

That expression of regret deserves more than a passing notice. Undoubtedly the learned judge is right, that the evidence of such a man may be of use by "conveying to the mind of the judge as much conviction as if given under oath," and certainly lawyers accustomed to weigh evidence would not err very far in forming a proper estimate of the evidence given. But it may be asked further, whether an investigation held without any witnesses being sworn would not be more likely, in most cases, to bring out the truth as satisfactorily, if not more so, than the present method? Any statement made on oath, unless invalidated by counter testimony, is allowed to stand for truth; and as the verdict must be in accordance with sworn testimony, it is evident that a prejudiced witness, whose testimony cannot be rebutted, may give a wrong colouring to a whole question involved. Still, that false statement must form part of the ground for decision. Perjury, we know, is by no means uncommon in our courts; and even when the suspicion is very strong, the judge cannot reject that as testimony. He must give it full value. Besides, Quakers and others give evidence without swearing, and generally are even more reliable than the average witness. A conscientious man will not give false testimony, either with or without oath; and a man who will knowingly give false testimony will be very apt to perjure himself if he is not in danger of being exposed. The number who will speak truth solely from a regard to their oath is comparatively small, and as a general thing these would on cross examination come out with the truth even without the oath. Testifying in court is a most important matter, and it may happen that issues of great value may depend on what an Atheist alone can tell. Why then should the cause of truth suffer because an Atheist may not be sworn? It is certainly a testimony to the public estimate of the value of religion and the fear of God, that the word of an Atheist is not thought reliable, and to deny him the right of testifying is a reflection on him personally, at which he may or may not be offended; but it is going too far to assume that all Agnostics are unreliable, and it may be seriously injurious to the interests of another if a case is decided on sworn evidence which is false, and which could be set aside by the statement of an Atheist. Truth has nothing to fear when full and free inquiry is made, and it will not be made any safer by taking sworn testimony as the only ground of evidence.

MORE SABBATH PROFANATION.

WE mentioned a few weeks ago that the Telephone Company were likely, at an early date, to require the presence of their clerks for ordinary work on the Sabbath day. The notice to this effect we understand has now been given, and the usual alternative of obedience or dismissal will of course be presented to every one in the company's employment. Not the most distant approach to the very semblance of an excuse for this step can be indicated except the all-prevailing one of money-making. Not contented with the gains of six days of the week, the company wishes to lay the whole of it under contribution for the increase of its "pile." Conscience, decency, family comfort, and necessary physical and mental rest, to say nothing of religious worship, are all to be thrown to the winds in order that the telephone people may catch a few stray dollars, and enable greedy, unscrupulous traders to steal a march upon their more reasonably disposed neighbours by getting the start of them in closing bargains, or in seeing how stocks are going. It is possible that it may be pleaded that such an arrangement as the one proposed will be very useful for those who have sick friends about whose welfare they are anxious, and with whom they can talk all the morning. Nay, we can even imagine that the opportunity for sermon-hearing will be pleaded, for Mammon has always been impudent and hypocritical even to shamelessness. But all these and such like excuses, if they are pleaded at all, are mere subterfuges to hide in some measure the hard, cold, disagreeable fact that even the smallest amount of physical rest from ordinary toil is gauged by those whose one thought by day and dream by night is to make money, but whether honestly and honourably or the reverse seems a matter of very small moment.

The late Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, used to say that he trembled for his country when he read the prophecies of the Old Testament and remembered that God was just, because in these writings were depicted a state

of society very similar to that which prevailed in the England of his day, and all his historical readings and ponderings led him to the conclusion that such courses persisted in, whether among the Jews or any other people, led in due time to social lock and ultimate disorder and revolution. Our great trading companies, and many individuals as well, equally unscrupulous, with their bullet-headed, superciliously godless greed of gain, may smile contemptuously at the idea of Old Testament prophecies having any application to them, and their ways of working, and may in their own foolish, feather-headed fashion, talk of fanaticism and narrow-mindedness when any attempt is made, as they phrase it, to "clog the wheel of business" and thus retain intact to the toiling millions the sacred *liberty* of their weekly rest. But all this affected indifference and contempt—the offspring at once of godlessness and greed—will not keep the intelligent, right-thinking Christians of Canada from protesting against all such short-sighted and nationally injurious proceedings, or from doing anything in their power to expose the hypocrisy and prevent the wrong.

We, at any rate, know no sensitiveness about quoting Old Testament prophecies, and cannot even imagine ourselves making an apology for referring to such an ancient and with too many such an antiquated book as the "Word of God." Some people say the Old Testament is too old.—One rather prominent *litterateur*, who virtually claims omniscience, if not a good deal more, has recently, in a foolishly oracular fashion, even recommended Christians to repudiate it altogether on account of what he calls the "tribal religion" which he says it teaches; but with those who study that Book in either a devout or an intelligent spirit, it will always have a strangely modern character, as when it falls it will carry the "New" along with it to the grave.

Will the managers of telephones, telegraphs, railways, taverns, candy shops, etc., who are all "striving for ample liberty to ply their trades on every day of the week, allow us to quote a passage which they might all be the better for studying, and which we have no doubt is new to most of them, if not to all?—

"Hear this, O ye that swallow up the needy, even to make the poor of the land to fail, saying: 'When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the Sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small and the shekel great, and falsifying the balances by deceit? that we may buy the poor for silver, and the needy for a pair of shoes; yea, and sell the refuse of the wheat?' The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, Sur— I will never forget any of their works. Shall not the and tremble for this, and every one mourn that dwelleth therein? and it shall rise up wholly as a flood, and it shall be cast out and drowned, as by the flood of Egypt. And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day; and I will turn your feasts into mourning and all your songs into lamentation; and I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, and baldness upon every head; and I will make it as the mourning of an only son, and the end thereof as a bitter day."

Small wit and enormous self-conceit, with the due modicum of profanity, may make merry at the idea of Jewish times or Bible warnings having anything to do with modern ways and modern workings. Nay, they lead men to say with Claverhouse, "To man we can be responsible, and as for God we shall take Him in our own hands;" but all that will not change the facts, and will not make it less true that certain ways of individual or united action have still in the present day, as they have had in days gone by, a natural and necessary tendency to produce not only an enormous amount of personal suffering and degradation, but, if persisted in, to issue in social confusion and national ruin.

MRS. STRETTON'S new story, "Cobwebs and Cables," is commenced in this issue.

ON the evening of Monday last, the Rev. Principal Grant lectured in Shaftesbury Hall, in this city, under the auspices of the Young Men's Christian Association. His subject was "Joseph Howe, the Canadian Politician and Man of Letters."

SOMEbody who has a liking for figures should compile a statement shewing at a bird's-eye view how much the Churches of the Dominion do for missionary purposes. Probably the exhibit would make some people feel uneasy, but that would be a good kind of feeling for them to have. The trouble just now is that they feel too easy about such matters. Our neighbours across the lines surpass all other Christians in getting up comparisons of this sort. From some

statistics lately published, it seems that the Methodist Church North has a membership of 1,700,000. These followers of Wesley raise annually for Home and Foreign Mission purposes \$562,000. The membership of the Presbyterian Church North is 581,000. These followers of Calvin raise for the same purposes \$738,744. That is to say, there are three times as many Methodists as Presbyterians, but the Presbyterians raise for Mission purposes nearly \$200,000 more than their Methodist neighbours. Clearly the doctrine of predestination does not prevent these American Calvinists from using means. It never does.

DR. PARKER, of the City Temple, puts these pointed questions to preachers.—"How do you *speak*? Do you make a rumbling noise in the back of your mouth as if you had bronchitis, and were smothering your bronchial tubes with cotton wool? If you speak with the wisdom of men and of angels, the cotton wool will beat you." True, every word of it. Hundreds of good sermons are lessened in their effects by this kind of "cotton wool." There is another difficulty just now, however, against which too many preachers have to contend—over-heated and badly ventilated places of worship. There are not many preachers in Canada who cannot remember school-houses and small churches in which they laboured and perspired until nearly fainting. It requires an extraordinary amount of grace to keep a preacher in a proper frame of mind while he watches a church official put more fuel in the stove when the room is already twenty degrees too hot. The idea of preaching effectively in such an atmosphere is out of the question. The people go to sleep, and the preacher has a heavy cold on Monday. Paul could not keep a congregation awake and interested in some churches. The average preacher is not allowed to go around on Saturday and smash the windows, as Spurgeon is reported to have done to a church that the deacons refused to ventilate. By all means let people have plenty of fresh air as well as a free gospel. The two things go well together, and there is not much use in preaching to a congregation stupid with foul air, and sweltering in heat. At such a service there is always more perspiration than inspiration.

MR. O. B. FROTHINGHAM, leader of the free thinkers in the United States, has decided to offer no further opposition to the Christian religion. Mr. Frothingham tells his friends that he has not recanted; he does not believe in revealed religion any more than he ever did, but he thinks that, after all, there may be some truth in Christianity, and he has therefore determined to cease opposing and wait for light. Evidently Mr. Frothingham did not like some of the company he got into since he so ostentatiously dropped the title "Reverend." He says, "Such men as came forward as teachers in the free-thought movement were out-and-out materialists," and "a dead materialism" he says, "he abhors as deeply as any evangelical clergyman he knows." Well, it has always been so. Men who go off at a tangent always do get into queer company. Heterodoxy, like poverty and politics, causes a man to have strange bedfellows. Mr. Frothingham says:—

"The creeds of to-day do not seem in my eyes to be so wholly groundless as they were then, and while I believe the next hundred years will see great changes in them, I do not think that they are destined to disappear. To sum up the whole matter, the work which I have been doing appears to lead to nothing, and may have been grounded upon mistaken premises. Therefore it is better to stop; but I do not want to give the impression that I recant anything; I simply stop denying and wait for more light."

Instructive words these, and none the less instructive for their tone of sadness. The work which Mr. Frothingham has been doing appears to lead to nothing, and the "creeds" do not seem so wholly groundless as they once did. Quite so. Free-thinking leads to nothing but odious materialism, and the men with the creeds not only do work which leads to something, but even the creeds themselves improve on acquaintance. All this has been said a hundred times by orthodox men and orthodox journals, but it is just the very thing that Mr. O. B. Frothingham and the class he represents have been vigorously denying. Mr. Frothingham says when he was in Europe lately "Evangelical religion was stronger, and the churches better filled; there was more of the religious spirit abroad than when he was there twenty years ago." He also says "revealed religion" is stronger here than it was twenty years ago. No doubt of it. Free-thinking hurts its own disciples most.