

formerly used as a school book in New England, and which elderly persons known to him had been required, some seventy years ago, to get by rote as children. This task must have occupied no small portion of their time, as this string of doggerel rhymes makes up no less than 224 stanzas of eight lines each. They were written by Michael Wigglesworth, A.M., teacher of the church of Malden, New England, and profess to give a poetical description of the Last Judgment. A great array of Scripture texts, from the Old and New Testament, is cited throughout in the margin as warranty for the orthodoxy of every dogma.

Were such a composition now submitted to any committee of school managers or teachers in New England, they would not only reject it, but the most orthodox among them would shrewdly suspect it to be a "weak invention of the enemy," designed to caricature, or give undue prominence to, precisely those tenets of the dominant Calvinism which the moderate party object to, as outraging human reason and as derogatory to the moral attributes of the Supreme Being. Such, however, were not the feelings of the celebrated Cotton Mather, in the year 1705, when he preached a funeral sermon on the author, which I find prefixed to my copy of the sixth edition, printed in 1715. On this occasion he not only eulogizes Wigglesworth, but affirms that the poem itself contains "plain truths drest up in a plain meter;" and further prophesies, that "as the 'Day of Doom' had been often reprinted in both Englands, it will last till the Day itself shall arrive." Some extracts from this document will aid the reader to estimate the wonderful revolution in popular opinion brought about in one or two generations, by which the harsher and sterner features of the old Calvinistic creed have been nearly eradicated. Its professors, indeed, may still contend as stoutly as ever for the old formularies of their hereditary faith, as they might fight for any other party banner; but their fanatical devotion to its dogmas, and their contempt for all other Christian churches, has happily softened down or disappeared.

The poem opens with the arraignment of all "the quick and dead," who are summoned before the throne of God, and, having each pleaded at the bar, are answered by their Judge. Some