

uel Lester, and attended an appointed meeting for Abel in a Church near by, which was fairly well filled with a very orderly and attentive audience, which seemed quite satisfactory.

Second day morning Samuel, though aged and not very rugged, notwithstanding the weather being cold and road very rough, took us down to Nathan Wilson's—some six miles—to dinner, where we again met his sister Mary, their brother Sykes, of South Dakota, also being with us. We had quite an enjoyable visit with all of them.

Toward evening Nathan kindly took us down to Sterling, some ten miles, at which place Abel had arranged for a meeting in the Unitarian Church, which was well filled, lighted and warm, the audience giving good attention to what was offered. After expressions of thankfulness to them for these kindnesses the meeting closed. The minister came forward and expressed unity with what had been said. Returned with Hugh L. John, where we had taken tea, and spent a very pleasant evening and night.

We left on the early train Third-day morning for our homes, where we arrived in due time, feeling well repaid for the effort we made in the cause of truth.

## RELIGION AND IRRELIGION.

The wide difference of opinion and belief existing among the human family in regard to the subject of religion have induced me to express some thoughts upon what seems to me a very vital subject. I hold as a fixed principle that truth never suffers by comparison; and also that the quickest way to get rid of error is to get it fairly and forcibly before the mind. I shall not assume the position of absolute knowledge, believing that he who is over-positive or absolute in his beliefs gives strong evidence that he may be in error. It has been a problem during the years of my life, one which to me has never been satisfactorily demonstrated, how the religious world, holding to the teaching of the

Bible, could sanction and support capital punishment. Confronted first by that which is held of highest importance in the Old Testament, viz., the commandments, one of which in the plainest and simplest language possible, without qualifying words, emphatically declares—"Thou shalt not kill"—neither legally or illegally. This command, as the record states, was handed forth "amidst the thunderings and lightnings and the noise of the trumpet and the mountain smoking." Leaving the record of the earlier history we appeal to the "Sermon on the Mount" for evidences, in which the people were taught that "unless their righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees" they should "in no case enter the Kingdom of Heaven." "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time: Thou shalt not kill, and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment." And furthermore, that every one who is *angry* with his brother (the old version by way of excuse has interpolated "without a cause") shall be in danger of the judgment. The thousands of men who are recognized as criminals are the adversaries of those whom they have assaulted. The teaching of Jesus, so far as I am able to comprehend it, points to an agreement with our adversaries as practical and advisable. Never in a single instance does he recommend or hint at the propriety of depriving him of life. He does, however, in part recognize the fact of the dominion of law reaching out to restraint or imprisonment. What a sublime thought is embodied in his utterance "I say unto you, love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be so as of your Father which is in heaven." "If ye love them that love you what reward have you? Do not even the publicans the same?" When we shall have put on religion for irreligion, and have gone to our enemies or adversaries stripped of our cloaks of hypocrisy and with the genuine love of God in our hearts, there will be little need of placing the abhorrent cord