

# Religious Intelligencer.

BIBLE SOCIETY, MISSIONARY, AND SABBATH SCHOOL ADVOCATE.

E. McLEOD, Editor.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.—PETER.

TERMS.—ONE DOLLAR A YEAR, IN ADVANCE

VOL. V--NO. 9.

ST. JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26 1858

WHOLE NO. 217

## THE RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER.

Published in St. John, N. B., every FRIDAY, for the Free C. Baptist General Conference, (Incorporated by Law), under the direction of a Board of Managers, chosen annually by the Conference.

B. J. UNDERHILL, Agent.  
All letters on business connected with the paper, should be directed to the Agent.

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ONE DOLLAR A YEAR IN ADVANCE.  
If not paid till after three months Seven Shillings and Six Pence.

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## The Power of Grace Illustrated.

"Edward," said I to my much loved friend, who was my class mate and only room mate for many months, one day as we were about closing our scene of studies to go home, "Edward, give me a sketch of some of the most important incidents of your past life, and if desired, I will return the favor. We are now about to separate for distant sections of the country, and should the strong bond of friendship and Christian affection which has so long and firmly cemented us together, continue unbroken, it will be pleasant in after times for each other to refer to any interesting events connected with the other." For a few seconds, during which time Edward's mind probably scanned the whole history of his past life, he sat silent and motionless with his eyes fixed upon our faithful but rusty stove, which we had already commenced removing from our apartment, then raising his head, said he, "My own history is quite unimportant. The incidents of but one period of my life are worth relating, and you have so frequently heard me refer to them, that I am sure the subject must have become to you an old tale. I refer," said he, "to the period of my conversion and the remarkable conversion of my father, mother and sister, incidents, the results of which I trust will be the union of our domestic circle in the paradise of God." "Such events," I replied, "may well assume a vast importance; they extend far beyond the narrow bounds of your family, and indeed can only be measured by the countless revolving cycles of eternity. True, I have heard you refer to the conversion of yourself and parents, but have never heard you give the particulars, a relation of which would fully reach the object of my suggestion." Edward's compliance with my request proceeded nearly as follows, for I design to give his own language as near as my memory will enable me:

"My father, you know, was a man of wealth and high standing in his profession. My sister and myself were the only children and on us from infancy was lavished everything to gratify that immense wealth, that boundless parental affection could supply. We were indeed the idols of our parents. Great expense was incurred to qualify us in early life to act well our part in the highest circles of society. Our education, however, was entirely of a light character, calculated only for show. My father was a bitter opponent to all experimental religion, and we were consequently taught that to be the best dancer, painter, pianist, &c., should be the highest bounds of our ambition. Thro' my sister, who was older than myself, I was introduced much earlier than I otherwise should have been to the gay and fashionable scenes of youthful life. When a little more than sixteen years old, I was sent to school at H—, some ten miles from home. My father having provided me with board in the family of Mr. M., an acquaintance of his, to whose charge he committed me, with the particular injunction that I was to be kept from all religious meetings or influence. During my stay in this family, which was nearly four months, I was frequently getting into difficulty by being charged by the children of Mr. M., with their mischievous acts, and was as often severely reprimanded by him. On stating my situation and wish for new board, place to a student by the name of Frederic A., with whom I had formed a pleasant acquaintance, he informed me that his parents who resided in the village, had a spare room and would take one or two boarders. I at once engaged the whole room to myself, together with board, of which I soon informed my parents, also the reason for leaving Mr. M.'s. Here commenced a new era in my life.

At Mr. A.'s all was entirely new and changed. The table was approached with invocation and left with thanksgiving; each day began and ended with prayer, and praise. The entire family were living Christians, whose star fire, like those of holy Israel, never waned. I was informed that the ringing of a small bell would give notice of the hours of family worship, and that I could attend or not as best suited me. From respect to the order of the house, the summons of the little bell was always strictly attended to. Observation soon convinced me that this family had some source of bliss to which I was stranger. What was it? Was it their religion? Perhaps it was. Observing Father's

room one morning, I carried it to my room, supposing I should find from its perusal what religion was. In this, however, I was disappointed though its arguments satisfied me of its truth. An increasing anxiety to know what religion was, induced me to get a Bible to gratify my curiosity. To this hour, I believe I was as ignorant of what Christianity was, as the darkest heathen. Paley had convinced me of its truth as a system; but upon what it was based, or what its object and what its importance, I was entirely ignorant. I had probably never read a verse in the Old or New Testament in my life. I commenced reading, and the commandment emphatically came home. I saw what religion was; that it was based upon the relation that man sustains to his Maker and his entire universe; that all of its commands and requirements being based upon these relations, were just and right, and in consequence of obedience and disobedience, I saw in some measure its great importance. I believe, too, I had tolerably just conceptions of man's low condition as a transgressor, and his remedy in the death and mediation of the Saviour. I do not mean to convey the idea that this amount of light burst upon my moral vision at once. On the contrary, it was the result of investigating the subject for several weeks. Here, however, I made a complete stand. I saw that in order to be saved by the atonement, and become an heir of eternal bliss, an entire new course of life was requisite—that I must wholly abandon all that I had been accustomed to prize. This I could not consent to do. I concluded, therefore, to think no more of the subject, and indeed made every exertion for three weeks to banish it from my mind; but my efforts were worse than useless. The more I labored to keep my thoughts from it, the more complete seemed its influence over them. Every passing day awakened and convinced me more fully of the importance and value of religion.

At this time, a vacation of two weeks spent at home, diminished greatly my religious anxiety. On being interrogated on the subject by my father, I told him that the folks were hoarded, I believed were religious, but I had a room to myself, and they said nothing to me about it, which, by the way, was false; for as I was highly pleased with my boarding place, I wished to give such an account of it as would induce him to allow me to continue there, to which he assented. On my return to school, the subject of my own salvation forced itself upon my mind more powerfully than before. So strong was its influence that in three weeks I was entirely incapacitated for my studies, and made up my mind to return home and get my father to help me out of the trouble. Having packed my books and clothes with the view of returning home the following day, as I was sitting in my lonely room, the two following questions forced themselves powerfully upon my mind: What is religion? and what is its price? To the first of which I almost involuntarily replied, religion is that upon the rejection or attainment of which is suspended man's eternal interest—interest as heaven, deep as hell, and vast as eternity. It is an institution of a God of infinite goodness and wisdom, and must, therefore, be conducive to man's highest interest in time as well as eternity. But what is the price? It is the renunciation of sin. It requires the giving of myself and all my earthly interest. But as religion makes provision for our highest interest even in time, it of course cannot require the renunciation or giving up of anything but what really conflicts with these interests. The price is certainly reasonable, and I will have religion. A little reflection, however, convinced me that I must sacrifice much more than I had for the moment realized. I felt that I should have to incur the sneers of my sister and the scoffs of my associates; but this was trifling in comparison to the displeasure and violent opposition of my father, who would doubtless entirely disinherit me and turn me from his door, unless, if he could not induce me to renounce my religion. On the other hand, I saw that to reject religion now was in all probability an eternal rejection—one that would involve, beyond hope, the ruin of the soul. I saw, too, that the wealth of my parents, two-thirds of which I had expected to inherit, might soon be scattered by adversity, or should I be permitted to possess it, very possibly it would be a curse, rather than a blessing. Added to this, who could assure me that I should live to mature years to receive, should my father be pleased to bestow it. Instead of living to see my parents, to receive from them the opposition I had expected, the morrow's rising sun might find me dead and damned, or (as hope for a moment lighted up the dark scene) some strange influence, like that which had appeared upon me, might awaken my parents and sister, and all of them, instead of opposing, might possibly accompany me home to heaven. Again I felt I could pay the price; I would have religion. For the first time in my life I felt on my knees and asked God to help me make the sacrifice—to dispel my darkness and enable me that very night so to repent of my sins and believe on his Son as to be saved. On rising I felt strong to go forward. I immediately called Mr. A. to my room and told him my feelings. After giving me suitable instructions, and telling me it was my duty and privilege to experience saving grace and the evidence of it that hour, he proposed to have the whole family come to my room and have a prayer meeting for

me, to which I readily assented. The exercises commenced by singing a few verses, which were followed by successive prayer by all present. While in prayer, I believe I gave up myself and all my interests, in so-called covenant to God. I asked the forgiveness of my sins and acceptance through the atonement and mediation of Jesus Christ, which I doubt not was granted. The winds were hushed and the tempest calmed. I felt a peace that had in it all the sweetness of heaven itself. I then saw, too, the depth of the pit from which I had been taken, from the total ignorance from having lived for more than sixteen years without having read so much as one verse in the beased Bible, from the strongest religious influence which could possibly be thrown around me, from my own temple of worldly ambition; from all this I had been rescued by the mercy of God, by means, it seems to me, of special interposition of Providence, and was now placed as a lamb in the very bosom of my Saviour. My flowing tears for hours could only give expression to the gratitude of my soul. I still saw before me the opposition that I had before contemplated, but O! to meet it all, or a hundred fold more, for my blessed Jesus, who had done so much for me, I thought would afford me the highest pleasure. The following morning I wrote to my parents, informing them of my conversion as simply and frankly as possible; also detailing minutely the circumstances that led to such a result. I expressed my fears that the step which I had taken would not meet their approbation, and solicited a candid investigation of the whole subject before passing upon me a final sentence of condemnation. When my father received the letter, he was deeply indignant. The following day he came with his carriage and took me and all my baggage home with him. He expressed much surprise and sorrow that I had been so foolish, and told me that I must give it up at once; if I did not, it would ruin my prospects for life; that he could not think of assisting me in a course so directly opposite to his wishes. Soon after our return home, a ball was proposed (for the purpose of overcoming religious feelings) and he following Tuesday evening appeared for it. I expressed my unwillingness to be present on such an occasion, and asked permission to spend the evening at class meeting. In return I received from both parents and sisters, nothing but scoffs, sneers and reproaches. When the evening however arrived, I utterly declined being present, and did, in fact, go to class meeting. This exasperated my father, to the high at pitch, and he positively declared that if I attended another religious meeting of any kind, he would disinherit me, that his roof should no longer be my shelter. Though my grief was unexpressed, I still felt determined to serve God, whatever might be the sacrifice. The class meeting of the village was held on Tuesday evening; accordingly on the afternoon of the next Tuesday, my father came to me with a large white horse-whip. "There," said he, "Net, I think that will cure your religion, and keep you from class meeting. Should you conclude to go to night, as you did a week since, against my wishes, you may rely upon finding it warm upon your naked back in the morning."

I had here a most severe trial, not in reference to the whipping, but as to what extent I ought to obey my parents in matters of religion. Should I obey them, I must disobey God. But could I not give up all my meetings and religious privileges, in obedience to my parents, and still enjoy religion. After much prayer I concluded my only way was to claim the enjoyment of all the help which God had provided me. Should I stay from class meeting that night it would be considered a victory of the whip, and I should be required at once to recommence my old course at the same place. I came to the conclusion that it was not my duty to obey my parents when their requirements conflicted with those of God; and so with a heavy heart I again went to class. On my way I determined that I would not receive the intended whipping without saying something more in justification of my cause than I ever had done. I determined to say something to my father of his responsibility as a parent. But what could I say, a boy of seventeen years old, to one accustomed to sit in judgment and listen to arguments from the finest talents? Of myself I could say nothing; but the promise of wisdom from on high led me to a grove just without the village, where the whole night was spent in prayer for a preparation for the event. Thank God, as day dawned, light and peace broke into my soul. I was strong as a giant. I knew not a word that I should say, though I felt a blessed assurance that God would give me words and wisdom, and I would as soon have made my defence before an assembled universe as any way. On my arrival at the house, I found my father up and walking his room. He had, in fact, fastened the doors and remained awake all night, so as to meet me at the door. "Well," said he, "this is the fruit of your religion, is it? Where have you been all night, you disobedient rascal? I have been up in the grove praying since class meeting; I answered very frankly. 'Praying, hal! a pretty story, that! I'll see if it can't be cured after breakfast.' So saying, he left me and I did not see him again until at the breakfast table. Breakfast over, taking the whip he bade me follow him, and led the way to the stable, where I was ordered to take off my coat and vest, preparatory to the whipping. 'Father,

said I, 'it is customary for you to condemn without giving a chance of defence? Of what have I been guilty, that I deserve the severe punishment you propose to inflict?' 'Defence,' said he, 'what defence can you make for wilful disobedience? You do serve to be punished for tramping on my authority, and I will show you that my authority shall be maintained.'

"I expected opposition," continued I, "when I experienced religion; but I embraced it in view of both worlds. I am prepared for any suffering that may be inflicted in this, but must save my soul in the other. Nothing can induce me to forsake it. Is it not possible that in the exercise of a father's authority you have transcended the proper bounds of parental control? And have you, dear father, fulfilled all the duties growing out of your relation to me, as a son? Our duties grow out of our relation to our Maker and each other. It is my duty as your offspring to honor and love you, to study your highest interests, and to obey you in all things where your commands do not conflict with the requirements of a higher authority—with those of my Maker. On the other hand, it is your duty as a parent to study my highest interest. You have been the instrument of bringing me into being—of giving me an existence co-extensive with that of the Deity—eternal. That eternity of existence, after the passage of a few short years of this life, must be in woe or bliss, and is it not your duty, dear father, the author of this, eternity of being, to aid me all in your power to gain the one and escape the other? O, let me ask you, said I, clasping his hand to my bosom, 'has this been the course you have pursued with me? rather than your whole life and the administration of your government, tended to lead both myself and my dear sister directly to ruin—with wealth to sink us down to hell? O! father, father!—here my feelings overcame me and I burst into a flood of tears; I recovered myself as soon as possible, and raised my eyes to heaven, and observed that the whip had fallen from my father's hand, who stood before me motionless and white as a marble statue. I picked up the whip and placed it in his hand. 'No,' said he, 'I shall defend the whip, but you must leave my house.' I told him that I preferred the performance of every duty as a faithful son, but must abide his decision, at the same time reminding him that nothing could relieve him of his high responsibility as a parent. He dropped the whip and left the stable evidently in great agitation. I knelt down by the side of I and thanked God for his goodness, and prayed that what I had said might result in the greatest good both to myself and father. In the course of the day but little was said by myself, mother or sister. They supposed that I had received the whipping that I had been threatened; and as I was silent they did not feel like broaching that or any other subject. During the whole of afternoon and also at dinner table, my father was absent. Our residence was in the outskirts of the village, no more than fifty rods from the grove which I have already referred to, to which I again resorted after dinner, for another season of prayer. Soon after entering it, to my surprise I discovered my father some distance from me walking back and forward, apparently in deep study. Seeing that I was not observed, I withdrew and repaired to my chamber, where the forenoon was spent in prayer that God would be with my father in the grove, for I was certain that he was under the awakening influence of the Holy Spirit. At the usual supper hour he had not returned; and after waiting for him until dark, my mother, fearing some accident had befallen him—such an absence had never before occurred, requested me to go and see if I could find him. I proceeded directly to the spot where I had seen him a few hours previous. When I first came in sight of him he was sitting with his head leaning against a tree, but on observing me, he arose up and met me. I extended my hand to him, saying, 'I am glad to see you, father; mother feared some evil had happened to you, and sent me to see if I could find you.' He made no reply, but taking my hand in his, walked slowly toward the house. His heaving sighs bespoke the deep emotion of his soul.

Perceiving he had not settled the great question of life and death, I felt it up my silent prayers that God would not leave him in this important hour, upon the decisions of which were suspended heaven and hell. We had not reached the outer edge of the grove when my father stopped short, clasped me to his bosom and exclaimed in tears, 'O! Edward, Edward, forgive me. O! forgive me, my dear son, O! forgive me.' He never seemed so precious to me before. I clasped my arms around his neck and pressed my lips to his cheek, as my only method of giving expression to my feelings, or a pledge of the forgiveness he sought. On arriving at the house, we met my mother in the dining room; my father, bathed in tears, clasped her to his breast. 'Will you go with me?' he said. 'I have determined to have religion, and accompany our dear Edward; and will you go with us, daughter?' addressing himself to my sister, who was just entering the room. 'Yes, I am sure you will both join me; and here is dear Edward, who has forgiven me; he will pray for us,' so saying, he drew myself and sister as near into his arms as he could, with our mother, and as though he had received the assistance of all, immediately fell upon his knees. 'O! Edward, said he, the big tears rolling down his cheeks, 'O! Edward, pray for a wicked son,

ther, pray for us all: God has heard your prayers, and he will still hear them.' We all bowed with him, but the deep emotion of my soul forbade me utterance, and nearly overcame my physical strength. In fact, I did not know when I commenced vocal prayer. I only know I found myself, how long after I cannot tell, in the arms of my father, our voices both mingling in mighty prayer for his salvation. Our prayers, through the mediation of our great High Priest, were heard on high, and salvation's tide soon rolled over his soul. He sprang upon his knees, and my thoughts then became wholly absorbed in the case of my mother—the dear mother that bore me, on whose bosom I had been cherished, and who had constantly watched over me with all the affection of a mother's heart. My whole soul was drawn out in prayer for her immediate conversion; the chariot wheels for a time seemed stayed, but our supplications were incessant.—My father, who had again knelt by her side, tried to encourage by conversing with her, or rather he prayed and talked together; praying a part of a sentence, and talking the balance.—My mother and sister were both weeping in bitter accents—part of the time praying for themselves, having taken courage from the speedy deliverance of my father. Their prayers and groans, and the prayers, exhortations and shouts with which my father seemed overhurdled, together with my own prayers, all commingling together, produced what would generally be termed 'wild confusion.' How long I continued in prayer for my mother I do not know, but catching the eye of my weeping sister, it occurred to me that I had entirely forgotten her, that I had not even prayed for her at all. Bitterly reproaching myself and still upon my knees, I clasped her to my bosom and bathed her with tears of sorrow that I had been so thoughtless. I besought God with all my soul for that dear, that only sister, that he would enable her to renounce the world and all of its allurements, and cast her naked soul on Jesus for salvation. My prayers assailed with me, and while we wrestled, the symbol of the Divine presence was manifest. 'Ellen,' said I, 'God has blessed you.' 'Yes,' said she (as we bathed each other's cheeks in tears) 'I know I love the Saviour.' On rising from our knees, we found, to our surprise, that the morning had dawned. The following Sabbath we all received the solemn signs of our consecration; and for months our bliss seemed complete. But the destroyer came, and they have been carried, one after another, to the silent and lonely habitation of the dead. Over those countenances once so fresh and lovely, have gathered the cold damps of death, and the unfeeling worms now feed upon those so fondly loved. But two short years had passed ere they had left me; but they left in joyous hope—they rest in peace. Consumption first poised its fatal dart at my lovely sister, and like the early rose nipped by the untimely blast, she soon fell—its withered victim. While the rose faded from her cheek, and her sparkling eye grew dim in death, joy and hope cheered her soul and lighted up her passage through the dark and dreary waves of death's cold flood. A few moments before she left us, imprinting upon my cheek the last pledge of a sister's love, 'Dear brother,' said she, 'a few months since your influence snatched me from the giddy paths that lead to death, and now is about to introduce me to the home of the blessed. A few minutes and I shall strike my golden harp and swell my voice to the anthems of this blood-washed, with my Saviour in glory. A few years, and I trust I shall be permitted to greet you and our parents all home in triumph! With her head bowed in prayer, her happy spirit took its flight to fairer climes and brighter scenes. In less than twelve months, my dear parents both followed her. I need not detail the incidents of their happy exit. They bore a similar testimony, and like her crossed the raging flood in rapturous triumph.

Thus I have been left like the lonely oak that bends to the sweeping tempest of the mountain's top. The unbidden tear of loneliness will sometimes escape my eye, but the cheering prospect of meeting all my kindred dear.

When a few more griefs I've tasted,  
When a few more Springs are o'er,  
Dispels my gloom and makes my sorrows light.

My friend Edward is now on Zion's walls, a faithful and successful minister of the gospel. Not only his own kindred but hundreds more of his spiritual children will doubtless greet him home to rest.

## The Excellency of the Bible.

A nation would be truly blessed if it were governed by no other laws than those of this blessed book. It is so complete a system, that nothing can be added to it, or taken from it. It contains everything useful to be known or done. It affords a copy for a king (Deut. xvii. 18)—for a ruler and a subject; it gives instruction and counsel to a senate—authority and direction to a magistrate; it cautions a witness—requires an impartial verdict of a jury, and furnishes a judge with a guide for his sentence; it places the husband as lord of the household, and the wife as mistress of the table—tells him how to rule and her how to manage. It entails honor to parents, and enjoins obedience upon children. It prescribes the duty and limits the sway of the sovereign—the rule of the ruler, and authority of the minister;

commands the subjects to honour, and the servants to obey; and promises the blessing and protection of its Author to all that walk by its rules. Its holy influence is associated with our weddings and burials. It promises food and raiment as the reward of industry, but limits the use of both. It points out a faithful and eternal guardian to the departing husband and father; tells him to whom to leave his fatherless children, and in whom his widow is to trust (Jer. xix. 11), and promises a father to the former, and a husband to the latter. It teaches a man both to set his house in order, and to make his will; it appoints a dowry for his wife, while it entails the right of the first-born, and provides for the younger branches. It defends the rights of all; and reveals vengeance to every defrauder, over-reacher, and oppressor. It is the first book, the best book, and the oldest book in all the world. It contains the choicest matter, gives the best instruction, and affords the greatest pleasure and satisfaction that ever was revealed. It contains the best laws, and profoundest mysteries that ever were penned. It brings the best of tidings, and affords the best of comfort to the inquiring and disconsolate. It exhibits life and immortality; and shows the way to everlasting glory. It is a brief recital of all that is past; and a certain prediction of all that is to come. It settles all matters in debate, resolves all doubts, and eases the mind and conscience of all their scruples. It reveals the only living and true God, and shows the way to him; and sets aside all other Gods, and describes the vanity of them, and of all that trust in them. In short, it is a book of laws to show right and wrong; a book of wisdom, that condemns all folly, and makes it a foolish wise; a book of truth, that detects all lies, and confutes all errors; and a book of life, that shows the way from everlasting death. It is the most commendable book in all the world—the most authentic, and the most entertaining story that ever was published; it contains remote antiquities, strange events, wonderful cures, heroic deeds, unparallelled wars. It describes the celestial, terrestrial, and infernal worlds; and the origin of the angelic myriads, human tribes, and infernal legions. It will instruct the most accomplished in chancery, and the cleverest artist; it will teach the best rhetorician, and exercise every power of the most skillful a thesaurus (Rev. xiii. 18)—puzzle the wisest anatomist, and exercise the profoundest critic. It corrects the vain philosopher, and guides the wise astronomer. It exposes the subtle sophist, and makes diviners mad. It is a complete code of laws, a perfect body of divinity, an unequalled narrative, a book of lives, a book of travels, and a book of voyages. It is the best covenant that ever was made, the best evidence that ever was produced, the best will that ever was made, and the best testament that ever was signed. To understand it is to be wise indeed; to be ignorant of it is to be destitute of wisdom. It is the king's best copy, the magistrate's best rule, the house wife's best guide, the servant's best directory, and the young man's best companion. It is the schoolboy's best spelling-book, and the learned man's master-piece. It contains a choice grammar for a novice, and a profound treatise for a sage; it is the ignorant man's dictionary, and the wise man's directory.

It affords knowledge of witty inventions for the ingenious, and dark sayings for the grave, and is its own interpreter. It encourages the wise, the warrior, the patriot, and the philanthropist; and promises an eternal reward to the conqueror. And that which crowns all is, that the author is without partiality and without hypocrisy; in whom is no variableness or shadow of turning.

## Conversion of Mr. Spurgeon.

The Rev. C. H. Spurgeon, preaching in Scotland, recently, gave an account of his "conversion." He stated that, in early boyhood, he was the subject of many religious impressions, and that of so painful a nature that he might truly say that he was a miserable wretch. So at last he determined to attend three times on the Sabbath in the house of God, and go to every chapel in the town in which he lived to seek a balm for his wounded spirit. It was not until prayer he formed his resolution; and day after day he cried to God—but never heard the Gospel preached. He said this without disparagement of the ministry of his native town, for they were good men and true, but one preached the experience of the child of God, and he had nothing to do with that; and another told of the future blessing of the regenerated, and that did not apply to him; one Sunday the text would be, "Be not deceived, God is not mocked," and again "The wages of sin is death;" he only came there and was after hearing discourses which drove him to despair; and then came the text for good people, but not a word for him. At last he found a Primitive Methodist chapel, of which he had only heard before that the singing was so loud that it split people's heads. Well, he went there; and he did find that they sang quite as loud as he liked to hear. But the text was, "Look unto Me, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth." Now, that was what he wanted to hear. He knew that it was intended for him; and indeed, the preacher fixed his eyes upon him, pointed his finger, and said to him, "young man, you are under great distress of mind—(but sure, enough, that was true)—and you will continue to