and more, it may well appear surprising that any who claim to follow Wesley should remain from choice in opposition to their Master's strongly expressed instructions.

But we fear the editor of the *Witness* means what he has said to be understood as a sneer. God forgive him if he has nothing better to do than to encourage controversy. With a world lying in sin all around us, surely Christians can ill afford to be calling each other names, or in any way assisting to widen the breaches which are even now doing more to destroy souls than all the work of the Christian bodies effects in awakening sinners. Not sneers but prayers should emanate from Christians of all names that God would hasten the time when we shall see eye to eye, and, free from internecine strife, which is of the earth earthy, may stand together, and as a united host fight the powers of sin and darkness.

### A NOBLE RESOLVE.

WE referred a couple of weeks ago to the gratifying fact that Canon Anson, Rector of Woolwich, England, had resigned, to take duty in our Canadian North West. Speaking of this, *Mission Field* says:—"The Hon. and Rev. Canon Anson has announced his intention of resigning the important Rectory of Woolwich, in order to throw himself into the enormous work before the Church in the rapidly developing districts of Manitoba and the North West. Such an act, we need hardly say, implies no small self-denial, and shows a readiness to listen to a call felt to be from God. In the sermon on June 3rd, in which he announced his intention, Canon Anson said:—

"A few weeks ago it was my duty to urge upon you the duty of our Church with respect to other parts of the world. In preparing to do so, I was very deeply stricken with what I read concerning the truly terrible state of things that exists in North-west Canada, where 'emigrants, attracted by a belt of virgin soil extending for a thousand miles from east to west, are pouring in in numbers without parallel in the history of the world.' The increase of population seems almost fabulous.

"I have felt that the call of which I have spoken was one that I at least could not resist. It seemed to me to be an emergency of the Church which those clergy, who like myself had no special home ties such as is implied in wife and children, and who might be able to support themselves by their private means, might do something to help to alleviate by volunteering for the work."

Canon Anson is a brother of the Earl of Lichfield, unmarried, and a man of great energy, and

his presence and help in the North West in the present emergency will be of the utmost value; while his unselfish devotion to duty, as shown in his resignation of so valuable and important a Rectory, and the giving up of the many comforts with which he has been surrounded, will prove to the world that Christianity is not a name only but a very real thing. We may well repeat the words of *Mission Field*—"There is good hope for the Church at home and abroad when the Church's emergencies and necessities are thus regarded (as indeed they should be) as her attractions."

### IS UNBELIEF INCREASING?

#### III.

HAVING in previous numbers given prominence to the present aspect of scepticism, we come now to contrast it with the growth of Christianity, and to look into some of its visible results. To do this satisfactorily will at least require two additional articles. Many make themselves unhappy over the alleged exceptional prevalence and power of infidelity. We have tried to expose its worst features ourselves, and we do not find them so very alarming. The power of scepticism is wonderfully exaggerated. For ten articles on this subject in the secular press there is not one respecting the advances truth is making. Atheism and materialism struggle hard and assume much, but they are by no means as formidable as they appear.

But we have no desire that our readers should accept our unsupported statements in such deep matters. We shall therefore strengthen our assertions by some quotations from the writings of a few master minds—men well qualified to judge as regards the present condition of the religious world and the growth of unbelief.

John Fiske says, "In my estimation it is a very serious mistake, though a very common one, to suppose the tendency of modern philosophic thought is towards materialism. It seems to me that the course of modern philosophy is distinctly in the opposite direction. The latest and ripest philosophic speculation leaves the gulf between mind and matter quite as impassable as it appeared in the time of Descartes."

Joseph Cook, perhaps more than almost any other man living, can speak authoritatively of the condition of the religion of Jesus Christ. He has just recently completed his tour around the world, has lectured almost everywhere, and came in contact with all classes of people. The testimony he gives is that "infidelity and materialism are actually decreasing, and Christianity is spreading, not only in America, but all over the world." In an article in the "Bibliotheca Sacra" on the religious condition of Germany, he has made similar statements, and his views are endorsed by such eminent men as Professors Tholuck, Christlieb, and Kahnis, and also by Dr. Swartz, court teacher at Gotha.

The greatness of the change in one country in Europe is shown by the following fact, the truth of which is vouched for. In 1826, at Halle, all the students except five, who were the only ones that believed in the Deity of one Lord, and all the professors united in a petition against Tholuck's appointment, solely on the ground of his Evangelical belief. Less than twelve years ago a vast number of Germany's able and influential thinkers assen-

bled to do honor to this same noble Christian professor and expounder of the faith!

George Ripley, an accomplished literary critic and philosophic observer, said not long before his death that "materialism and unbelief had during the last few decades been steadily and surely declining, and that science was becoming ever more ready to confess the spiritual and immortal nature of the soul, and showing more humility and reverence in their attitude toward God." Mr. Frothingham, himself at one time an avowed atheist, now asserts that the orthodox churches have grown stronger rather than weaker during the last twenty years.

Those who underrate the present time, and who imagine Christianity is becoming effete, would do well to refresh their memories by a peep into the history of the past.

Take, for example, the question of *morals*. We unhesitatingly affirm that the absence of faith means the presence of immorality. We know sceptics assert otherwise, but they cannot produce a tittle of evidence in their favor. With them the eclipse of faith does not necessarily involve the eclipse of morality also. But history and experience are all against them. Atheism and infidelity have ever opened the flood gates of immorality. Scepticism means not only the complete overthrow of all the hallowed relationships of human kith and kin, but the uprooting and destruction of all civil governments. Voltaire himself confessed that if there were no God, it would be necessary to invent one in order to bind society together. Renan acknowledges that though he kept his purity, he felt himself under no obligation to be moral, when he laid aside his faith. It is clear, therefore, that religion and morality go hand in hand. Dynamite plotters and midnight assassins of the present day are either invariably agnostics, or they only make a show of possessing religion. It is undoubtedly true that if we throw overboard the Christianity of the day, most certainly morality will go along with it.

But to take a leaf from the past, no one who has the faintest idea of the condition of affairs, say in the time of Charles the Second, would want to go back to it. The state of morals in that day was simply shocking; the history of the period reveals a picture so revolting, that every decent person must turn away from it in utter loathing. Taine, in his "English Literature," gives us a glimpse of the licentiousness and cruelty of that age, and of the base conduct of those who are by courtesy called "nobles." We do not wish to sully our pages by giving an outline of its black vileness and horrible sins, but let those who imagine Christianity has accomplished nothing, think of the foul description he gives us of the Dukes of York and Buckingham, and of scores of others in that day. Bad as our times are, we have nothing, thank God, like that. No doubt there is much sin—secret and open—among us now; but how little in comparison with the past! As some writer has said: "If one of the old martyrs, who had seen the corruptness of the Roman Empire and the little effect of Christianity, could see the Church as it is now, with all its faults, he would say, 'the millenium had begun.'"

So, while there is much to keep us humble and repress self-satisfaction, there is much also in the present outlook which is cheering and hopeful, and which bids us thank God and take courage.—*Communicated.*