

nor, have all been produced by laws acting around us. These laws, taken in the largest sense, being Growth with Reproduction; Inheritance which is almost implied by Reproduction; Variability from the indirect and direct action of the conditions of life, and from use and disuse: a Ratio of Increase so high as to lead to a struggle for life, and as a consequence to Natural Selection, entailing Divergence of Character and the Extinction of less-improved forms. Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted object which we are capable of conceiving, namely, the production of the higher animals, including man, directly follows. There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally evolved by a few forms or by one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning, endless forms most beautiful and most wonderful have been, and are being, evolved!

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, U. S. A.

### CASKET OF GEMS.

Sin always leaves its mark. A man who has been bad, brutal and vicious all his life cannot be made really pure, moral and good by any sudden conversion or ceremony. Virtue, benevolence, charity, goodness and purity come by slow and steady growth and accumulation. They are not picked up as one gathers pebbles upon the sea shore, but they must be laboriously mined out, as one mines out gold from its deep-hidden subterranean recesses by slow, patient, persevering toil.—*Mrs. E. D. Slenker.*

If God created a universe, was it because he desired a universe? Does not desire for a thing, imply dissatisfaction? If before the creation, God desired worlds and sentient beings, must he not have been dissatisfied, discontented with his condition,—a condition in which he sustained no relation to worlds and living creatures? Does not dissatisfaction imply finiteness, incompleteness, imperfection? If the desire for a universe had a beginning, must there not have been a change, and an addition to his wants? Can an infinite being—to whose existence relation and knowledge no additions can be made—have *new* desires? Can such a being have *any* desires, since they imply dissatisfaction with existing conditions? If it be said the desire for a universe always existed, must there not have been an unsatisfied desire, and consequently unhappiness up to the time that the creation occurred?—*B. F. Underwood.*

Rely not upon creeds, dogmas or beliefs, but place thy confidence on deeds and works; for these, combined with an earnest desire to attain to the greatest elevation, morally and physically, of which the race is capable, will make for thee a heaven here and now, which shall be so real and so satisfactory that it will cause to fade into nothingness all dreams of an intangible, incomprehensible vacuum of bliss, in some coming future of which no one knows or can know anything.—*Mrs. E. D. Slenker.*

What thou wilt, thou rather shalt enforce it with thy smile than how to it with thy sword.—*Shakespeare.*

The phrases which men are accustomed to repeat incessantly, end by becoming convictions, and ossify the organs of intelligence.—*Gaethe.*

Time will inevitably sift the false from the true, and what is real in all beliefs and "isms" will stand the test of the very closest examination and the most scientific research. Until people are content to confess their ignorance when they have traced causes as far back as actual knowledge and true reason will account for them; and then wait for future developments, instead of trying to solve the why and wherefore by saying "God did it," the whole progress of real truth will be kept back by Bibles, myths, ghosts, and gods.—*Mrs. E. D. Slenker.*

People gave ear to an upstart astrologer (Copernicus) who strove to show that the earth revolves, not the heavens, nor the

firmament, the sun and moon—but such is now the state of things. Whoever wishes to appear clever must devise some new system which of all systems is, of course, the very best. This fool wishes to reverse the entire science of astronomy. But the sacred scripture tells us that Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth.—*Martin Luther.*

Men must endure their going hence, even as their coming hither; ripeness is all.—*Shakespeare.*

We must be afraid of neither poverty, exile, nor imprisonment; of fear itself only should we be afraid.—*Epictetus.*

Wood burns because it has the proper stuff for that purpose in it; a man becomes renowned because he has the necessary stuff in him. Renown is not to be sought, and all pursuit of it is vain. A person may, indeed, by skillful conduct, and various artificial means, make a sort of name for himself; but if the inner jewel is wanting, all is vanity, and will not last a day.—*Gaethe.*

### OUR CONTEMPORARIES.

The *Spiritual Offering*, a monthly magazine formerly published in St. Louis, and now in Springfield, Mo., has reached its ninth number, which is before us. It is certainly one of the best Spiritualist publications offered to the public. Its contributors are both able and earnest, and it is conducted with care and dignity. We expect to be able to make such arrangements with its publishers that we can offer the *Spiritual Offering* and the *JOURNAL* at reduced rates.

The *Duluth Tribune* is making it hot for the orthodox people of that enterprising Western town. Bro. Mitchell is a man of ability, and deals sturdy blows. We hail with pleasure such signs of progress, and we hope many more editors will come out from their creed-bound churches and proclaim the truth as it is in Freethought. We wish Bro. Mitchell success, and we have no doubt that if he keeps on in his independent and manly course he will attain it.

We have received the first number of the *Anti-Sceptic*, a twenty-four page magazine to be published monthly in Boston, Mass. Its editor claims to be a "converted Infidel," but is evidently ashamed of his "conversion," as he does not favor the public with his name. Until he does so we shall be somewhat "sceptical" as to his ever having been an Infidel. He promises to demolish "Atheism," "Deism," "Materialism," "Free Religionism," "Spiritism," and all other "isms" that are opposed to Christianity. He uses eminently orthodox christian modes of warfare—misrepresentation, villification and threats. He speaks of "Christian morality" as though all non-christians were *immoral*. We scarcely know which to wonder at most, his impudence or his ignorance. Every word of the twenty-four pages seem to have been written by the same hand and in the same style. Not a single argument in support of Christianity is adduced, nothing but bare assertions of its truth and frantic appeals to the worst passions of the Christian public.

We have received the first number of *Payne's Age of Reason*, a new weekly eight-page Liberal paper, published by Seth Wilbur Payne, New York. It is thoroughly liberal but we think is somewhat egotistical, when it claims to be the only Infidel paper in America. We have noticed that most of our Liberal contemporaries published in the United States coquette with Spiritualism, but we think the *Common Sense* of St. Louis and the *Boston Investigator* are exceptions. If the worthy Editor of the *Age of Reason* will take the trouble to look over the *FREETHOUGHT JOURNAL* we think he will acknowledge that we are about as "broad-gauged" as it is possible to be. The *Age of Reason* is published at the marvelously low price of \$1 a year. We wish Bro. Payne abundant success in his undertaking.