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**Communications.**

**BRIEF THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.**

(Continued from page 243.)

We have contemplated some of the uses of baptism when administered to adults. Let us now inquire into the uses of this ordinance when applied to infants. Here, as in many other things, men run into opposite extremes. Some magnify the benefit of this Christian rite beyond what inspired writers warrant us to expect; while others, equally mistaken in their views of duty, reject it as unscriptural and useless. The former affirm baptism to be regeneration; believing that all infants, washed in the name of the adorable Three, are delivered from the corruption of their nature, and endued with a new principle of spiritual life. To this opinion we cannot assent. We reprobate it as unfounded and dangerous. That the Almighty can regenerate an infant by his grace, is not to be doubted; and from the admission of this fact, it will follow that, if he please, he may communicate spiritual life at the moment in which a child receives the outward sign of this great and necessary blessing. But from the *power* of God to do a thing, we cannot infer his *determination* to do it. His omnipotence, which, by a word, brought this world into existence, is able to create, in the same way, ten thousand other worlds this *moment*; but no one is so extravagant as to found on this fact an ex-

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pectation of seeing, in this, or in the next hour, such stupendous exhibitions of Almighty power. The power of Jehovah to regenerate a child in the act of being baptized, supplies no ground of expectation that he will do so: nor could we infer even from occasional occurrences of such a connexion between the rite and the thing signified, any thing like a uniform procedure of a sovereign God, in dispensing renewing grace in conjunction with his own appointed ordinance.

If we look at the conduct of baptized children, we shall find no evidence to support this extravagant opinion. Alas! too generally they discover unequivocal signs of a depraved nature, and of being under its full and unbroken dominion. They need, as well as unbaptized children, to be regenerated. If baptism be regeneration, then, for the same reason, circumcision must have been regeneration; and consequently none of the seed of Abraham, who had received this initiatory rite of the church, would have needed the quickening process of renewing grace, how much soever they may have needed repentance and reformation. But our blessed Lord affirmed the necessity of being *born again*, in the most comprehensive terms; and he doubtless had respect to Nicodemus, with whom he was conversing, and all other circumcised Jews who had not been born again, as well as to Heathen men who were destitute of the seal of God's covenant. Simon Magus

brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person,—upholding all things by the word of his power." But *he humbled himself*, for a season, and *when he had purged our sins*, he returned to his original mediatorial glory, from the scene of his mediatorial humiliation, and *sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high,—crowned with glory and honour,—highly exalted with a name which is above every name*, and so much more exalted in his state than the angels, *as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they*. Philip. ii. 8, Heb. i. 3, and ii. 9. This mediatorial glory was originally conferred in consideration of the consent of the Son to the covenant of redemption, saying, *Lo! I come: I delight to do thy will. The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting*. Isa. l. 5, 6. It was a REWARD, by anticipation, even as his present exaltation as governor and judge in his character of God-man, is a reward for having actually become "obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." In the same manner the ancient saints were saved in consideration of the atonement, which Christ had covenanted to make; as we, who now believe, are saved by a retrospective view of a work completed.

This mediatorial reign of the Son of God extends, since the bringing in of everlasting righteousness, to holy angels, to Satan and his fallen angels, and to every individual of the human family. So teaches the present chapter; and we add, that it *always did and always will*, extend to all creatures, in all worlds; for ever since Christ was set up in the divine counsels as mediator, he has been, and will be, *head over all things, to his church*. He is essentially, in his own divine na-

ture, and by covenant, in his official character as Saviour of his people, *King of kings, and Lord of lords; God over all, blessed for ever*.

The nature of the reign of Messiah is adapted to the subjects of it, and his designs concerning them. *He must reign*, till he has subdued all enemies, either by his sceptre of love, or his iron rod. He reigns over the rebel angels to their destruction; and the holy angels for the perpetuation of their holiness and bliss. "Even the damned will not be able to say that they were unjustly or too severely dealt with." To this assertion we most cordially assent; and invite the serious attention of all who deny the deity of Christ, to the closing paragraph of this chapter. "Unquestionably there are many who are deceiving themselves with the fond opinion, that as they believe in God and Providence, in the distinction between virtue and vice, and in a future state of rewards and punishments, they have religion enough, and are in as fair a road to heaven as any men. But if it shall appear that the actual government of this world is in the hands of Jesus Christ; that it is with him that men have to do, and to him that they will have to account; it will follow that the unbeliever in Christ might as well be an Atheist." E. S. E.

(To be continued.)

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#### NO FICTION :

*A Narrative founded on recent and interesting Facts. In 2 vols. 12mo. First American, from the third London edition. Boston—published by S. T. Armstrong, and Crocker & Brewster.*

We have reason to congratulate our readers and the Christian public generally, on the appearance, from the American press, of the above interesting little volumes. They are deservedly held in high estimation, by our transatlantic

brethren, as appears from the judicious commendation bestowed on them, in the journals of criticism, and from their having passed through three successive editions, in the course of one year.

Although the religious publications of the day are numerous, and in many instances excellent, for their orthodox sentiment and benign moral tendencies, still we have long been sensible of a deficiency in that species of writing, which would be calculated to counteract the unhappy influence of those multiplied publications, which present themselves under the attractive titles of *romances* and *novels*. Sermons, however eloquently written, and didactic theological treatises, however recommended by their ability and conclusiveness, although they may be eagerly perused by confirmed Christians, seldom succeed in arresting the attention of ardent youthful minds, which revolt from the labour of elaborate discussions, and delight chiefly in the charms of narrative composition.

As our taste for reading is generally regulated by the peculiarity of those writings, which have absorbed our attention and enlisted our feelings when buoyant with youth; and as there is a palpable and imminent danger attendant upon the perusal of those *fictionous* narratives and adventures, which are poured upon us with an unsparing and indiscriminating profusion; it must certainly be esteemed a *desideratum*, that our Christian literature should be provided with a proper counteractive—an antidote to the poison.

Novels are recommended by their incident and adventure, and their popularity is in no slight degree increased by the circumstance, that they may be comprehended without any painful application of the mind; yet certainly, a chaste, skilful and imaginative pen may exhibit religious truth with all these peculiar attractions.

Every justifiable mean should be resorted to, in order to excite an interest in the minds of youth, in favour of the religion of Christ; every possible channel of communication should be explored, by which its divine and saving maxims may obtain access to their hearts. We think it by no means hazardous, to embody religious truth in story, which may be fictitious in its general outline, when the line of demarcation is accurately drawn; and since we are apprized of the particular style of writing, which is sought after, by the prevailing taste, we should endeavour, as far as practicable, to wrest it from polluted purposes, and sanctify it to religious use.

We consider the volumes under our notice, as occupying a department in religious literature, which has hitherto been too much neglected; and for their peculiar character they have our cordial approbation.

In the form of *narrative*, they present much interesting incident, much chaste and elegant description; and by the deep solemnity of the truths exhibited and the beauty of style in which they are dressed, they are calculated, we think, to insure the perusal of youth, who are more particularly tempted by the vitiating novel.

The story being founded "on recent and interesting facts," derives an additional charm from that circumstance; forming in the whole, a piece of history exceedingly instructive, and evidencing in the author, a knowledge of the human heart, which but few possess.

As it is probable, many of our readers will not have an opportunity of procuring these volumes, we will present to them a brief outline of the narrative and accompany it with some of the most striking passages in the work. Lefevre, the prominent personage and subject of the narrative, exhibited at an early age, many excellencies of a moral and religious cast. In the

amiable and exemplary Douglas, he found a friend, to whom he might confide the secrets of his soul, and without restraint unbosom his hopes and fears. Such a companion and counsellor Lefevre needed; he had early been dismissed from the roof of a pious and anxious mother, and was exposed in a public office to all the snares of the British metropolis; and although his aim was good, his disposition was too compliant, to resist the seductions of sin, without the constant guardianship of a friend, more fixed in religious principles. Wallis, a companion of Lefevre in the office, was a youth of insinuating address, generous and social spirit, yet of dissipated habits. During the absence of Douglas from the capital, he succeeded in seducing Lefevre into the routine of vice, until at length, the victim had outstripped the seducer in every species of iniquitous abandonment. The judgments of God at length overtook the offender; despair fastened upon his soul; from despair he settled into melancholy, and in this state of mind, meditated his own destruction, but finally enlisted in the army for the American service.

On his voyage to Canada, the Spirit of God met the offender; humbled him under penitential views of his own misconduct, and restored to him his long lost peace of conscience.

He finally obtains his discharge, and returns like the prodigal to the sweet enjoyment of home and friends.

Though a very faint idea of the narrative is conveyed by this outline, we have no fear but the defect may be remedied by selections from the volumes; for the length of which their truth and moral tendencies must apologise. The following is a pleasing specimen of the style of our author, and whilst, in one point of view, it illustrates the character of Lefevre before his apostacy, it may probably remind some of our

readers, of Wirt's eloquent picture in the British Spy, of the preaching of the venerable Waddell; it is an extract of a letter from Lefevre to Douglas.

“ On Sunday I heard Dr. Mills. I had not many expectations, but how was I surprised and delighted! He is a real orator; quite an example of the eloquence of which we have been lately saying so much. No gingling antitheses—no unmeaning epithets—no periods set to music—no meretricious ornaments—no tricks to catch admiration and applause. On the contrary, there was, occasionally, something in his manner, that a fastidious critic would have called awkward; and, sometimes in his style, there was a degree of carelessness that involved a sentence in some obscurity; but this seemed to carry forward the great effect of the discourse, as it convinced his hearers he was intent on higher objects. His gestures were the most natural; dictated from present feeling, and not from studied attitudes. His language was plain and simple, such as seems at every one's command, but which, after all, few can employ: and, if images were introduced, they evidently rose to illustrate and enforce the subject, and were not called up to assert the capacity of the speaker.

“ But Dr. Mills' *forte* is in the pathetic. He appears convinced; that sermons, addressed as they generally are, to people who know more than they practice, should incline rather to exhortation, than argument; and he possesses, in a remarkable degree, that insinuating, affectionate earnestness, which the French call *onction*.

“ When he first announces his subject, there is nothing to observe, except, that every thing about him seems to say, ‘he is in earnest.’ He gathers warmth and energy as he proceeds; and the prevailing sentiment of his heart evidently is—‘If so be I may save myself and them that hear me!’”

“ I shall never forget the close of his sermon on Sabbath morning. He had been treating of the excellencies of the Saviour; and was addressing those who neglected them. Piety, anxiety, benevolence, rose to their fullest exercise, and his manner and language were most powerfully vehement. Now, he entreated like the tenderest of parents; then, he proclaimed the forgiving mercy of the Redeemer, with the authority of an apostle; and again, with trembling, he foretold, like a prophet, the unavoidable miseries of impenitence. He forgot himself, and his hearers forgot him. His style, his manner, his sentiments were wonderfully eloquent and grand. They influenced all; but no

one dwelt upon them. Nothing filled the soul of the preacher, but the immortal interests of his people, and he had succeeded in fixing their attention on the same object.

“As he was about to sit down, he paused; looked compassionately on his congregation, and said, “I have now fulfilled my commission. I have contrasted the world you have idolized, with the Saviour you have neglected. Say, my dear hearers, which will you serve? I will not receive your reply. The Saviour himself is in this place!—Answer as in *his presence*!—Do you hesitate?—Hesitate to prefer bliss to sorrow—honour to disgrace—heaven to earth—heaven to hell—Oh! to hesitate, is to yield to the tempter of your souls—to hesitate is to defer your safety to a moment that may never, never be yours!—Yesterday is not yours. It is gone; and has recorded your transgressions before God!—To-morrow is not yours—it may never come to you. *This* moment alone is yours; and the very moment in which you should cast yourself on the mercy of the all-merciful Redemer.”

“O, say not,” he continued, “I am too ardent on this subject. Because you are too insensible to your salvation, blame not those who cannot imitate your indifference. I have a deep stake in your highest interest! I trust I can lay my hand on my conscience and say, I am clear of your blood; but this—this is not enough! I aspire not only to escape being accessory to your ruin—I pant to be the instrument of your redemption! You are part of the charge which the hand of Providence has committed to my care; and when ‘I pen my fold for immortality,’ how can I bear to find you wanting? I have prayed for you—and watched for you—and ‘travailed in birth till Christ be formed within you the hope of glory;’ and how—O! how can I endure to subscribe to the sentence of your condemnation, and see you sink into hopeless, endless, unutterable wretchedness!—God Almighty, in his infinite mercy, avert from us such tremendous evils! and grant, that through his dear Son, we may *all* finally partake of that blessed salvation which we all so eminently need—which we have all so criminally abused.”

“He sat down. A solemn silence testified the feelings of the assembly—several were moved to tears. I trembled on my seat. But you should have seen and heard him to judge. I have not done him justice.”

The art of Wallis in seducing Lefevre from the innocence and happiness of a religious life, is admirably delineated, and presents a

salutary admonition to youth, who are exposed to the example and persuasions of ungodly companions. *Nemo repente turpissimus*; there is a gradation in sin; if we indulge the “appearance of evil,” we are in danger of plunging into unequivocal criminality. Such was the experience of Lefevre; “he passed from the doubtful to the improper, from the improper to the vicious, from the vicious to the flagrant.” Wallis desired to rub off his “puritanical austerities,” that he might convert him into a jovial companion; and he found but little difficulty, after a first compliance, to conduct him from the concert to the dance, and from the dance to the social board; where *honoured* as “master of ceremonies,” he was soon inveigled, by the attention and flattery of his companions, into an act of degrading, dishonouring intemperance. Thus the Rubicon was passed; he had made a merciless sacrifice of his religious character, and now every mean was ineffectually applied to recal him to the path of virtue or to prevent him from plunging deeper into vice.

Although conscience may be lulled with opiates, there is a time, when it will assert its rights; and if rejected as a friend, it will assume the spectral aspect of a tormenting fiend.

Lefevre had run the round of worldly pleasure—his sensual appetite had become satiated and disordered—his relish was lost—and whilst thus sickened by the world, the judgments of God overtook the offender.

Hapless youth! the vultures of remorse revelled at his heart, and conscience had learned to “bite like an adder and sting like a serpent.” We cannot resist a few extracts which strongly pourtray the despairing feeling of his mind.

“I believe I shall die—I know I shall be damned.”

“He spake like one, who thought, that this confession broke his last link with hu-

manity—like one, who was waiting the summons to final punishment. Horror moved on his features; and the chair he occupied trembled with his emotion!

“O Charles!” said Douglas, “do you know what you are saying? Do you know what it is to be *damned*?”

“With a voice and smile inconceivably unnatural and shocking, he replied—*‘Know what it is? I think I do! They who have suffered as I have these three nights, may easily know what is damnation.’*

“Charles! Charles!—you must not talk so! This is language suited only to those spirits, who have fallen below hope!”

“And am not I *below hope*? Am not I *like them*? Do not I suffer the wrath of God? Do not I feel the unquenchable fires within me?”

“Charles!” interrupted Douglas, “I beseech you—this must not be—quit the subject—”

“Quit the subject!” he cried, renewing his ghastly smile,—*‘quit the subject! Why, I can think of nothing else!—It haunts me by night and day, and I cannot get rid of it! O, Douglas! I have lighted up the fires of hell in my conscience and I cannot extinguish them!’*”

The violent tumult of his mind fixed disease on his body; under the sway of the fever “he was alternately rational or delirious; but in either state, his thoughts were engrossed by the weight of his guilt. If he reasoned, it was against himself; and if frantic, it was the phrenzy of despair.” We present to our readers the interview between Douglas and his wretched friend.

“Look to Mount Calvary!” said Douglas,—“look to the cross of Jesus—there hangs all our hope!”

“O name it not!” he cried,—“that goes to my very soul!—O how have I abused—mocked and crucified the Saviour of sinners!—but for this, there might have been some hope!”

“There is hope yet!—Though you have insulted and neglected him, he looks upon you, as he did on Peter, and invites you to return to him. O look to him Charles!”

“O do look to him Charles!” cried Mrs. Russel, dropping down by his bed-side, and raising her hands as in supplication.—“He has said, he will cast out *none* that come to him—if you had a thousand souls, you might trust them all on that.”

“I cannot—I cannot!”

“Ask him to enable you,” said Douglas.

“O, do ask him, Charles!” rejoined Mrs. Russel. “He has said, ‘ask and ye shall receive—seek and ye shall find.’—Do pray to him!—Only say, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner!’ He will hear you.”

“Yes, he will hear you, my dear Charles, rely upon it,” said Douglas. “O, think of his love in dying for us, when we were ungodly and rebellious! How much more shall he regard us, when we ask his mercy.”

“It is too late!”

“No!” replied Douglas, “it cannot be too late while you are out of eternity.”

Lefevre was affected. Douglas wept. Mrs. Russel sobbed. She thought there was a ray of hope. Always ardent, her feelings rose with her hopes, and she continued sobbing and saying,—“O Charles, do be persuaded—do listen to me—listen to Mr. Douglas—you loved Mr. Douglas—and he loves you—listen to him.—Do try to pray.—Bless my ears with one prayer—if it is only ‘Lord help me.’—Say, Lord help me—do! He will hear you, indeed he will.—Shall we pray for you?—Mr. Douglas, do pray for him—he does not *object*.”

Douglas sunk on his knees, but was not in a state for regular prayer. They uttered their desires rather ‘by cries and tears unto God,’ than by any connected sentences.

They arose, and, in silence, looked anxiously and tearfully upon him. He had evidently been greatly agitated, and appeared as though his thoughts were beginning to wander. His despair strengthened with the disorder of his mind.—“O don’t weep for me,” he cried—“my heart is so hard, I cannot weep. Once sympathy was dear to me—but now its like oil to my burning conscience.”

“We weep,” cried Mrs. Russel, ‘for love, for hope! we hope you will recover—we hope our prayers will be heard.’

“No never!—no never!” he exclaimed in a deep and resolved voice—“your prayers will bless you, but they cannot bless me—none can bless me but God, and he *will* not.—It is *just*—I have forsaken him—‘I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh,’—*think of that!*”

He paused, and was getting more confused. Wallis and his uncle came into the room, but he did not distinguish them. He looked round with wildness, and continued at intervals:—

“Lost, lost, for ever lost!—O I have forsaken my God—he called, but I would not hear—he stretched out his hand, but I rejected it—*think of that!*—See! how his broad eye frowns upon me! O hide me—hide me—from the wrath of the Lamb! Cruel Douglas, to tell me to look to the cross—any thing but that!

O how I burn!—Pour some water over me here (running his hand over his bosom)—*Unquenchable fire, think of that!*—a worm that *dieth not*—if it would but die!—Death is nothing—but its what comes after death—*dreadful—dreadful!*

Mind I tell you—take care of sin—its a nasty, bloody thing. If it stains your conscience you'll never get it off—I trifled with it—and I shall never be clean again. Take care of sin!—God won't forgive you else—O, He is good and merciful—very—very—but then he's *just*—he's *just!*—*think of that!*—O I have forsaken my God—I have forsaken my God!

“Lefevre groaned heavily as he terminated these and some similar exclamations; and looked round on the objects in the chamber, with that ‘speculation in his eyes,’ which indicated the return of his mind to his senses. Wallis and Lefevre's uncle gazed on each other in wonder.

“‘Poor fellow! this is only what might have been expected,’ said Wallis, veiling his sentiments in ambiguous words, lest Douglas should correct him.

“‘Expected indeed,’ said the uncle, ‘this is what I always thought his over-righteous ways would come to. I told him it would never hold long, and if it did, it would be sure to turn his brain. You see my words are true. Its all his religion—that's a clear case.’

“Lefevre sprang hastily in his bed as the last sentence caught his ear, and exclaimed—‘*All my religion, Sir!* O, is the just punishment of my sins to be imputed to religion! No, Sir, it is all for the *want* of religion that you see me thus! I neglected—despised that religion which you awfully blaspheme—this makes me wither and perish as you see, under the curse of Almighty God!’

“‘Well, don't discompose yourself, Charles,’ said Wallis, stepping towards him.

“Lefevre had not distinctly recollected his presence. He turned a piercing eye upon him, which spoke to his soul—his tongue faltered a moment, and then he said—“O Wallis! you have ruipied me! How can I look at you! Yes—you have not gone the lengths I have—but you *first* led me astray—*first* brought me to base company! O, I was never unhappy till I knew *you!*—Yet it was all *my own fault!*—I knew better.’

“Wallis endeavoured to cover his awkwardness under this address, by assuming an air of indifference.

“Lefevre's quick eye, still searching his countenance, observed it—“O Wallis,” said he, ‘attend to me!—I have little to say in this world!—There is hope for *you*. Doubt not the truth of religion. I tried to doubt, but I don't doubt *now!* I *feel* there is a

God whom I have offended. I *feel* there is a heaven I have lost. I *feel* there is a hell—I have the witness here (striking his breast)—O do not trifle as *I* have done—as *you* have done—renounce the world—fly to the Saviour. Brave not the terrors of God? I could brave more than you—but see what I am! The finger of God crushes me like a moth!—O 'tis a terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God!’”

His melancholy is described with equal force and graphical effect.

“Deep melancholy had been gradually preying upon Lefevre, and her dominion seemed now complete. He became more like the statue of a man, than a man himself. Hour after hour he would retain the same seat, and even the same attitude, without any sense of fatigue; as in sleep we retain a posture free from uneasiness, which would have been insupportable had we been awake to our situation. The features of his face were fixed in one unchanged expression; knowing no variation but the occasional muttering of the lips, which yet emitted no articulate sounds. He noticed nothing—he wished for nothing—he showed feeling at nothing; except when attempts were made to disturb him. The servants, and even the very animals of the house, in time, passed to and from his room, as though it were unoccupied; and, if any regard was paid to it, it was such a regard as we pay to a place where death has entered, and not where a living inhabitant is found. In a word, Lefevre appeared to have lost all *volition*. He was like a fine machine, perfect in all its parts; but, from the fracture of the grand spring, incapable of all motion, except by extrinsic excitement. With all this apparent insensibility, however, to a careful observer, there was an indefinable something about Lefevre, which indicated—not only feeling—but feeling compressed and agonizing. The rebellious passions had ceased their violent struggles in the outworks, but they were now sapping the very citadel. A cold, stony indifference had placed its deathly form on all his faculties; but upon the whole of that form might be seen the worm of anguish, silently, yet rapaciously, feeding on the very seat of vitality!

“Nothing can readily be imagined more afflicting to an affectionate mother, than to be called to attend, day after day, a child in such a situation. She soothed him—she caressed him—she entreated him—she prayed for him—she wept over him—but nothing availed—it was like rain falling on the rock. The most that, by all her efforts she could extort from him was an unwelcome ‘Leave me! leave me!’”

“Sorrow is a sacred thing.’ And that sorrow that lies deep in the heart—that breathes no sigh—sheds no tear—utters no complaint—is wonderfully affecting. Douglas never felt more respect mix with his pity, than at this period of Lefevre’s uttermost distress. With the delicacy of Job’s friends, a delicacy he had often admired, he sat down without saying a word to sympathize with him in silence. Profound was the stillness that prevailed for many minutes. Lefevre seemed moved by his quiet and respectful sympathy: and appeared desirous of noticing it, in proportion as it retreated from notice and expression. He half raised his eyes in an effort to look on him; but they fell under him again. This rejoiced Douglas; and he was waiting for the second effort, expecting it to be successful, when Mrs. Lefevre broke the silence. She did not fully comprehend that communion of spirits which subsists, not only without words, but in scorn of them; and she was uneasy that he did not *talk* to her son.

“Charles!” said she, ‘here is Mr. Douglas, you’ll speak to him, won’t you?’

“Lefevre evidently shrunk from this overture, and Douglas, scarcely knowing how to act, said—‘Charles! I am concerned to see you so unwell.’

“He spoke not.

“‘If my speaking,’ Douglas continued, ‘is painful to you, only raise your hand, and I will desist altogether.’

“The hand was not raised. Douglas was encouraged—‘There is hope, Charles!’ said he.

“Lefevre shook his head slightly.

“‘O yes, I do assure you there is hope! For the vilest returning sinner there is hope! The tempter may incline you to think otherwise, but remember he is ‘the father of lies.’ He is always tempting us either to presume or despair.’

“He was silent. Douglas alluded at intervals to the inviting language of scripture.

“‘The Redeemer has said, ‘Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’

“‘God has put words into the mouth of the backslider—‘Take with you words and turn unto the Lord, and say unto him, take away all iniquity, and receive us graciously.’

“‘Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he *will* have mercy upon him: and to our God, for he *will* abundantly pardon.’

“‘God has graciously assured us, ‘that he has no pleasure in the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn unto him

and live.’ And he condescends to expostulate with us—‘*O why will ye die.*’ Do not such scriptures afford you encouragement?”

“Again he shook his head.

“‘O Charles!’ continued Douglas much affected—do not cast away hope. Think of what you are doing. The mercy of God is unbounded; the merit of the Saviour is infinite; the agency of the Spirit is almighty: to suppose then, that their influence cannot reach you, is to dishonour God in a point where he is most jealous of his glory. Surely you would not wish this?”

“His frame seemed to shudder at the suggestion.

“‘Then do not reject all hope!’ resumed Douglas. ‘Look to Him who looked with pity on his enemies—his murderers—who looks with pity on you!’

“‘Do, Charles, do!’ said his mother. ‘Take comfort I entreat you!’

“‘For your own sake—for the sake of your friends,’ continued Douglas.

“‘For my sake—for your mother’s sake!’ cried Mrs. Lefevre, seizing his passive hand and kissing it. ‘O Charles, my dear Charles, take comfort! Are you not my hope—my joy? Do I not live for you only? O Charles, pity your poor distracted mother!—Speak to us Charles! Tell us *you* will take comfort—that will comfort *us*!’

“‘Leave me! leave me!’ said Lefevre, gently pressing her away.”

The recovery of this wandering prodigal is most feelingly described in his own words, in a letter to his friend Douglas, whilst on his voyage to America, with the regiment in which he was enrolled.

MR. LEFEVRE TO MR. DOUGLAS.

*Off Cape Breton, on board the —*

“DEAR DOUGLAS,

“Believe what you see! This is indeed my hand writing. I am still in the land of the living. Will this news give you any pleasure! Yes, it will! I have first abused your friendship, and then cast it away, but you are still my friend. O, Douglas! my folly has caused those, who were most fit for friendship, gradually to forsake me; but you will not be of that number. Let me have the consolation of thinking, that I have one friend left to me; and that that friend is he, whom of all others, I have loved.

“After the lapse of so much time, I hardly know whether I should have written merely to inform you, that I exist; but, since I hope I can say I live to better purpose, it is my duty to inform you of it, as some

compensation for all you have suffered on my account. Yes! I trust I may assert, that the awful visitation of the Almighty, which you witnessed upon me, was not in vain! I resisted it as long as possible, but at length my proud heart was compelled to yield. It was softened, I hope into penitence; and, I would believe, I am an instance of the truth of your maxim, *that every returning penitent shall be forgiven.*

“Forgiven! O, blessed be that mercy which forgives me!—but I can never forgive myself! The very sense I have of the divine forgiveness, aggravates every transgression I have committed. Have I, with a knowledge of the will of God, refused to do it? Have I, professing to regard religion, grossly dishonoured it? Have I opposed the preventing hand of Providence, till my obstinacy made it necessary to that hand, in saving me, to shake my reason and my life, and give me for a season to ‘the buffeting of Satan?’ Have I pierced the bosom of the best of Fathers, with the arrows of ingratitude and rebellion? Have I despised the gentle voice of a pitying, bleeding, dying Saviour?—O, what a sinner am I!—As perverse as Cain—as treacherous as Judas—as profane as Esau—as apostatizing as Peter—as worldly as Demas—and am I forgiven? Yes, I must believe, that the grace which has changed my heart, has pardoned my sin—but I *cannot forgive myself!* O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, then would I weep day and night for my transgressions!

\* \* \* \* \*

“How wonderful are the ways of God! It was when I had put myself beyond the entreaties of friends and the ordinary means of grace;—it was when he had permitted me to weary myself with my own folly, and to taste the fruit of my own doings;—it was when my heart had settled down into an awful state of sullen indifference to time or eternity—that, with a naked and outstretched arm, he did the work alone!—What grace!—What love!—What forbearance!—What wisdom!—I never think of it but I weep, and it is scarcely ever absent from my thoughts. ‘Surely his paths are in the sea, and his footsteps are not known.’ ‘He hath brought me up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay; and hath set my feet upon a rock, and hath established my goings; and hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise to my God.’ O, if I am saved it must be as ‘the very chief of sinners.’ I have merited the lowest place in hell, and I desire nothing more than the lowest place on earth—the lowest place in heaven!

“There is one thing, however, that presses heavily upon my mind, and often renders me *truly unhappy.* It is the injury

I have done to my companions in wickedness. I too well know, that my revolt from religion confirmed them in infidelity; and that my daring in sin made them the bolder. I have done them a mischief which I cannot undo. I am, I hope, reclaimed; but I cannot reclaim them. I may and will admonish and pray for them; but alas! they may still obstinately continue in a course, that will probably ruin their temporal, and certainly ruin their eternal interests. O Douglas!—It is only when I think of *this* that I shed tears of bitterness and gall!

“One of this number, I believe, you know. Have you not occasionally seen *Wilson* with me? And did you not once express yourself pleased with him? Poor Wilson! It is for him, of all the rest, I am most affected. He is affectionate and gentle; but easily led—alas! too easily led for me. He was, when I first knew him, a regular professor, and I think a real Christian; but I led him astray, step by step, and he became nearly what I was. He has an amiable young wife, and one child; and if he continues what he was, they and himself will speedily be ruined—ruined—O, how can I say it!—by me!—Douglas, my beloved Douglas, if he is living, find him out, for the sake of your friend. Think that I am the guilty cause of all his guilt. Tell him what I have suffered—tell him how I repent. Pray for him—warn him—entreat him in your name—in my name—in our dying Saviour’s name—to return unto the God he has forsaken! O, I cannot endure the thought of his sinking into perdition through my shameful example!”

If our readers are not fatigued with the length and number of these extracts, we will indulge ourselves with one other; which feelingly pictures the visit of Lefevre, on his return to England, to the dying Wilson, mentioned in the above letter.

“The first glance on Wilson’s present circumstances, affected Lefevre by contrast. He had formerly occupied good apartments to which cleanliness and order gave a nameless charm; and Lefevre had, at first, been accustomed to find him, receiving and reflecting the affectionate smiles of his wife and child, as the evenings passed happily away, in light employments, or domestic recreations. Now he saw him and his family driven, for a last refuge, to a wretched garret, low, dirty, and unfurnished; and even here, it was evident the scourge of poverty was on them. A clean cloth lay in one corner of the place, as if to cover their scanty provisions. Two damaged chairs and a bro-

ken table, stood towards the centre of the room. Within the sooty chimney-piece lay a few coals, between half a dozen bricks; but at so much distance from each other, that the flame of some, in vain attempted to communicate itself to the remainder. By the side of the fire, on a stool, sat the little child, stretching out her chilled hands and feet, desirous of a warmth she could not obtain; while the smoke puffed out repeatedly by the wind, had given a sallow cast to her dejected, but healthy countenance.

"The wife and mother rose at the entrance of the visitors to receive them, without salutation, without complaint. She stood like a picture of wo. Nothing seemed to remind Lefevre of her, but a certain neatness of appearance, which, though it cannot be described, often serves alone to distinguish one female from others; but this very neatness sat on her shabby attire, like the spirit of departed comfort on existing misery, and seemed to say—'I have seen better days.'

"On a worm-eaten press bedstead was Wilson himself. His eyes wandered without observation; his flesh had sunk from his features, and given them an awful prominence; and an unwholesome yellowness tintured his skin. His liver was consumed, and his end was rapidly approaching!

"'Ah!' thought Lefevre, as he moved towards the bed, 'I have done all this!' He spoke to the dying man. He was insensible.—He turned away with agitation to his afflicted wife, and inquired the state of his mind. Her reply was just what he dreaded to hear. 'Unhappy, Sir,' said she—'very unhappy!'

"'Is he penitent?'

"'I trust he is, Sir!'

"'Has he hope?'

"'Alas! no Sir. Had he but hope in his death, the bitterness of death would be past to me!'

"'He must hope!' cried Lefevre, losing the command of his grief for a moment. Then recovering himself a little, he inquired, whether he was likely to be sensible again: and, on learning that he was, and that it was most probable towards evening, he begged permission to attend him that night.

"The friends walked home in silent reflection. Lefevre knew not how, either to conceal, or express his concern. Douglas remarked it, and said—'Poor Wilson! I have seen him many times; and, though he is without comfort, I would believe he is truly penitent.'

"'Do you think so?' exclaimed Lefevre, with momentary satisfaction—'but he has no hope! Can there be real contrition where there is no hope—no faith?'

"'He may,' replied Douglas, 'have hope enough to raise him above despair; and

yet too little to produce sensible comfort—there may be faith enough to rely on the Saviour, but not enough for an assurance of his favour.'

"'Ah! may be! but at best it is doubtful. O my dear friend, you cannot know what I suffer at this instant! You have never ruined a fellow creature! Poor Wilson! His temporal distress is nothing—but his soul! Douglas!—Indeed, if he die without some evidence of his hope in the Redeemer, I shall never hold up my head in this world!'

"Strong emotion scarcely allowed him to finish the sentence. He hastened to his chamber, to repent afresh of those transgressions, which had carried their influence beyond himself; and to pray ardently for the pardon and acceptance of his former companion, that his guilt might not rest on his conscience.

"Early in the evening he renewed his visit, as he had proposed. Wilson was still insensible, and the hand of death was evidently upon him. Lefevre determined not to leave him; and prepared to remain with him the whole night, should he live through it. Hour after hour elapsed, leaving him little to do, except to count the slow minutes on his watch, or to feel the dying pulse, which by turns throbbled—trembled—and stopped! midnight came and went without any glimpse of reason; and the patient was waxing worse. Lefevre was greatly distressed; he feared that no opportunity would be afforded, to exchange even a word or a sign with him. About one o'clock, however, the heavy film on his eye dispersed—his senses were collected—he could see—he could speak. His eye caught Lefevre! He had no expectation of seeing him. He became confused. He made an effort to recover himself. His eye brightened, and still dwelt upon him. Lefevre could not endure it. He spoke to relieve his feelings.

"'Wilson!'—said he, 'do you know me?'

"'Know you! O Lefevre!—' cried the dying man, with alarming agitation.

"These words, associated with his own reflection, went, like a lancet, to the bottom of Lefevre's soul. Had he inclined to his feelings, he would have fled from the pain of his presence; but his mind was now disciplined. He had a duty to discharge—he desired to lead him back to the fold whom he had led from it—and he cared not what he suffered, if he might but accomplish it.

"'What is your state of mind?' he resumed.

"'Dark—dark—miserably dark!' said he, shaking his head.

"'Do you doubt the goodness of God?' said Lefevre.

"'O, no! impossible!—impossible—but to me—to me—' and his voice failed him.

"He regained it. He pointed to his wife, who sat at the foot of the bed absorbed in wo—'See there!' said he, 'I have ruined her—my child—I have ruined my child!'"

"Think not of us!" exclaimed the afflicted wife.

"They shall never want friends!" said Lefevre.

"Dear Lefevre!" said he, extending his hand to him.—"Where's the child?" he continued—"Where's my Ann?"

"He was told she was sleeping. He desired to see her. They took her from the corner of the room where she was reposing, and, without awakening her, bore her to her father. He passed his bony and faltering hand down her little fleshy arm. He motioned for her to be lowered to him. He endeavoured to lift his head a little, and pressed his livid lips on her half-opened and smiling mouth. The effort and emotion were too much for him—he fell back and fainted. The unconscious child was laid hastily on the foot of the bed, while they sought to revive him.

"Lefevre felt that he had been diverted from the subject, which lay nearest his heart. He feared the life was now departing; and he shuddered to lose his friend, without some evidence of his return to God. 'O,' said he to himself, 'his guilt will be upon me!'"

"On the application of volatile salts, however, to the nostrils of Wilson, he once more revived, but it was without the power of utterance! He tried to speak and could not! The attempt only convulsed the lifeless jaws. He looked on his wife and Lefevre, with indescribable anguish.

"O Wilson!" cried Lefevre—"cannot you speak to us?—Make a sign—Are you not happy?"

"He endeavoured to shake his head; but, having inclined it one way, he could not turn it in the opposite direction. They understood his awful, half-expressed *negative*, and wept.

"Do you not," continued Lefevre, "repent of your sins, and renounce them?—If you do, lift up your hand!—and his eye fell upon the nerveless hand, as though the sentence of life or death were within its power.

"It arose!—An insupportable weight fell from Lefevre's heart.

"Are you," he resumed, "enabled to cast yourself, as a perishing, condemned sinner, at the feet of the divine Saviour?"

"He had lost the power to raise the hand: but he slowly raised both his arms, while the feeble hands hung dangling upon each other.

"Oh! thank God!" cried the wife.

"Oh! thank God!" cried Lefevre.

"This burst of joyful gratitude over,

their attention was fixed in sympathy with the sufferer. A few moments would now end his sufferings. The blood had retired from his clay-cold extremities. The light of his eye was quenched. His breath was short, spasmodical, and rattling. Convulsions, like the fangs of death, writhed his whole body. An attack severer than the former came on. It terminated in a deep groan. Lefevre thought it announced the departure of the soul—he sunk on his knees exclaiming—"Lord Jesus receive his spirit!"—He paused to listen for his breathing—nothing was heard! He held his watch glass over his mouth—its surface was not steamed! Awful was the moment! Awful was the stillness that succeeded! Neither Lefevre nor Mrs. Wilson dared to interrupt it, by word, or sob, or movement. You might have thought, that death had not only triumphed in one instance, but that his seal was set on every thing in this chamber of wo. The neglected taper was flickering away its last light in the socket. The exhausted cinders on the hearth were, as the fire forsook them, crackling like the death-watch. The child lay at the feet of the exanimate body of its father, breathing so softly, that it seemed to respire not at all. The mother and Lefevre were so pale—so motionless, that you might have questioned whether they had power to move, or to think. And the room itself, with its low arched ceiling, blackened by the smoke of numerous years, and containing only light enough to reveal the darkness, was much more like a sepulchre for the dead, than an abode for the living.

"Mrs. Wilson was the first to show signs of life. She arose, and moving to the head of the bed, closed the eyelids of the dead body. This act of delicacy to the deceased stirred all her grief; she sunk on the bed, and, kissing the pallid forehead, wept aloud, without seeming to have power to arise. Lefevre did all that Christian sympathy could suggest, to console her beneath the affliction. He tarried with her till break of day; and then, taking his leave, assured her, that he would wholly relieve her from the painful duties connected with his funeral.

"Poor Wilson!" thought Lefevre as he went towards the residence of Douglas—"Poor Wilson! thy sun is gone down at noon!—and behind a heavy, impenetrable cloud!—But I trust, by the grace of God, it shall arise on the morning of the resurrection, bright with glory, and changeless as immortality!"

As we have perhaps, trespassed too long upon the patience of our readers, we will dismiss these volumes, with the hope that they will be generally and carefully perused.

They forcibly delineate the danger of forsaking God in our youth, and of casting aside that divine protection which is so necessary to shield us from the influence of our natural corruptions, and from the contamination and curse of ungodly companions. And most forcibly do they pourtray the peril and fearfulness of apostacy from God. It is indeed no light matter, to renounce a Christian profession; to trample under foot the blood of the covenant, on which we have once professed to rest our hopes for eternity; or to pour contempt upon the cross, which we have once professedly

elevated as the only object of our glorying. The reclamation of Lefevre cannot be relied upon, as a ground of hope, by those who are resolved to persist in a course of iniquity; his own interesting testimony was, "Alas! where *I* have been preserved, *thousands* have perished!"

Those who willingly forsake God, after being impressed with a full conviction of the truth of the gospel, may calculate not only upon the terrifying circumstances of Lefevre's despair, but upon the awful accompaniments of an irreclaimable apostacy. W. M. E.

## Religious Intelligence.

*The Treasurer of the Trustees of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church acknowledges the receipt of the following sums for their Theological Seminary at Princeton, N. J. during the month of June last,—viz.*

Of Rev. John E. Latta, from New Castle and Christiana Bridge for the Contingent Fund	\$24	
Of Rev. Dr. Alexander, from Rev. Elias Harrison, the donation of Col. Ritchie, of Fredericktown, Maryland, for same fund	10	
Of Mr. Thomas Fassitt, from Mr. J. S. Christmas, subscriptions collected by Rev. Thomas Barr, of Wayneborough, Ohio, for ditto	15	75
Of Rev. Samuel S. Davis,* in full of the advances made to him at the commencement of his agency, for-ditto	17	
Of Mr. John Lawrence, three quarters rent of the stable back of No. 81, South Second street, which he has given up, for ditto	30	
Of Rev. Dr. E. S. Ely, from Rev. A. G. Fairchild, George's Creek, Redstone Presbytery, for ditto	10	
Of Rev. Dr. W. Neill, in full for the subscription of Mr. James Nevins, on Rev. Dr. Green's paper for the Permanent Fund	50	
Of Alexander Henry, esq. on loan, for discharging the debt on the Professor's house	3000	
Of Rev. Dr. John M'Dowell, the donation of a female friend in Elizabethtown, for the professorship to be endowed by the Synod of New York and New Jersey	50	
Of Rev. John Goldsmith, Newtown, Long Island, for the scholarship to be endowed by the senior class of 1819	120	
Of Thomas H. Mills, esq. six months interest in advance on a scholarship to be endowed by a lady in the vicinity of New York	62	50
Received payment of the drafts received of Rev. Shepard K. Kollock, mentioned in the statement for May, viz. for the professorship to be endowed in part by the Synod of North Carolina	871	
and for the scholarship to be endowed by the Presbytery of Orange	285	
Total	4545	25

\* The Rev. Samuel S. Davis has generously relinquished to the Seminary, not only all remuneration for his services, for the year in which he was employed as an agent, by the General Assembly, but he has also declined accepting any thing for his expenses, which must have been very considerable; so that he has returned what was advanced to him for this purpose when he entered on the work.