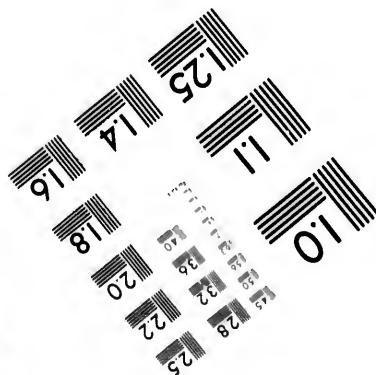
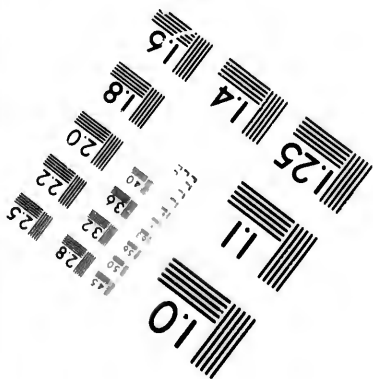
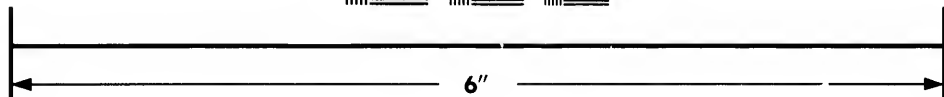
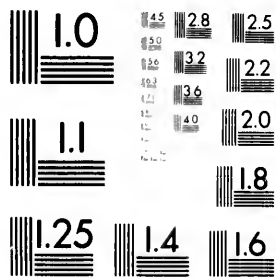


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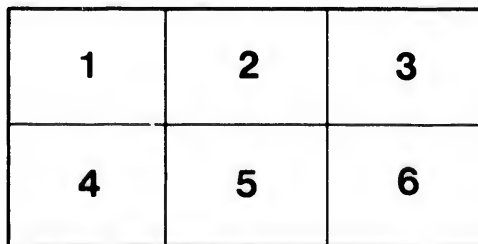
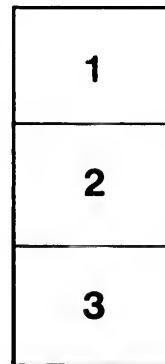
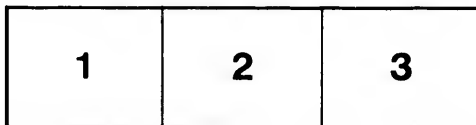
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The

BIBLE  

Versus

INFIDELITY

BY HENRY ADAMS



E. J. ARMSTRONG,
STEAM PRINTER,
ST. JOHN, N. B.

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THE
BIBLE
VERSUS
INFIDELITY.

BY HENRY ADAMS.

ST. JOHN, N. B.:
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1895.

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THE BIBLE VERSUS INFIDELITY.

Passing through the street a short time ago I came upon a certain individual who was violently attacking that sacred and inspired book, the Bible. He avowed that it was not the Book of God, but that it was the writings of men. For my own part, I do not hesitate for one moment in saying that no book ever printed gave such peace of mind to the human conscience; no other book ever printed has withstood the attacks and vindicated itself, as the Bible. The infidel will tell you that man was not created by God, but that he has developed from the lower forms of life, and that no God exists, or ever did exist. Will the infidel please tell us how long mother earth had power to produce the noblest of God's works, or when that power ceased to exist, and why it does not exist at the present time? or will he tell us whether man is endowed with reasoning faculties, or instinct only, such as the brute creation; and if any form of life has power to give those reasoning faculties. The infidel tells us that we worship an unknown God. Will the infidel prove to us that there is any race upon the earth that does not recognize an immortality, even though they worship idols, they acknowledge that a Supreme Being exists. What prompted the ancient Druids to believe in the transmigration of souls? What caused the ancient Britons to have weapons of warfare and hunting placed in their coffins? What induced the Hindoo mother to throw her infant into the waters of the sacred Ganges? What caused certain castes in India to throw themselves under the wheels of the juggernaut? Was it not in anticipation of their immortal souls reaching a brighter sphere? What causes the strong man, who has led a life of blasphemy and licentiousness, to shudder and tremble and call upon God to have mercy upon him, as the destroying angel, with the wand of death in his hand, stands over his bed. What caused

Tom Paine to falter when the dew-drops of death stood upon his brow? Was it that he turned traitor to his doctrine, or did he in the throes of death have the scales removed from his eyes and beheld the Triune God upon his throne. Whatever may have been the cause, the infidel cannot deny that Tom Paine faltered in his last moments. And here upon this point I boldly challenge the infidel to bring forth one single instance of man, woman, or child ever repenting of giving their hearts to God. The cowardly soldier dares not face the battle, so he arms himself with a false courage by drinking alcohol; in like manner the glaring infidel, who wishes to live a life of immorality and vice and dare not face the future, arms himself with a false courage by ignoring the Book of God and the future, and openly avowing that no God ever did, or will exist. A few years ago when in conversation with an infidel, he told me that his prayer was that he might be kept humble and patient. I asked him to whom he prayed—he stood amazed, and finally answered, well, that is the desire of my heart. What construction can an infidel put upon such an answer as that coming from the lips of a brother infidel. My answer is that no greater proof of the existence of a Triune God could be given. Here was a professed infidel, living not in ignorance, but in blind prejudice, with the Holy Spirit working within him, the infidel resisting it, and yet he had to acknowledge that he wished to become Christ-like. I do not believe that there is an infidel living who does not entertain a secret thought that there exists a living God; but he is not a God which suits their views and hence they ignore him; just so with the blind, prejudiced Jews in regard to our Saviour. He came to them as their King, yet they rejected him because he came not in the pomp and vanity of an earthly king. He came not to fight their earthly battles; that cause, rapine and murder, but he came with love and mercy to free them from the bondage of sin and redeem the lost and ruined soul—hence they rejected him, called him an imposter and finally put him to death because he did not meet their views; just what the infidel is doing to-day. Will the infidel tell us how it is that we have Israelites in this world who are still waiting for the coming of the Messiah; how did they receive their knowledge

of a Deity ; are they not the descendants of Abraham who walked and talked with God. Surely those people could not be mistaken about the existence of a Deity, for they still retain the rites and customs of their ancestors. The infidel tells us that nature governs the earth, will he please inform us how it is that dame nature has been so perverse as not to yield the creating power to man as well as the destroying ; man can destroy but cannot create.

You can construct a vessel, and place it upon the water ; will it propel itself? Certainly not, it must have motive power ; just so with man. God created him from the dust of the earth, breathed into his nostrils and he became a living soul, capable of reasoning and thinking for himself. If man has developed from the lower forms of life, will the infidel be a little more explicit and explain to us, if the Caucasian developed from the same form as the Ethiopian, if so, why such a remarkable difference between them. Surely, if nature governs the earth she has the same power over one as the other. Ah! says the infidel, science has revealed wonderful things ; yes no doubt it has ; it has enabled man to compute the distance of the sun from the earth, to discover planets that were hitherto unknown, to construct the barometer that foretells the storm ; to give us the magnitude of the stars and various other things ; but it has never revealed to man the secret power of giving life to an inanimate form. Science has revealed these things which benefit man, but let me remind the infidel, that in countries where Christianity is not tolerated there is little or no revelation by science, shewing plainly that Christianity is the basis upon which science is founded. The Bible has revealed to us much greater truths ; it has revealed to us that man is entirely at God's disposal ; he can give to man reasoning powers, or he can withhold them from him ; it has revealed to us that man without God's aid is lower than the brutes that perish ; it reveals to us that without God's grace we can accomplish no good thing—for the heart of man is evil ; it reveals to us that God so loved those whom he made after his own image that he provided a ransom for them. The infidel will tell you that Christians are constantly wrangling over the interpretation of the Scriptures. That this is true we must admit, but let me plainly tell the infidel that

all denominations agree on the one great point, that is, that God exists and the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ has power to cleanse the vilest sinner. Will the infidel please call to memory the scenes that were enacted in former days, will he look upon the noble men and women, who walked boldly and unflinchingly and submitted themselves to be burned without any remonstrance whatever; will he note that their last words were prayer and praise to that Holy Being who strengthened them for the ordeal. Think you those martyrs did that in their own strength, was it human nature? No, that same gentle voice that spoke to Saul of Tarsus when on his way to Damascus, spoke to them at the stake. His gentle voice bid them be of good cheer; Peace be still; Lo I am with you to the end. Think you Mr. Infidel that one of your followers could be found bold enough to march to the stake and give his or her life for the faith they put in you; think you that a Ridley, a Cranmer, or a Latimer, could be found in your ranks? The infidel asserts that Christianity is on the decline; will he go back with me to the year 597 and look upon England as it was in those days, and then look upon it as it is to-day, the head of the civilized world. When Her Majesty, the Queen, was interrogated as to wherein lay the success of Britain, she pointed to an open Bible and exclaimed "There"—and well might she, for her laws are framed from the book of God's laws; her courts deal out justice indiscriminately; her nobility are not allowed to transgress her laws any more than her paupers; her institutions of charity are guarded with a jealous care; her political circles are not contaminated with wholesale bribery and corruption; her soldiers are the best disciplined and a terror to all others; her sailors are the pride of the sea and fear no foes; her religion is planted upon the solid rock, Christ Jesus, and her dominion and power is felt from one side of the globe to the other, and this has all been accomplished since the year 597 when Christianity first spread its mantle of light upon that little isle. The infidel says had it not been demonstrated that man had developed from lower forms of life, were these things all unknown the growing civilization of the world, the goodness of the human heart would have made it impossible for the world any longer to believe in the

cruel egotist sitting on the throne of the universe and governing all merely for his own glory. The world is too good for that kind of a God any longer; also that the ideas of God contained in the oriental writings, are far superior to the blood thirsty Jehovah of the Bible. Pardon for the above language, as I use it in reverence and in honor to the Saviour in whom I trust, and now I boldly confront infidels in regard to my own experience.

When a youth, I, myself, stood upon the verge of infidelity, my delight was in reading infidel works and irreligious literature, in drinking and gambling with cards upon the Sabbath day and spending the evening in the theatre or the bull-fight. My lips moved often in curses but never in prayer. I asked myself perplexing questions that I could not answer, such as, if there be a God, or were he so good, how was it that he allowed such dire calamities, so many murders, so many shipwrecks, why did he deprive me of my loving mother when but an infant and various other such like questions. Had I have gone to my Bible I should have received an immediate answer; My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are my ways your ways, saith the Lord. Finally I became like to a mariner without a compass on a tempest tossed sea vainly endeavoring to find the beacon light that was obscured by dark and sombre clouds, when lo! a faint glimmer of the light I saw, brighter and brighter it grew, until it became transcendently beautiful; then in the distance I saw the life-boat, nearer and nearer it came, until it came within my reach. I availed myself of the opportunity and sought release in it from the rocks and breakers that threatened to engulf my immortal soul. That beacon light was the Spirit of the living God working within my heart; that life-boat was the Lord Jesus Christ, who snatched me from the seething caldron of infidelity and left me in the path that leads to glory, and through his grace I now behold the beacon light and still retain a seat in the life-boat. Voltaire, the infidel writer, defines christianity as a religious system attributed to Christ, but an invention of Plato. Can the human hand construct a piece of mechanism that is capable of transforming the obdurate and sinful heart of the murderer into a heart of love and praise to that holy Being, who heard his prayer,

washed away his sins, and accepted him as one of His flock ; if so, why did not Voltaire's friends administer to him that soothing balm which would have enabled him to pass away quietly and peaceably ? Can the infidel deny that Voltaire's death-bed scene beggars all description ? No language can express it ; no pen can portray it ; the tortures, the pains, the anxiety was a scene of of horror. Alas ! how true were our Saviour's words : " His people's hearts waxed gross and their ears were dull of hearing, and their eyes have they shut, lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and should be converted." The natural heart will bring up argument after argument to disprove the existence of a God and to repudiate the allegiance which is due to Him. You may peruse the lives of all prominent infidels and you will find that not one of them ever passed away peacefully or happily. Why all these tortures and forebodings, if nature governs the universe ? Why does she not console her children, in the hour of death, as the Omnipotent God consoles and strengthens those who put their trust in Him ? Ah ! says the infidel, it is the weakness of failing nature. Was it weakness of nature with David Hume ? When on his death-bed, so long as he was surrounded with infidel associates, administering such excitements as they had to give him and stimulating the pride, unwillingly retracts sentiments which had long been maintained, he exhibited a childish insanity ; but the moment his associates retired he sunk into a state of wretchedness and mental torture which no language can adequately represent. Just so with all infidels. They can not, dare not face the future without a shudder. Not so with the child of God ; he has a strong arm to lean upon ; he has the assurance of a loving Saviour that he will go with him through the dark valley and shadow of death ; he has faith in Christ to carry him through. Note the last words of the following men, and then compare their last moments with those of the infidel. The last words of John Bunyan were : " Weep not for me but weep for yourselves ; I go to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Richard Baxter's last words were : " I have pains ; there is no arguing against sense, but I have peace—I have peace." Thomas Scott exclaimed in his dying

moments, "Christ is my all! He is my only hope!" Jeremiah Evarts, as some one said to him, "You will soon see Jesus as He is and know him," replied, "Oh, wonderful, wonderful glory! We cannot comprehend; wonderful glory. I will praise Him—I will praise Him—wonderful glory—Jesus reigneth!" Many thousand such testimonies could be given; we see them around us every day. Then let us ponder over these things. Let us not forget the four ends of all things: Death, which is the gate of eternity; Judgment, which will decide which eternity shall be your portion; Hell, which is the abode of a miserable eternity; Heaven, which is the abode of a happy eternity. Our life is but a shadow—it is fast passing away. Then let us reflect upon the force of three words,—a God, a moment, an eternity! A God who sees you, a moment which is passing away from you, an eternity which awaits you; a God whom you serve so ill, a moment which you employ to so little purpose, an eternity which you risk so rashly.

Children, take the Bible for your guide; give it the preference of all other books; it is a gift from the great and eternal Jehovah; it is the only book that shews you your condition in the sight of God and toward your fellow-creature; it is a book that will never lead you astray; it exhorts you to pray, teaches how to pray and what to pray for: unlike other books it never becomes old—the oftener you peruse it, the newer it becomes to you. It may be the last gift of your best earthly friend, your "mother," whose immortal soul has taken its flight into that region of bliss, where trouble and sorrow are unknown. You wish to meet her again; then follow the teachings of that holy book, the Bible. Go to it often and you will find peace and consolation to your soul that no other book can give. The infidel tells us that it is useless to pray to God, as there is no God who can hear and answer prayer. That God does not always answer prayer in the way we expect when offering the prayer, we admit; yet many prayers have been answered to the petitioner's eternal loss. For instance, when Nero, the Roman Emperor, was an infant, his life was despaired of, and when the proud mother saw that there were no hopes of his recovery she offered an unwise prayer. She prayed that her

child might be spared. God heard the prayer, spared the child, and he grew up to be the most blood-thirsty tyrant that ever sat upon a throne. Again, a few years ago, in the village of S—x, another prayer was answered. During a violent thunder storm, five men were gathered together in a drinking saloon, gambling and blaspheming. A quarrel ensued. One man accused the other of cheating; he called upon the living God to strike him dead if it were so. That instant a vivid flash of lightning shot through the room, and the immortal soul of that man was summoned to appear before his God. When the proud king Edward of England, with an army of thirty thousand men, came upon the small Scottish army, he found them upon their knees. "Ah!" exclaimed Edward, "see how those proud dogs kneel to me since their leader has gone. "Not so, sire," exclaimed his aide-de-camp, "it is to God they kneel." Edward learned the truth of the reproof, for ere the darkness set in he himself was a prisoner and his army completely defeated. Dare the infidel say there is no God who hears and answers prayer? Let him look upon the meek and lowly Jesus as He agonized in the garden of Gethsemane; no human being ever suffered as He did, and yet He bowed in humble submission to the will of His Heavenly Father. Mark the submission: "If it be Thy will, Father, remove this cup from me." Again upon the cross He prayed for His enemies. Mark the love, the sympathy: "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

The infidel is striving to fight a stupendous battle with the word of the living God. He has clad himself in the garb of infidelity, but he will find it cumbersome; he will find that the word of God is sharper than a two-edged sword, which will pierce his garb and reach the inmost recesses of his very soul. The day will come when nature cannot hurl back the darts of the pale faced rider—he will have to surrender and be entirely at the disposal of that God of love and mercy whom he has ignored. And now, my readers, may we not as professed christians put a question to ourselves? Are we not giving the infidel unlimited space for criticising the christian religion? Are the principles and instructions of the Bible taught to-day as plainly as they were given by

the inspired men who wrote it? But, as not in many instances, much learning, darkened counsels, and the simple, plain gospel truth so perverted and changed by false teachers that we are sometimes constrained to think they would have us believe that the Bible was only meant for the rich and cultivated. Is it not too true that some of our college educated ministers fear to speak the truth as it is in Jesus lest offence be given to their wealthy, influential hearers? We thank God that His word is for rich and poor alike without distinction, that with Him there is no respect of persons. He has honored the poor of this earth and given them the promise of eternal riches if they but seek and serve Him. The pure, simple gospel is what the souls of men crave, and this is the message which the Spirit of God always owns and blesses. Though some would try to make us believe that the Bible is only for the cultured and refined, yet God Himself tells us it is for all; "That the wayfaring man, though a fool, need not err therein." This is the gospel we need, and this truth more widely proclaimed, that the Bible was given and dictated by the living God as the true guide to the human family, to the unlearned poor and ignorant as well as to the learned and wealthy. This was the message given to the apostles and disciples. Was it the cultured and refined language of the preacher upon the day of Pentecost, when three thousand precious souls were brought humbly to the feet of Jesus and their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life? Nay, of a truth, it was not. It was the language of unlearned men who were obeying the commands of their Saviour. He sent them out to preach the gospel; told them to open their mouths and He would fill them. He promised the laborer his hire and He verified His promise. Never since that day has the same scene been witnessed or ever will be until the pride and arrogance of the human heart, that is crushing the religion of Christ, be utterly removed; for the ideas of man at the present time are far more uplifted with pride than the teachings of the meek and lowly Jesus. To-day the millionaire makes his boast that he is worth from ten to twenty million dollars, that he owns houses and lands in all portions of the globe, and yet in his heart there is not sufficient charity to give one dollar toward the

extension of Christ's kingdom. "All is mine!" exclaims the proud man. But who knows what a day may bring forth? Tomorrow "the worms" may claim him as their food.

Let us take a glance at the meek and lowly Jesus. He condescended to leave His heavenly home and take up His abode among the human family; nor was it destined that He should be the son of proud and haughty parents, but, on the contrary, He was to be the son of a God-fearing, God-loving, honest mechanic. No cradle festooned with drapery, or emblazoned with gold, was the bed of the child Jesus, but in a manger where the oxen were feeding, and the angels of heaven were singing and rejoicing o'er their new-born king, with a halo of glory around Him that made even the dumb brutes rejoice. And so from the time that He was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary He occupied a very humble position in this world's view of life, for we find at the Feast there was a carpenter of Nazareth, his wife, and her young son, now twelve years old. If poverty could have prevailed, these two had not been there. Of such poor estate were they that a moment, which of all her life stirs most and deepest, the full springs of a young mother's heart—the birth of her first-born—she had approached the altar of God to own His goodness and express her love, with nothing save the poorest man's offering. But poverty cannot contend with piety, for, spare what else it may, God shall be honored and the service at His temple daily paid.

The infidel will boldly stand up and avow that the Bible is a myth, that there is no truth within its pages. May I ask, is there any other book that can compare with it? Every commanding race, every vast civilization has been directed and controlled by its sacred writings. If we look at the tribes of Arabia we shall find that they were gathered, moulded, banded and wielded in a resistless tide of conquest by their sacred book, the Koran; but the Bible to-day stands as much above the Koran as the heavens are above the earth. The sacred book of the Buddhists have been the leaven of civilization among a third part of the human race during a vast period of time, and if we judge them by their influence, these are the great books of the human race. Yet the

Bible stands above them all. It has a constituency composed of all the races of the world. The others belong to decaying, arrested, or dead civilization. The Bible is a fountain whose waters feed intellect, heart, life, promoting the highest worship, as well as the largest humanity. The supreme value of the Bible has been recognized by thinkers of all schools; even the infidel himself admits that any book that has a tendency to exalt man must be superior to all others. Theodore Parker, who was not supposed to reverence the Bible, speaks of it thus: "No other book that has been printed ever took such a hold upon the world. It is read upon the Sabbath in the thousands of pulpits of our land; in all the temples of christendom its voice is lifted up week by week. The sun never sets upon its gleaming pages. It is found in the cottage of the poor man and in the palace of the king. It blesses us when we are born, it rejoices with us; it has sympathy with our sorrows, and tempers our grief. There have been millions of books written but they are all gone—their authors are forgotten, but the book of God, the Bible, to-day stands intact, and the greatest institutions that we have to-day are built upon the Bible."

When in conversation with an aged man who at one time professed christianity, but now a confirmed infidel, he admitted to me that there must exist a Being far superior to man, yet who or what that Being was he could not comprehend. He allowed that the world could not have been formed without a maker, and yet he was so prejudiced that he would not give to the eternal God that glory which is due to Him. At this point I would simply direct all sceptics to the following Scripture: "Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord: for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet I will not leave thee wholly unpunished." Can the sceptic dispute the above and deny that they are the words of the eternal God? If he does I simply ask him to refer to Great Britain and see if he can find one individual who can trace his descent back to an ancient Briton, or again at France and see if he can find one there who can trace his or her descent to the Gauls. Those

nations have been made an end of—the prophecy has been fulfilled to the letter. Then let him cast his eyes upon the Jew as he wanders our streets. His countenance at once declares his nationality; and although they have been persecuted by all nations, yet they have never renounced their religious views, and can to this day with pride trace their ancestry back to their Father Abraham. This of itself should convince the sceptic that the Bible is the authentic word of God. Shew me the infidel who dares to venture upon the summit of some mountain, or into the recess of the forest when the angry tempest is raging, when the angry lightnings are shooting forth in majestic beauty and heaven's artillery is causing the earth to rock with its terrific appeals, there to go upon his knees and denounce the eternal God who rules the universe, and I will shew you a contemptible coward who does not believe in the doctrine that he teaches; and in return I will shew the christian who fears not to enter into darkness and there, upon his or her knees, return thanks unto an Almighty God for His tender love and mercy that He had bestowed upon them. Such is the difference between the infidel and the christian. I remember once an infidel who, when in a storm at sea, was the greatest coward on board the vessel. He would cower like a dog, and although there was not any immediate danger, yet he trembled and shook like an aspen leaf. Why all this mental and physical torture if there was not any hereafter? Why was he afraid to face death if man is like the brutes that perish? Is the child of God afraid to meet death? Nay; in many instances it has been a happy relief to them, and they have passed away as peacefully and happily as the babe that lays upon its mother's breast.

Again, the infidel will scoff at those who observe the Sabbath, openly declaring that there is not any such day as the Sabbath, that all the days of the week are alike; that it is only man's invention. Dare the infidel deny that there is a sublime grandeur resting upon that day that does not rest upon any other day of the week? Even the little fish sport and gambol in their native element with less timidity, as though nature itself taught them that they were free from the molestations of man upon that day; the feathered songsters warble forth their heaven-tuned lays in a

far sweeter strain ; even the flowers of the field send forth a sweeter perfume and bow their drooping heads as though they also united in giving praise to that holy Being who causes everything to come forth in its season. Go out upon the angry sea and even there is a sublime feeling that tells it is the Sabbath day, and although no sound of the vesper bell is heard to summon the worshippers together, there is a holy serenity that proclaims it to be the Lord's day. Ask the christian soldiers if it is not a day of rest to them, when they can lay by their earthly cares and go to the house of God, where they can hold sweeter and closer communication with that blessed Saviour who shed His blood upon the cross that we might live and reign with Him in the mansions that He has gone to prepare. Then who or what is there that does not recognize the Lord's day—except the infidel? The Sabbath is a blessing to the poor ; it is a day of rest to them from their weekly toil and labor. To the pious poor it is a day of sweet and refreshing rest, indeed both to the body and the soul. It powerfully calls off their minds from the painful considerations of their many trials in life, and their various worldly troubles, to think and prepare for a better and a happier world of rest and comfort with God in glory. It gives to the poor the blessed opportunity and privilege of thinking of, with an undivided attention, and of providing for, with uninterrupted diligence, that happy state where “the rich and poor meet together,” where all earthly distinctions will cease and all earthly troubles end to those who love and serve God in sincerity.

The Sabbath is designed as a blessing to the sinner and is calculated to impress his mind with a sense of God's goodness and forbearance, to excite him to lively gratitude, and to “turn from his wicked ways and live.” To the sinner every Sabbath is a proof of God's mercy in sparing him, in warning him of his sins, and in calling him to repentance. To the sinner every Sabbath is a voice of mercy and love from the Saviour to win him to happiness and to save him from misery. On every returning Sabbath a voice from heaven seems to call the sinner to prepare to meet his God, and to assure him of pardon, if he repent and believe the gospel. The Sabbath is a blessing indeed to the

believers in Christ Jesus, whether they be rich or poor. It is a day of holy joy to their souls, when they can meet God in the sanctuary; "serve God without worldly distraction," and come into His courts with a voice of praise and thanksgiving. It is a blessed day to the believer in Christ. It sweetens all the toils and troubles of the week and prepares him for all that may come upon him. It is a sacred day in which the christian gathers strength for the journey of life, obtains grace to help in every conflict with the enemies of salvation, and to the humble and devout servant of God appears to be the pledge and foretaste of that glorious Sabbath in heaven, which will be perfect and eternal. Then let us remember to keep holy the Sabbath day.

What! can man dare to make light of the will and counsel of the Almighty God "in whom we live and move and have our being" and "who giveth us all things richly to enjoy." Where is all sense of duty, gratitude and love to his daily benefactor and his daily friend? Where is all regard to self-interest, his own happiness and his safety? Can man, that lives only at the will of his Maker, and breathes only by permission, dare to make light of the purpose of his love in Christ Jesus to redeem from ruin a fallen race, to restore a guilty world, and to "save all to the uttermost who come unto God by Him?" Is it possible that the sceptic can make light of the offered mercy of pardon from God, and of the free salvation of the gospel of Christ, by whom alone he can approach God acceptably either on earth or in heaven? Shall a sceptic, accursed of God for his belief, make light of the dying love of Jesus to redeem his soul from the curse of sin and to make him an heir of glory? Can the sceptic make light of all the agonies and sufferings of Christ, and even the death of the Redeemer upon the cross to make atonement for his sins, to rescue him from the devouring flames, and to save him from going down into the pit of destruction? Will a rebel against the king of heaven and earth make light of the offer of a free pardon for all his offences and spurn both the offer and the love that make it? Could it be supposed that if the judgment, with all its eternal consequences, were set before you, you would make light of the awful solemnity and terrors of that day, when God will "render

to every man according to his works." If heaven with all its glories, and hell with all its horrors, were laid open to you, would you make light of it? And yet by your rejecting the offer of grace and mercy from God, and by your neglecting the salvation of Christ you do make light, both of all the awful realities of the great judgment day, of all the horrors of hell, and of all the joys of heaven. And does man act thus foolishly, thus ungratefully and thus daringly against his God and his Saviour? What! does man, frail, fallen, dying man, act thus against the voice of nature, of reason and common sense, and oppose both conscience and Scripture, in making light of the gracious call of the God of love, and of the offer of being made holy, happy and glorious through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus? Why even the devils in hell tremble at the very thought of the power of the vengeance of an offended God, and shall man alone despise "him who hath power to destroy both body and soul? Do the devils tremble at the very thought of a judgment to come, and the final day of condemnation; and shall the sceptic alone make light of the approaching day of righteous retribution and the judgment of a sin-avenging God? Shall man, who is but a "fading flower" and "withers like the grass" be careless about that life which is to last forever? Shall man, who is born for eternity, and who is so deeply concerned, disregard the admonitions from nature, providence and grace, and still live as if he had no God to serve and no soul to save? Shall the world so ensnare his soul and so rob God of his heart as to prevent his attending to and securing "the one thing so absolutely needful" and the things that belong to his everlasting peace? For such characters we feel a pity, mixed with a holy indignation, at their own wilful folly and perverse contempt of all the promises and all the threatenings of the word of God. But I would "pray them in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God;" to throw down their arms of rebellion and to adore that mercy which hath spared them and which now invites them to repent and be saved. Oh! I pray you, make not light of the present offer. Cast off your past carelessness and resolve to be serious where so much is at stake. Be you concerned where the soul is at stake. Hear the voice of sovereign

mercy and no longer make light of the warning voice. Be won to happiness by the voice of mercy. Accept with heartfelt gratitude the offer of divine compassion to fly from scepticism to the arms of that merciful Saviour who has kindly and faithfully promised to every humble and returning penitent: "Him that cometh unto me I will in nowise cast out." Let me warn you never more to make light of God's words and promises. Let me exhort you no longer to neglect the care of the soul and your bounden duty. Let others do as they please, but do you "fear God and keep His commandments." Though others despise mercy, "trample under foot the Son of God and perish in their own error," yet do you believe and receive the Saviour, love Him in truth with your hearts and your lives, and he will guide you by His holy Spirit through this world of temptation and danger in perfect safety, and "keep you by His mighty power through faith unto everlasting salvation." There are some who do not indeed oppose the truth, or try to destroy its authority, but they make light of it. They do not feel any deep and serious concern to become acquainted with its power and blessings. They do not give it that attention which the grandeur and solemnity of the subject so justly demand, nor do they consider the consequence of neglecting "so great a salvation." They do not, perhaps, blaspheme the holy name of Jesus, nor renounce altogether Christ, and pour contempt on the glorious gospel, but they make light of it. They do not cordially receive Christ as the only Saviour from sin in the heart, nor faithfully obey the commands of His gospel in their lives. They do not, probably, vilify or deride the religion of God, but they make light of it. It is to them as an "idle tale," either wholly unimportant or uninteresting. What an awful proof of the natural corruption of man is this, and the heart of man turned away from God, that it can be so insensible of divine love and mercy, and so regardless of its own present and eternal welfare. What blindness must there be in the understanding of the natural man, thus to choose "darkness rather than light," and the ways of ruin and death to life everlasting! What an evidence is this of the soul as "dead in trespasses and sins," that it can despise and reject a gracious Saviour, and prefer the wages of sin to the gift of God!

If a man had a long and perilous journey to take, in which he would be exposed to many difficulties and great dangers, would he not most thankfully receive from any one the kind offer of direction and assistance that he might perform it with success and security? The life of man is such a journey, during which he is exposed to many dangers and difficulties. He often feels his utter helplessness and inability to direct and support himself, either how to bear or how to avoid, the various troubles that befall him by the way. He feels the need of some friendly aid and direction how he may proceed on his journey with the prospect of ending it in peace and security. Many things do, indeed, appear to offer him that aid and direction which he so much needs, but he finds them all more or less full of vanity and disappointment, till he is brought to seek his happiness and safety in God, the Father of mercies, the faithful friend and sure protector of all who trust in His name. God offers all needful help in time of trouble, direction in all difficulties, and perfect safety from all dangers. But the power of unbelief and the deceitfulness of sin prevent men from accepting the offered mercy of the guidance and protection of the Spirit of God, till they are driven from every other refuge by the experience that "all is but vanity" except the faithful promise of "the God of salvation." If a man tries the world he finds every promise vain. If he trusts to it he hath to lament his foolish confidence in that which at the best is but deceitful. If he depends upon the creature he soon finds out its utter insufficiency to support him "in time of need." In vain he searches the world through to find a sure refuge in the storms of life, or a friend to direct and support him under all the troubles of his journey. Finds them all but "refuges of lies," and unable to relieve and to save him in the time of trouble; till he hears the voice of mercy from the word of God: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;" "Call upon me in the day of trouble, I will deliver thee;" then he rejoices "at the joyful sound," and feelingly and from his heart prays: "Give me help from trouble, for vain is the help of man." Man is born to trouble. In the world we must expect tribulation. As fallen creatures we are constantly liable to infirmities, afflic-

tion and disappointment. We are exposed during our journey on earth to numerous evils and dangers, and we shall not proceed long or far before we find the truth of this, and experience what all before us and all around us have experienced—that this world is full of trouble, sorrow and disappointment. Neither riches nor greatness can secure us from trouble, nor uphold us in the day of trouble. Neither wisdom nor judgment can secure us from the hand of affliction, nor alone support us under its weight of sorrow. The day of trouble will overtake us in every condition of life. Our utmost skill and prudence will not insure success to our plans. An hour of affliction may deprive us of our fairest hopes. The hand of disease may, in a moment, strip us of our best and truest friends, and of all help and hope from man. Troubles among our connections may darken our brightest prospects. Death may rob us of all that is near and dear to us on earth and render both our houses and our hearts the abode of sorrow. Disappointment from the world may dash in pieces our building of expected earthly happiness, and we may be left a prey to unavailing grief, and to seek in vain throughout the whole compass of creation for a refuge or a remedy for our misery amidst the troubles and cares of this life. All the efforts of man to prevent trouble, and to support himself and others under it, have ever proved to be in vain, without the help of God; and even the greatest and wisest in worldly policy and strength have found all their policy and strength but as “the broken reed” in the day of trouble. The wisest in worldly wisdom have fallen beneath the pressure of affliction and unable to support themselves, or to find relief in time of trouble, have sunk under the weight of human sorrow because they did not, or would not, seek a refuge and support in God. “Vain is the help of man.” Man may not have the ability nor the inclination to help us in our worldly troubles. Man may not feel for our misery nor be disposed to aid us in our distress. He may, indeed, feel for us in our afflictions and sympathize with us in our sorrows, but he may not be able to comfort us or relieve us. He may promise us his assistance and yet desert us in the very time of need. “Vain is the help of man.” Man may endeavor to help, but it is so feeble as

to be of no real service. Vain is the help of man to soothe the anguish of spirit arising from many worldly disappointments, family troubles, or the loss of those nearer and dearer to us than life itself. The voice of man cannot reach the seat of sorrow, nor turn the house of mourning into joy. But there is help in God amidst all the various troubles of life. God, and God alone, can remove the burden, or support us under it. He can overrule, by His kind providence, the troubles of the world to our good; control the events by His power, that would otherwise sink us in sorrow, and convert them into blessings on the soul.

In drawing this little work to a close, allow me to present to the sceptic a case that came under my personal observation. Some thirty years ago when on board the barque "Fanny" of Bristol, and when lying-to in a terrific gale of wind near Cape Hatteras, an incident occurred that should convince the sceptical that there is an All-wise Being who guides and directs all things. During the storm the captain and mate were walking the quarter-deck when a strange bird flew across their faces. It came the second time. It came again the third time, when it struck the captain in the face, and then fell dead at his feet. The captain began to wonder at this strange affair and finally said to his mate: "This must be a warning." He at once ordered the crew upon deck, squared the yards, and ran his vessel before the storm for four hours, when he sighted the sinking steamer "Central America," which had on board a large number of passengers, chiefly women and children. It took but a short time for that heroic man to accomplish his mission of mercy, when all the women and children were safely landed through that tremendous sea on board that "God-directed vessel," -- one woman only being lost, and she, through her greed for gold, sank with all her store, to rise no more. Sad to relate, but three of the men were rescued from death, and then only after eleven days of untold sufferings upon a raft in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, so emaciated were they when rescued that the doctors declared they could not recover. But it was God's will for them to recover and then reveal to the world that horrible story that they had subsisted upon human flesh for nine days. That strange bird which

carried the tidings is still in the Museum to-day. It has been viewed by millions, and no person ever saw anything like it before or ever since. But there it remains as a messenger from God to His people in distress. Can the sceptic dare to say this was chance, and that there is no God who guides and directs all things? Then let me sound these warning words into the ear of the sceptic: "The Lord is at hand." Hear this and "Prepare to meet thy God." Christ is now "at hand" in mercy to bless, to pardon, and to save, if you repent and turn to God before mercy be turned to vengeance, and that voice which now so mercifully invites you to be saved, pronounce upon you the sentence of just condemnation: "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire."



