

The Church Guardian.

Upholds the Doctrines and Rubrics of the Prayer Book.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."---Eph. vi., 24.
"Earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."---Jude: 3.

VOL. V.]
No. 16.]

HALIFAX. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1883. WINNIPEG.

[\$1.50
PER YEAR.]

IS UNBELIEF INCREASING?

V.

THE special point to which we shall next make reference and which will close the present series of articles, is the wondrous growth of missions in our day. In every quarter of the globe the Evangelical churches are rapidly gathering in the heathen. Never in any age has such activity been witnessed in the foreign field? The Churches of the English speaking races especially are giving freely of their men and means to plant the blood-stained banner of the cross amongst those who are still in darkness and superstition. And they are reaping golden harvests everywhere. Converts are numbered by thousands and ten thousands. Country after country has thrown wide its doors to receive the peaceful soldiers of the cross. Nations which but a few years ago were considered quite inaccessible, are now glad to secure and profit by the teaching of faithful missionaries. This progress and zeal and devotion abroad have greatly benefited the Church at home. Before foreign mission work was thus entered upon, the state of Christendom was, it must be admitted, very sad. Cold, lifeless, apathetic, spiritually dead—these are the only terms we can truthfully apply to its condition.

Gladstone, in his "Church and State," speaks of the blight which had smitten the Church of Christ in the middle of the last century. Vecker confesses of the same period. "we had lost too many of our people by not preaching in a manner sufficiently evangelical," and he adds, "the Church exhibited a melancholy picture both as regards doctrine and discipline." In 1770 Sir William Blackstone, the eminent lawyer, then residing in London, determined to hear every clergyman of eminence in the metropolis, that among them he might make his choice. But he tells us "that he did not hear a single discourse that had more Christianity in it than the writing of Cicero: and that he never could discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher was a follower of Confucius, or Mahomet, or of Christ."

Dr. Watts, writing about the same time, says, "There is a general decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men."

The most thoughtful and intelligent confess this apathy was chiefly due to the neglect of real, earnest missionary work. Culture and Christianity can, it is affirmed, make no real progress apart from missions of the Gospel. The religion of the Bible, if anything, is missionary. But only ninety years ago, when Dr. Carey proposed that a discussion should take place on the Church's duty with regard to missions, he was straitway commanded to be silent. Ten years later the Scottish Conference, during a discussion on the subject of missions, declared a similar motion to be "fanatical and absurd; dangerous, indeed, and revolutionary." On our own continent the Andover students, headed by Adoniram Judson, were obliged to ask the conference whether the idea of missions which filled their hearts was visionary and impracticable, "I doubt," says Dr. Mullins, "if a single convert had been made before the year 1800 in foreign lands." Thus the present century began. True, three missionary societies, the Christian Knowledge Society, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, and

the Church Missionary Society, had been formed, but they had seen no visible results of their labours.

And now behold the change. Joseph Cook reckons the triumph of Christianity as one of the modern wonders of the world. In the first fifteen hundred years religion had gained one hundred million adherents. In the next three hundred years it gained an additional hundred million. Within the present century, up to the close of the year 1882, it had gained two hundred and ten millions! And these represent *communicants*, not merely adherents. The Bible, too, is fast becoming the constitution of nations in every land. Where can infidelity point to such triumphs? Are not the advances atheism may have made in Germany and a few other lands much more than counterbalanced by the marvellous successes of the Church on every side? In fact we live in the golden age of Universal Christian mission, when the light of the glorious gospel is awakening the nations everywhere to newness of life.

Take a few comparative statements which will serve as specimens of a multitude of others. The information we supply, our readers may rest assured, is recent, authentic and reliable.

In 1800 England had but 14 missionary stations in the entire heathen world. To-day she can number over a thousand. Then there were but seven missionary societies on the face of the earth, now there are upwards of seventy, and of these 18 belong to America. Eighty years ago Professor Christlieb estimates the total number of heathen converts at about 50,000; now there are at least two millions; the number of schools in foreign lands was then not over seventy; now there are over 12,000, with hundreds of native teachers and an army of native candidates for the ministry. The Scriptures at the beginning of the present century existed in some fifty translations, the total circulation being about five million copies. Now the Bible has been translated into 226 languages and dialects, while the issue is about 150 million copies. At the opening of this century all Protestant Christendom expended only \$250,000 annually for missions. It expends to day \$7,500,000 for that purpose.

If we take instances from the growth of missions in particular countries the account reads perhaps still more satisfactory. On all sides we witness most cheering evidences of progress and prosperity. In some cases the results are in fact unparalleled.

Thus India, one of the most interesting countries of the world, and where Christianity has to contend with almost insuperable difficulties, shows the growth of native Christians during the last decade as no less than 100 per cent. In the ten years ending 1851 the ratio of increase was but 53 per cent. Lords Lytton speaks of the change now going on there as "the greatest and most momentous revolution, at once social, moral, religious and political, which, perhaps, the world has ever witnessed."

Sierra Leone, it is well known, is a colony for liberated slaves. The population is 37,000 embracing a hundred distinct tribes. Thirty thousand of these are now professed Christians. To accomplish this noble work fifty-three missionaries

have laid down their lives. The climate it is well known, is deadly to Europeans.

Forty years ago the people of the Fiji Islands were notorious cannibals. Now, out of a population of 120,000, 102,000 are regular worshippers in the churches, while in every family there is daily prayer.

New Zealand, formerly given up to perpetual warfare, and wholly pagan, has been made a prosperous and civilized colony. Nearly 16,000 natives are members of the Christian church.

Only thirty years ago to be a Christian in Madagascar was a capital offence. In that Island there are now over 70,000 church members, and more than a quarter of a million adherents.

These are but glimpses from the mission field, but they speak volumes. We could largely add to them but we forbear. The evidences we have produced largely prove that the Church is steadily advancing, and that her labours in the past have been intensely satisfactory. The heaven is working. Much of course remains to be done. Millions are yet untaught. There are nations still in darkness and unbelief. But the past bids us go on nothing doubting. Its experience says: *Sursum corda.*—"Lift up your hearts."

Men may rail at the good old gospel. They may say atheism and infidelity are spreading. But the logic of facts, if they prove anything, show the onward march of the truth of Christ. The promises belong to the Church, and if her sons are faithful, victory in the future is assured.

If we have contributed anything by our articles to the better understanding of the question with which we set out, or if we have in any measure encouraged and cheered the despairing and hopeless, or strengthened the hands of the toilers for Christ, we shall be more than satisfied.—*Com.*

MATERIALISTIC TROUBLES.

MATERIALISTS are always in trouble. They build theories on nothing and change with the seasons. They glory in facts, and build largely on imagination. They boast of logic, and bridge chasms by assertions to conceal their poverty of connecting links. They leap from nothing to matter, and from matter to life though an unbridged gulf divide them. They evolve the highest from the lowest, and yet ridicule the thought of the Highest creating the lower. They assume the eternity of matter, but deny the possible eternity of mind. They imagine force before substance, yet discard the Almighty and Infinite God. They scorn the faith of the Christian, but build on their own imagination. They confess their reasoning unsatisfactory, and still plod in the dark insisting that facts must justify them, though unable to find them. They treat living as if it were the offspring of dead matter, though no case of life out of dead substance is recorded. Thus they flounder, imagine, guess, dogmatize and end where they begin, in Agnosticism. We need not fear their bite, for they knock out their own teeth; Christianity will not suffer for it rests on a Rock.—*Selected.*

BARON ROTHSCHILD'S carriage at Vienna is lighted by electric light. The apparatus is beneath the coachman's seat, and the light will burn one hundred hours, within ordinary carriage lamps.