

76

See account of Misses
hardships in ~~the~~
Education - Vite
also by of Misses
d.

2. h. 47.

~~See page 47~~
~~of the~~

Drake of Course 32 M. Wright
1844

Lake 1-6 all the
Commanders -

SPECIAL NOTE

**ITEM SCANNED AS SUPPLIED
PAGINATION IS AS SEEN**

SYMPTOMES
OF
GROWTH and DECAY
IN
GODLINESS
IN

Eighty Signs of a Living and Dying
CHRISTIAN, With the Causes of Decay
and Remedies for Recovery.

The Second Edition much *Enlarged*, with the Ad-
dition also of *Twenty* Signs largely Improved.

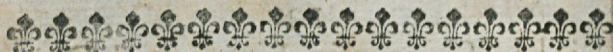
By *Francis Smith*, One that through Gods Grace,
and the Deceitfulness of Sin; hath had some ac-
quaintance with both these States.

Psal. 92. 12. *The Righteous shall flourish like a Palm
tree, he shall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon.*

Rev. 3. 1. *I know thy works, that thou hast a name that
thou livest and art dead.*

Whether for Heaven or Hell you go,
This Book, with Heart compar'd, may show.

Printed for *Francis Smith*, at the *Ele*
and Castle, near *Temple bar*, 1672.



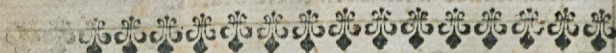
IMPRIMATUR

William Jeffery,

Thomas Munck,

Benjamin Morley,

Joseph Wright.



To the Right Worshipful and
my ever Honoured Good
Friend, Sir THOMAS
FOSTER Knight: One
of His Majesties Justices of
the Peace for the County of
Middlesex and Surrey.

Right Worshipful,

UNthankfulness is not only a sin, but it
is ranked amongst those *Capital sins*,
that are signs of the *last times*; and
hath a general mark in the holy
Scriptures, not barely to debase Christians
below Heathens, but indeed below brut
Beasts; for the Ox acknowledgeth his Owner,
and the Asse his Masters Crib.

This Consideration, with many more,
Commands me to enquire into the truth, and
greatness of my Debt to your worship, whose
past Favours I can mention, but never Requite:
Yet by Gods grace and help, will ever remem-
ber, and acknowledge, where ever Occasion
serves, to the day of my death.

And because your Faithful, Unmeritted,
and every way Unrequited Kindness may live
when

The Epistle Dedicatory.

when I am gone; not only to induce others to such Compassionate Acts of Mercy, in time of Extremity; but that my Children also may have an honourable remembrance of *your Name and Deeds* to their poor once languishing *Father*, while buried alive in the worst of *English Prisons*, that they may still read over, what both their *Father* underwent, and your *Worship* relieved from, when others, sufficiently obliged, did decline; while your self neither accepting Common Acknowledgement, nor regarding the strength of Opposition, or other Reflections of being so much concerned for one wholly a stranger to your selfe, and under names of *Contempt* or *Fanaticisme*.

Yet in unwearied Indeavours after once you took the task in hand, were so far from declining, that in conjunction with *this noble Principle*, sure *God raised you up* to regard the distress of a stranger, and his poor wife and several small children: which Principle still carried you through those many oppositions that befell you: yet like a resolved Warriour, did attempt all Indeavours for a thorow Conquest of what you had once begun. And now,

Dear Sir, pardon my boldness, and please to give me leave at this time to remember you, of what in duty to God, I ought never to forget: namely, in *August 1661*. I was seized by a Warrant from the then *Secretary of State*, and committed close Prisoner to the *Gate-House*.

The Epistle Dedicatory.

House Prison, upon Suggestion of Printing a Book entituled, *The year of Prodigies*: though I knew not who Printed it. There I was truly buried alive, it being a Prison famous for oppression of poor Prisoners, as many besides my self can notoriously witness; for as soon as I was brought thither, a Stern Goaler locked me up, and said, I must not see, nor have the liberty of any of Relations or acquaintance to visit me without special Order from the Secretary first obtained. This looked like Cold entrance, to one unacquainted with such a Condition; (*though I then deserved worse at Gods hands*)

But to a tittle, this and much more I found to be as truly performed as promised, for I was locked up in a Room, where I neither had Chair nor Stool to rest on, and yet ten Shillings the week must be the price: and ere I had been there three nights, seven Pounds and fifteen Shillings was demanded for present Fees; that is to say, five Pounds to free me from wearing Irons; ten Shillings for my Entrance week Lodging, five Shillings my Sheets, five Shillings Garnish mony, the rest for Turn-Key Fees, &c. I desired, being a stranger to their Custome, a few dayes time to consider of it; which was granted: In which season, I had the happiness, late at night, or early in the morning, to stand up upon a high Table, and lay mine ear to the side Roof of the Room, by which means, through the affectionate en-

dea-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

deavours of a worthy Prisoner, and his worthy Companions close Prisoners also, (that must, to lend me any converse, lie all along upon the ground, and call at some *Crevise*, but blessed be God, they were, from sence of what they did undergoe, beset with such *Sympathy* towards me, that still I had their ear in such a manner, and at such seasons,) whom I acquainted with the Keepers Demands, desiring to know what Just Custome did require: from whom (as after the same was confirmed by the then Secretary;) That it was not Warrantable, by any known *Law of England*, to require five pounds to buy off wearing *Irons*: Upon which, I gave this answer; I did not understand any just cause I had given for so severe an Imprisonment, much less to pay such Fees; for which I was neither able nor willing. Upon which, many Cruel Indeavours were used, to exact a Consent from me, and my *afflicted wife* not suffered to speak with me but in the presence of the Keeper, and after a chargeable *Order* for so much Priviledge first obtained: Nay many times Orders denyed again and again for my Friends admittance to me; and my Window Casements must be nailed up, that I should not have the benefit of that Common Aire which is every Slaves Birth-right. And when Provision was sent me for my necessary support, though a little served, my Stomach so failed to eating, being
so

The Epistle Dedicatory.

so close shut up, yet that must be kept from me, and frequent forced Fasts imposed on me; and however, what was sent for my dinner at twelve by the care of some loving Relations that lived neer the Prison, must be given me at four or five a clock; at which time I usually must *Break-fast*; and if meat were brought, I should be sure to want *beer or bread*: so that at last I was forced to devise a way to get a *string and bagg* to be let down by night at the window, to convey some refreshment to me.

These Cruelties spreading abroad, occasioned applications to a higher power to obtain some respite; but in the general, things continued at this pass for some twelve weeks; in which time, for but receiving a note at the key hole by an open Prisoner, sent from my poor wife, then sick and weary with grief and successless travels about my release, the harmless neighbour that brought it was secured, and my self taken out of this room (sufficiently bad, as I thought and felt) and put into another, neer twenty dayes hopeles and helpless in a visible way, (yet to Gods praise be it spoken, then least a Prisoner though most so;) being locked up in a Trap-Room, where I could hardly be heard with hollowing, it being a place where such condemned to death are usually secured. In this time more than thirty pound was spent to attempt
my

The Epistle Dedicatory.

my release, but all in effectual: Then was Application made to the *Kings Bench Barre*, where I had four or five chargeable *Habeas Corpus* before the Cruel Goaler would obey to bring me to the Barre.

Upon this, my afflicted wife was advised (your honoured Father being then *L. Chief Justice*) to beseech your Worship, to view the Breviate of my Case, I being the next day to be brought before the Judges, both she and my self were perfect strangers to you; yet it pleased God, upon your hearing our grievance, to affect your heart with such a measure of Compassion, that you undertook the work, and never ceased till it was compleated which in two Terms more was brought about notwithstanding the considerable opposition and suggestions of some Instruments to the contrary, (but here it may be remembred as an Addition to the habit of Cruelty attending that Prison) I no sooner was remanded back by the Judges till a convenient day of hearing in the Term following, but the Goaler thrust me into the Common Room or Dungeon, where I remained for twenty dayes or more, because I could not raise him seven pounds towards Chamber rent at that instant.

And though my usage was hard, your honoured Father, to the praise of his just memory, gave patient hearing to all my Complaints; sufficiently disdaining the usage,
and

The Epistle Dedicatory.

and commanding the Keeper for time to come it might be mended; also willing me to *Indite* him in the same Court: and when I told his Honour my mony was spent, he was pleased to reply, it should be done at the Courts Charge, I only *Prosecute*, and if it should happen till my Legal Release I should die with such ill usage, the Keeper should be indited for his Life.

VVorthy Sir, while other Council took our mony and declined to speak answerable to the trust reposed in them; your self, *gratis*, stood faithfully by me to the last.

Pardon, Dear Sir, my being something tedious in this Repetition, which I the rather am bold in; that you might see the great slavery God made you the sole instrument to deliver me from; and that your name and deeds may live fresh in the memory of me and mine, while time shall endure with us on this side the Grave. VVorthy Sir, this Imprisonment cost me above one hundred and thirty pounds, and above six Months Captivity in that cruel Goal, besides the loss of my shop, and Trade which remained out of my hands for two years to such detriment I am scarce yet recovered from: I have had nine or ten Imprisonments and Restraints more, some of them considerably chargeable, yet your heart and ear is open at all times to give your best assistance, still *gratis*, only because you are surely
rai-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

raised of God, to be my Friend; without the least merit of mine, only His *Mercy*, and your good *Nature*.

This leads me, Dear Sir, to the remembrance of that never to be forgotten farther Act of your kindness in the height of that dreadful Plague upon poor *London*, while the Providence of God afforded me for my self, Wife and several small Children, a little place of respite, in a Village neer *Darke* in the County of *Surrey*: where, when what little money I had, upon the foresight of that Deluge coming upon *London*, gathered together to maintain us with bread, was neer spent; a very black Cloud seized on me, and many undue and unjust suggestions were laid against me, by some evil and busie Instruments of mischief: that because I was an *Ana-baptist*, as they are called, or *Phanatique*, I must therefore be looked upon, as disaffected to the Government. So that though the Cloud seemed to arise out of the North Countrey, yet upon some poor innocent persons in that County and my self, part of it must fall: so in short, I was ordered to *Windsor*: at this strait, money being almost gone, and how long Gods hand might remain upon poor *London*; wherehence I got my bread, none but the same God knew.

Yet go I must, notwithstanding all my pleadings, and importunity of many strangers with tears, that seemed to have pittie on my present case,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

case, reflecting upon the sad Providence by
reason of the Plague, that had separated me
and my family from our most native habitati
on; all the favour I could obtain, and that a
Gentleman of his own good nature gave
pledge for, was, that upon my parroll, if I
would ride so early and late, as to be at the
Garter in *Windsor* next morning by nine, to
meet the Guard and my fellow Prisoners. I
should then enjoy the priviledge of riding
without Guard: this obtained, I speeded on
my Journey, and left halfe of that little money
I had (which was grown low) with my sor
rowful wife and Children for their relief, and
took the rest to buy me bread in the Castle,
where undoubtedly I must have lodged, till
ruined, had not God stirred up Your heart to
Compassion in the way, for coming late to
Fosters, where I was treated liker a neer
Kinsman than a Prisoner: you no sooner
heard my strait, but with all chearfulness, as if
God had said verbally; *Go with this poor man,*
and stand by him in all his Troubles. You
called for your Cleark to make ready against
eight next morning all things convenient for
your passage to the Garter at *Windsor*, which
I well remember, to your perpetual honour be
it spoken, these were your words: *Mr. Smith,*
I will (with Gods leave) go with thee; and
my Cleark shall get three Horses ready by eight
in the morning, and thou shalt keep thy word;
for

The Epistle Dedicatory.

for we may, with much ease, be there by nine ; and that is the hour it seemeth your engagement lieth upon you to perform. This, your Noble Promise, was as truly performed ; and when we arrived at the *Garter*, the Souldiers waited ready for their Prisoner, then you were pleased to call for their Captain, and demand what accusations was laid to my charge, and did immediately, upon your implicit belief of my protested innocency, repair to the Honorable Lord *Mordant*, then Constable of *Windsor* ; where, in your presence I had my Examination, and to your Glory be it spoken, you were pleased frankly to offer your self body for body, yea to ingage all you had in the world on my behalf : which I shall sin not to remember and repeat, although I can never requite. Upon which I was dismissed, and to admiration of all that knew what had been suggested, was set free with this promise from his Honours own mouth, for such wrong I should fare the better, while I remained in the County. Thus hath your heart & hands been ready to do, & have not been wanting to lend your Purse upon any emergent occasion : and your House hath been as a home to me and mine at all times : which I shall not cease to pray God Almighty to requite to your self and yours, for I never can.

The Premisses considered, Dear Sir, do not think me rude to be so bold, seeing I can do no more to perform a Debt, which in our Journey

The Epistle Dedicatory.

ney to *Windsor*, I did then in my heart to God ingage to pay, namely, that when ever his providence would please to open a door for my Reprinting and publishing this Book, I would then with Gods good leave, give a brief account of his Mercies to me and mine, in Dedication of it to your self: and if any, for these my poor labours, are bettered, as I trust, and through Grace know many have been in time past, whose affectionate importunities, together with my Debt to your Worship, put me upon the study of many, I trust, useful Additions, proper to the decaying state of Christianity in this our Generation, as the wise God, who first put me upon this meditation, and pleased of his rich Grace to give me a word in season, not for the use of such as do think themselves in a higher Orb, but for them that are mean in their own esteem, I only, and humbly recommend it.

And now, Dear Sir, I having had alwaies from my first happy acquaintance with your self, so large a share of your heart-love, am the more bold to Dedicate this little Book into your hands: freely acknowledging, if any gain profit thereby, next to God, the praise is yours, by whose continued favours, under him, I have been delivered from such Perils, as otherwise had pressed me down into utter
Obli-

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Oblivion, or at least to an incapacity on this Account.

Thus with my dutiful acknowledgment of your manifold Favours, I do humbly and heartily commit you, and all yours to the Merciful Protection of Almighty God, beseeching him so to multiply his Graces upon you, that you may see many good and happy dayes in this life, and inherit everlasting Blessedness in that which is to come.
So prays

*Your Worships ever Ob-
liged, and Thank-
full Servant,*

London this 15. day
of June 1672.

Francis Smith.

TO

Every Judicious and Considerate

READER.

Christian Reader,



Here was never more need from the beginning of the Creation to this day, for persons professing Godliness, to enter into their Closets, and to retire into their most secret Chambers, there to Commune with themselves, and most seriously and narrowly to search their hearts, and try their wayes, whether they be such as can abide the strictest and severest scrutiny, according to the ballance of the Sanctuary, and the Touchstone of the Scriptures, and (it may be) a Fiery Trial, which is coming upon all the World, to try them that dwell upon the Earth. Let these things be seriously considered in such a day as this is, wherein such a multitude of Professors of all sorts do abound, who have enjoyed so long a time of peace and prosperity, which are apt in themselves, through our carnal hearts, to lull us fast asleep in the bed of sloath and carnal Security, and to beget a spiritual Lethargy in the Soul.

To awaken and to provoke one another to this great duty

The Epistle Dedicatory.

duty, let us call to mind our former dayes, when we were first illuminated, how great a zeal did then possess us, what care, what diligence, that we might be found approved of in the sight of God, who judgeth the hearts, and tryeth the reins? It is the sad complaint of discerning Christians to this day, (and is there not a cause!) that there is a lamentable decay and decrease of Godliness, in the power and life thereof among professors. This is a Lamentation, and it shall be for a Lamentation.

It does therefore exceedingly concern all Christians of what rank soever, seriously to search and examine their own hearts, and to cry what have we done! what is the matter! Surely the dispensation that is upon us at this day, is to try and to purge, and to make white, that they which are upright might be made manifest, when the Hypocrite and formal professor, that cannot abide the tryal, shall stumble and fall, and the shame of their nakedness shall appear. Our lot is certainly fallen in the last dayes upon whom the ends of the World are come, and our Lord himself hath expressly foretold, that in the last dayes among professors iniquity shall abound, and the love of many shall wax cold; and that then the wise Virgins, as well as the foolish, will all slumber and sleep, Mat. 24. 13. and 25. 1, 2, 3.

So likewise the Apostle Paul foretelling the evil of the last times, sets down a black Catalogue of sins that will be found, not among the prophane only as in all ages) but in such persons, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, 2 Tim. 3. beginning.

Formality and Security abounding among Professors, is the sin and sign of the last dayes. And herein we may discern gray and hoary hairs, more than here and there upon the head of this old World. We are fallen into the lees and dregs of time, and the World the older it grows, the worse, declining now into its dotage.

Blessed

R E A D E R.

Blessed is that Servant, that in such a day as this is, keeps his Garment unspotted, and his Conscience unfiled, that hath his Lamp burning, and his Light shining, and his Loyns girded, and alwayes expecting and prepared for his Lords coming. Blessed is that Servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing.

The design of this ensuing Treatise, (which we recommend unto thy serious perusal) is to set forth the sad estate of a Dying and Decaying Christian, shewing the Symptomes, Causes and Cures of the Decay of Godliness; Together with the Benefit and Means of the Growth and Increase of Godliness. As thou maist see in the Title and Frontispiece of this Book.

A Subject certainly never more suitable and seasonable than at this day, when as Godliness it self in the power and life of it, is at so low an ebb, and grows every day more than other, into a sensible Decay and Consumption. And therefore this Peice needs not our Commendation but a greater than we are, hath Avouched this whose Wisdome and Authority we must adore; A Word fitly spoken, or spoken in season, is like Apples of Gold in Pictures of Silver.

For the Author, by that acquaintance we have with him we judge him to be an experienced Christian, and one who hath made it his business to discern the Signs of the Times, and we doubt not but the savoury Christian, upon the through reading of his Book, will judge the same with us.

Reader, we shall detain thee no longer in the Porch, enter the House it self: Come and see whether it perform not more than we speak.

Now the blessing of God go along with it, and with thee in the reading of it, and he that gives seed to the sower, and blesseth the increase thereof, grant unto us all

To the judicious, &c.

all that we may remember our first wayes, and do our first works; and more abundantly; that our last dayes may be our best dayes, and our last works may be more than our first; that we may be Trees of Righteousness, of the Lords own planting, that we may bring forth most and best fruit in our old age, when all other Trees cease to yeild their encrease. In a word, that we may not be found wanting, nor too light when our Lord shall come again to Judge every man according to his Works: Shall be the dayly Prayer of,

Thy Servants for Christs sake,
Henry Jessey, Henry Denne
John Gosnold

To all that are called to be Saints,
Especially my dear relations in Yorkshire West-Riding; together with my breithren and Companions in the Faith in the County of Lincoln Northamptonshire, Buckinghamshire Kent, Sussex, and Surrey, with all that in every other place call upon the Lord Jesus, and all in and about the City of London, Grace and Peace be multiplied.

My dear fellow Travelers.

HOWEVER it is with you now, as to your spiritual state, I am bold to affirm, that the dayes of your first Espousal, as in themselves. so in your own estimation, were very happy and joyfull dayes, and you so afflicted for your own former Mis-doings, and so affected with what gracious change, God through his rich
Grace

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Grace then made, that with all your might you did willingly render up your selves to Christ Jesus for your Saviour, and with all free affection and humble submission chose him, or rather closed with Gods own Appointment, that this his Son should become your *King* to Rule you, your *Priest* to make Attonement for you, and also your *Prophet* to Teach you; in a word your *All in All*: Thus at the sight and sense of what *Sin* and *Satan* had been, and what now *Christ Jesus* would be by way of change, your hearts were wonderfully taken up with admiring this choyce, that were not only of Gods preparing to Redeem you from the *highest wrath*, but to Redeem you to the *highest Glory*: I fear your hearts now this change is not so new, is unable to express what once (though in the time you had less Knowledge) you could have reported of this matter, the sense of Wrath then at Gods unfolding your condition, being so apparet, and the necessity of a *Saviour*, without which you must *perish*, being so urgent, put you upon that thoughtfulness of heart, what to do that you might not *Perish*, but be *SAVED*, and filled your hearts and hands so full of better business, that *Husband*, *Wife*, *Children*, *House*, *Land Trade* and whatsoever else till then had been *dear* to you, now became strange in your *esteem*; thus did you run well, and of Christ Jesus were known well, your fruit being *sweet to his taste*, and *love* in each answered *love*, with such delight, that you could say with *David*, *Whom have I in Heaven but thee? and whom in Earth in comparison of thee?* Was not then the light of his countenance *life* to you, and his withdrawings your *death*? none but Christ could satisfie you, to be talking with him, and whether he is in the *Garden*

The Epistle Dedicatory.

den, or Wilderness, or any Solitary place, you must be with him; nay, rather could you not *bleed* with him, than *feast* without him? thus in nothing more happy than with your Beloved, wondring greatly at this great Grace, that in such a *condition* should find you, and to such a *condition* bring you: look back, call to remembrance dayes past, was it not thus with you, and a thousand times more?

But how is it now you have seen some of the depth of Christs love, and borne the heat of the day in some measure? Do you love him yet more and more? Is, *Prayer, Hearing, Reading, Weeping, Watching, Fasting, Doing, Suffering, welcome still*? Doth the Pulse of your Soul run this way stronger and stronger? *The path of the just is as a shining light, that shineth More and More to the perfect day.* Are ye able to speak in truth this to be your condition? Or do you grow *weary and faint* in your mind, thinking now Christ's way too strait, his work too great? If it be come to this, then it is a piece of the *saddest news* that ever came to thy Soul; Yet God knows it is no new thing, but an evil too too common among Professors, who like Israel of old, thought *Manna* while new, most welcome, yet in its continuance, though Gods *Institution*, (which was a reason sufficient why it still should be welcome) they *loath* and call it *light Bread*; thus were their goodness like a morning cloud or early dew that passeth away: In like manner, New Testament Churches, that had fair and flourishing beginnings, yet in time, comes to hang down their heads, and grow *feeble and faint* in their minds. How had the *Corinth-Church* that had been their Apostles glory and crown, become his *shame and grief*; what bitter messages doth God send

The Epistle Dedicatory.

to most of the Churches in *Asia*, complaining that they had fallen from their first love, threatening them with no less then to unchurch and spew them out of his mouth; such wild Grapes in time, did this once flourishing Church bring forth; and the very complaint of *Jeremiah* concerning *Israel* in them verified, *Chap. 2. 21. Yet had I planted thee a noble Vine wholly, a right Seed; how then art thou turned into a degenerate Plant, of a strange Vine to me?*

My dear brethren, these are not the ryth of the sad instances that might be alledged of such as once were fair and flourishing, yet in continuance of time to a sad degree left their standing, and so incurred Gods sore displeasure and severity upon them; all which premised, proves it so far from being any of our happiness to begin well, though at the rate here mentioned in our *Esposal dayes*, that truly it will but prove an addition to our unhappiness, if we shall not end well; for better is the end of a thing than the beginning: All which notes a Christians true good, to consist as in a fair beginning, so both to hold on well, and above all to end well. What Christian is he, that will not tremble then to consider both Old and new Testament Churches, what fair beginnings they made, and yet what dismal ends they came to, as *Iude* complains, *Trees without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots.*

The good Lord help you my Brethren, and my self, to lay this thing to heart, that with fear and trembling, we may work through our Salvation and from first to last avoid that damning sin of carnal security, that God knowes doth too too much rock many Professors in our dayes into a deadly sleep, who being once green and flourishing, still retain a strong

The Epistle Dedicatory.

opinion of hereafter glory, though grown as dry and barren as the Fig-tree, that Christ Jesus would not suffer to stand.

Thus considering with my self, and musing in my mind what a *fearful* thing it would be for me and you, that have had such like beginnings, and have made as great promise of a good conclusion, to *fall into the hands of the living God*, who will strip us as naked of his Glory (if here we are found wanting) as ever we were born, unless the falling of former Churches prove so our admonition, as *he that standeth takes heed lest he fall*; for which cause, I have both for your benefit and my own, gathered together in this new edition forty *Symptomes of Growing*, and forty more of *decaying to godliness*; in the first you may (for present) only read the *Signs of growth*; in the second, you may read both the *Signs of Decay to godliness*, with the Causes and Remedies, which with Gods blessing (I humbly pray and hope) may tend to your strengthening, if growing; or to your speedy redcement, if declining: Read therefore what now by the help of the Lord is brought to your eye, with much seriousness, and while ye look upon the book, be still reflecting both upon the heart and life, with this kind of searching language; *Is my case thus, or is it thus?* However your own opinions may be of *Growth* or *decay*, they are your *Highest Concernment* entertain therefore with all love my poor yet affectionate Dedication, remembering *the Marriage of the Lamb draweth nigh and his Bride must make herself ready*: Be sure then you be not found without your Wedding Garment; but imagine your selves the very next door to *Being* compassed with the *majesty of that day*; let the thoughts of it keep you company,

The Epistle Dedicatory.

company, in Buying, Selling, Eating, Drinking; yea
in the whole course of your Pilgrimage, and follow
God with incessant Prayers to fill your Souls brim-
full of the living Worth of hereafter glory, and the
unsupportable weight of its contrary; that to this great
end these my poor Labours, and such as these, in
the glory of their perfection, may prepare you upon
the most acceptable terms for future Glory; is the true
desire of

Your unworthy Brother in the dear

Concernments of the Gospel.

Francis Smith.

These following Meditations, were sent me
enclosed in a Letter from my Worthy
Friend C. I. M. then Prisoner in
Windsor Castle.

O That the Author of this book did know,
what comforts from it; to my soul did flow.
He would be encouradged, yet once again,
To imbrace his study, and to take his Pen.
And write on my behalf, a Psalm of praise,
For me to magnifie God all my dayes;
Divine providence, sent mee't in an hour,
when Sathan he, was using of his power,
And subtle wiles my soul for to ensnare,
Carrying me along, twixt hope and despair,
Perswading of me that my case was good,

which

which I beleived, till that I understood,
By what the Author of this book made out ;
which put the case with me out of all doubt.
That christians might from good estate decline
They not living to principles divine.
From which my soul was warpt and turn'd aside
Following of those that prov'd an erring guide.
Sathan combin'd with my corrupted heart,
Occasion'd me from Gods wayes for to start ;
For want of watchfulness, I'de like t' have lost,
My share i'th price, that so dear did cost,
My blessed Saviour ; even his hearts blood,
Freely expos'd to do his people good.
And now again, that I such grace should find,
That let such grace, so slip out of my mind,
As I have done ; let me do so no more,
My gracious God, and Christ my Saviour,
Let me be alwaies strictly on my watch,
And no more snapt, by him that lies o'th catch.
O let my heart no more with him combine,
But cause it close with principles divine :
And let my labour now continually be
To waite on Christ, and follow none but he,
O let the Author of this little book
Rewarded be, for the great pains he took.
From which, my soul, hath reaped so much good
Let grace from God, be given him like a flood.

Thine,

John Mason.



A T A B L E

OF THE

C O N T E N T S.

Chap. **P**ROVING Luke-warmness to Christian Meetings an inlet to Christian spoyleing with three Causes assigned of such decay's which being avoided, may serve as remedies against its Ruin, and several usefull objections and answers, *Pag.* 1. so on.

Chap. 2. Shewing the Causes of wearyness to solemnest Duties, as Fasting, Praying, self Examining, Hearing reading, &c. Proving such under great Decay to Godliness with three Causes of such Declention, *p.* 13.

Chap. 3. Briefly shewing the reasons why we are unwilling to hear the same Truth, often with three Causes of this Decay, *p.* 20. so on

Chap. 4. Proving want of Humility and Charity, causeth many to be a disquiet to themselves and others, and leads them to find fault with matter, manner or man, to the breach of publick Charity, and Gratifying the Devil, *p.* 26. so on

Chap. 5. Proving upon four false bottoms, we may think we know enough, with four markes to know when we are under this Decay, *p.* 32. &c.

Chap. 6. Proving a necessity of frequent Approches to the Lords Supper, and habitual frame of heart eying, the Author inviting, and the Subject invited

A Table of the Contents.

invited, we ought to come with and three Causes of indifferency assigned, p. 37. &c.

Chap. 7. Proving decay to Godliness great, which heartlessto Prayer, with a description of Prayers necessity excellency lets and helps in 16. particulars, with four directions as to the manner of our approaches to God in this service, and what we are to do after Prayer, p. 44. &c.

Chap. 8. Proving neglect to reading the holy Scriptures, an Inlet to six Calamities, also proving it a blessed privilege to have the Scriptures with a confutation of that Athistickall Stile, the people called *Quakers* put upon this blessed Booke, p. 51. &c.

Chap. 9. Proving that an Itching Eare in Christians after novelties, bespeakes them injudicious, and stability to be their glory, with four directions how we may avoid Unconstancy in the Christian Religion, p. 61. &c.

Chap. 10. Proving our case bad, when others sinings are not our sorrowings with four Arguments to provoke amendment, p. 69. &c.

Chap. 11. Shewing that unsavory talking among Christians when they meet, proves them carnal with three causes of this Decay with direction to ask each other twelve questions when they meet, p. 74. &c.

Chap. 12. Proving unpreparedness to hear the Word of God, a sign of dying to Christ, with three sorts of hinderances which must be laid aside, and what our works must be before hearing in being after hearing, p. 82. &c.

Chap. 13. Proving such under a bad spirit that assemble more for fear of Mans Eye then Gods Eye, with four marks of this spirit, and two Causes of this Decay, p. 88. &c.

Chap. 14. Shewing our state dying, when we are more troubled at the decay of our house then Christs house

A Table of the Contents.

house, with four marks how we may know this
p. 92. &c.

Chap. 15. Calls for weeping in some, when others
& Christs people with trouble are stooping, with four
directions how to Pity, also four remedies against
this Decay, p. 97. &c.

Ch. 16. Calls to greater respect to Christs name
and Gospel, then to either body, estate or life, with
four causes of a contrary spirit. p. 103.

Ch. 17. Proving provocations no warrantable
ground to sin and several objections as to the de-
grees of anger, answered with three causes of two
much aptness upon provocations to sin assigned,
p. 114.

Ch. 18. Proving those Christians almost dead
that make it more their business to get the form,
then power of Religion with its causes and reme-
dies. p. 117.

Ch. 19. Containing in it a description of a de-
caying Christian, by his light trouble at his own
miscarriages, though known to Gods eye, while
kept from mans eye, with two special causes of this
decay. p. 119.

Cha. 20. Shewing the heart very bad, when un-
der faults it cannot bear wholesome rebukes, with
three causes of this badness, also direction for the
Christian admonisher to take six neighbours along
with him, with practical caution to the admonished,
p. 127.

Cha. 21. Proving that rich or poor have their
troubles, and whether more or less to be answerable
in Prayer, with a description of the different kinds
of trouble, and four causes of spiritual decay, also
some profitable objections answered. p. 135.

Cha. 22. Containing an assertion of the causes
of

A Table of the Contents.

of affliction, shewing that without great cause, God is not wont to afflict his people, though provoked very unwillingly to extremity, with four objections, which seems to complain against this doctrine, answered.

p. 146.

Cha. 23. Proving those Christians under deep decay, that pray more in affliction to have it removed then sanctified, with several causes of this decay.

p. 162.

Ch. Containing in it six Reasons why Christians ought to humble themselves by Fasting proving those under great Decay that in time of Calamity, can find no necessity for it,

p. 160.

Ch. 25. Proving our Ignorance of the Causes of Gods, Rod upon us or benefit by it with three marks to know when we are under this Decay and Remedies against it,

p. 167.

Ch. 26. Shewing where sin takes its beginning, and how by degrees if harken too it Works Ruin, with six special marks how persons (though pardoned) may know when God will suffer them to fall into Sin a fresh,

p. 174.

Ch. 27 Shewing Satans way by which he gets in our dayes most advantage, upon Churches and a plaine discovery of the first rise of the *Quakers* proving that the great Law of Edification is to be prefer'd in all Doctrin, also Cautions to such as Live out of all Church way, and Directions how Christians are to behave themselves, under Rest from Persecution,

p. 183.

Ch. 28. Shewing the necessity of humble waiting and confident depending upon the holy Spirits help in the great work of Mortification, in seven particulars, with six directions how to get and keep this Holy Spirit,

p. 193.

Ch. 29.

A Table of the Contents.

Cha. 29. Treating of spiritual ignorance, about our everlasting condition; with five Scriptures tending to our reducement from carnal security, with three special causes of this damning decay, *p. 204.*

Cha. 30. Shewing the miserable estate of such as after long acquaintance with Christ, hath less love to him, with six causes of this decay, *p. 214*

Cha. 31. Setting forth the great aptness in persons. to form to themselves a devotion, and from thence promise themselves life and happiness, while they live under some sins dominion, with six marks of a right conviction of sin, and a right conversion from it, with the causes assigned, why in process of time sin becomes less hateful, *p. 222.*

Cha. 32. Shewing the great aptness in christians to be less affected with prayes for a tribe of mercies coming, and more affrighted to murmur for a tribe of mercies going; with four causes of this decay, *p. 231.*

Cha. 33. Demonstrating what a precious Jewel time is, how to be redeemed, proving it Gods work to give the space, Mans work to make the use, shewing also what a dreadful loss the loss of time is, with the causes and remedies, *p. 239.*

Cha. 34. Shewing the sad estate of such that take more care for a great Trade then a good Heart, proving that right Religion, will be as careful to duties of the first Table as second, with four marks of an outside Professor, with three causes of this decay, with some help assigned to keep a live our first love heart towards Religion, *p. 249.*

Ch. 35. Setting forth the different ends of labor, for temporal and trew bread, and that our Calling is not to take us off of our high calling, with three causes, why care for necessities, prevail beyond care for necessities.

A Table of the Contents.

necessities.

Ch. 36. Proving solemn and set times of meditation, one essential to the being of christianity, with direction on what four objects we are to place our meditation, with three blessed advantages, also a description of right meditation with directions, about the fittest time and place for this excellent soul enriching work. p. 254.

Ch. 37. Shewing that in the true beleif of *Heaven* and *Hell* rests the authority of Religion, and what tortering deaths many have chosen for heavens sake, with three causes why some decay in this spiritual frame. p. 270.

Cha. 38. Shewing how prevalent to a Christ-like conversation, the true thoughts of Heaven and Hell is; demonstrating how much rather the argument of Christs passion ought to oblige, Dialogue-wise explained by two despicable Prisoners, pittied by two strangers, with three or four helps assigned for practical application. p. 271.

Cha. 39. Demonstrating that in every man, there is a Master sin which must be killed, or it will kill; and how in process of time this once loathed, may be again liked; with eight steps by which it gradually gets new admittance, and four causes assigned of this decay, and a necessity asserted of our mortal enmity to all sin. p. 277.

Cha. 40. Calling for Grave considerations when we accompany our neighbours to the Grave, also proving death rightly stiled the King of Terrors, by three arguments, and that it is a sad Symptome of decay in godliness, when the sight of death is not laid to heart, with three causes, and seven short practical Hints to a lasting recovery. p. 284.

p. 300.
Psal.

Signes of a Living or Growing Christian.

Psal. 92. 12. The Righteous shall flourish like a Palm-Tree, he shall grow like a Cedar in Lebanon.

1. **W**hen your chief delight is with the Saints, especially them that excel in Virtue, Psalm 16. 3.

2. When the smitings of the Righteous are not a burthen to you, you can hear of your faults with affectionate attention, Psalm 141. 5.

3. When Jesus Christ in the midst of Temptation is more to you then all the world, Phil. 3. 8.

4. When Reproach for Christ makes you not ashamed of Christ; Mark 8. 38. Heb. 11. 26.

5. When wandering Thoughts in time of Duty, find less entertainment than formerly, Psalm 139. 23. 1 Cor. 13. 11.

6. When length of standing in the Profession of Christianity, works increase of hatred to all Sin. Psalm 119. 104. 113.

7. When you carry about with you a constant jealousie over your own Heart, that it turn not aside from God and Goodness, Prov. 28. 14.

8. When every known new Mercy begets new Thankfulness, and that with delight. Psalm 145. 2.

9. When known Calamity in Gods House, begets deep sorrow in your Heart. Neh. 1. 4.

10. When Gods afflicting you for your Sin, makes you love God the better. Psalm 119. 75.

11. When the same care and travail you at first laboured in to get Christ, is as much, if not more laboured in to keep Christ, Heb. 6. 11, 12.

12. When a feeling Sense of the Peace, and Edification of the Church of God, lies so near your Heart, that you can prefer it above your chief concerns, Psalm 137. 6. Rom. 14. 19. 2 Cor. 11. 9.

13. When under deep Distress or Languishing, the word of God is precious to you, Psalm 119. 92.

14. When any condition, though in its self mean, as it comes from God, is most welcom. Job 10. 21. Hab. 3. 17, 18.

15. When the peace of Christs House begets chief Joy in your Heart Psalm 122. 7, 8, 9.

16. When chief care to avoid all Sin, is as truly occasioned through fear of Dishonouring God, and incurring his present displeasure, as Wrath to come, Neh. 5. 15 Gen. 39. 9.

17. When the least apprehension of Gods withdrawing, makes you seek him more earnestly in such ways wherein he will be found, Ps. 63. 1.

18. When every Conscience is burthensome to you, that is not designing your Fathers Glory, but croagating there-from, Ps. 120. 5. 2 Pet. 2. 7, 8.

19. When the Sins of others come so near your Heart, that you walk sadly to see such Persons transgress Gods Commandments, Ps. 119. 136

80. When the light of your understanding grows more strong to your making judgment of Spiritual things according to Gods word, Ep. 1. 18.

21. When bitter things become sweet to you, as they are squared by, and founded on the Will of God, Mat. 26. 38. 39. Acts 21. 14.

22. When the Path of the humble is so delightful, that you'd rather be with them, than in the Tents of the ungodly, Acts 20. 19. Ps. 84. 10.

23. When your pity is such to perishing people, that you cannot but weep at the thoughts of their Ruine, Luk. 19. 41. Jer. 9. 1. Phil. 3. 18. 19.

24. When Prosperity doth not with allowance lift you up, nor Adversity immoderately cast you down, Phil. 4. 11, 12.

25. When your Resolution to follow God fully through all Difficulties, is stable, and Temptations to the contrary, tends but to your strenghtning, Acts 20. 24.

26. When the Yoke of Self-denial as imposed by Christ Jesus, is not grievous, but pleasant to You, Mat. 11. 29, 30. Mark 10. 28.

27. When you are so acquainted with your Spiritual standing, that you are easily apprehensive of the least step to Decay, 1 Thes. 5. 4.

28. When the force of the Resurrection and Judgement to come, lies so close at your Heart, that it makes you answer every Call of Christ, to do or suffer cheerfully, 2 Cor. 5. 9, 10. Acts 24. 15, 16.

29. When the hopeful assurance of a City to come, makes you contented to be a stranger to your own, Heb. 11. 9, 10, 13. 2 Cor. 4. 17, 18.

30. When increase of Time in Christs acquaintance, works increase of Delight in Communion with Christ, Psal. 92. 12, 13, 14.

31. When in the walk of Faith you are more frequent, and less depend upon walking by Sense, 2 Cor. 5. 7, Gal. 2. 20.

32. When you are quicker sighted at your worst part to self-abasing, than at your best part to self-admiring, Gen. 32. 10 Eph. 3. 8.

33. When the Majesty of the great God, considering how visible you are in his sight, hath an awful prevalence upon your Heart, Job 31. 4.

34. When Conscience is so tender, that every little disobedient acting, grates upon, or grieves your Spirit, 2 Chro. 34. 37. Heb. 13. 18.

35. When you are at open war, and constant Hostility with bosom-sin, as displeasing to God, and forbidden by his Law, Psal. 18. 23.

36. When Heart-work is of more worth than House-work; as your Soul is more precious, than your Temporal concerns, Ezra 7. 10.

37. When for inward motions to any Sin, you have as truly Heart-sorrow, as for the outward acts of any Sin, both being displeasing to God, and forbidden by his word, Psal. 119. 113. 2 Cor. 10. 4. 5.

38. When you have a thirsting care to get the power of Godliness in your Heart, rather than the form of Godliness in the Head, or outward Profession, 2 Cor. 1. 12.

39. When the worship of God agreeable to his Word, is highly prized, and faithfully practised in the worst of times, Mal. 3. 14, 15, 16.

40. When the Soul is more hungry for the word of God, than the Body is for temporal Food, Job 23. 12. Psal. 119. 72, 162.

Signs



S I G N E S O F A D Y I N G or D E C A Y I N G C H R I S T I A N.

C H A P. I.

Containing in it a Sign of Dying to Christ; with three causes of its coming, which being avoyded, may serve as remedies against its ruine; with profitable Objections answered.

S I G N I.

When you are so indifferent to assemble, or frequent the Church of God, that you can come, or at your own pleasure, cannot come.



IT is not only possible, but too too common, for Christians after they have been sometime conversant in the worship and service of Gods House, to come to this declining frame of Spirit, having seen into some of the depth of that that at their first conversion, being mighty new, was mighty welcome; but proving more natural to them, becomes in some kind burthensome; then Satan, that long waited for it, gets advantage upon them, to dispute the case with them.

2 *Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian.*

them, Whether there is such necessity of that labour and travail about their Religion, as they take; and by this means *Jeroboam*-like, 1 *King.* 12. 27, 28. When he would draw the hearts of *Israel* aside, tells them; it is too much to go up to *Jerusalem* to worship, and so makes two Calves of Gold, and puts the one in *Dan* and the other in *Bethel*, saying, *These be thy Gods O Israel.*

Now such pretences of ease as these, takes presently with deceitful hearts, especially when there is a shew of attaining the same end they looked for, with less cost and charge; by this means the heart lets go those powerful convictions wrought by the holy Spirit at his first taking possession, which leads the mind out to make Religions getting and holding, a labour, work, or business.

Now lets go its first unwearied diligence, and so takes in this Spirit of indifferency to assemble; which plainly discovers, that now but half the heart attends that Spiritual service, in which the body is present; and indeed thus much ground by a Christian lost, gives such a wound to his heavenly trade; that the savour and relish he had at his first beginning to run well, is now much departed, and so his appetite being withdrawn, makes his stomach loath or nauseate that food, that once was savory and nourishing.

Now what likelier way can be imagined, to hurt and spoil a Christians Communion with his God, and so by little and little, remove him from his spiritual trade; then to possess his heart with such kind of indifferency as this, even a willing negligence to assemble; and so estranging himself to Christ Jesus's Fold where he is wont to feed his flock at noon-day, being a stranger there, to the daily opportunities of spiritual gain, must needs loose in his spiritual trade, and consequently

frequently be affected with new lovers, and lust after their unprofitable dainties.

Doth not experience speak mournfully in this, and confess the field to be more then half lost, when that early zeal to Christian assemblings grows low; and though once remained greatly burthened at *material hinderances*, yet now is content with *slight excuses*, seeing no such necessity, as is by zealous persons pretended, and once by them believed, so often to assemble; and as by sad experience some can witness, when others have been delightfully taken up with Gods publick worship: they idling up and down, have found Satan not a little busie; nor his design a little taking, to prepare their speedy ruine; For as by often rubbing hand in hand, warmth is gotten; or by often using working-tools rust is prevented; even so a frequent assembling among Gods children, inclines and disposeth the heart to good, and consequently impairs and lessens the old mans hold; being under that continual means, that renews and inclines the mind into a spiritual likeness, to Christ its head; and so is wrought up to a spiritual compliance with every new motion to good performances; saying with David, *when thou saidst, seek my face, my heart said, thy face Lord will I seek.* Psal. 27. 8. no sooner saith God; *seek my face*, but without delay Davids heart saith, *thy face Lord will I seek*; I was glad when they said, *Come let us go into the house of the Lord*, Psal. 122. 1. it was joy to David to see Persons so mindful of their true good, as to be forward to assemble.

All this premised, bespeaks this indifferency to assemble of a very bad tendency, plainly giving beholders to understand, that good things were not esteemed so much as good by such Persons; as they was so esteemed as new, we have sad instances of this kind of spiritual

4 Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian.

tual decay, in Israel of old, Num. 11. 4, 5, 6. The mixt multitude that was among them, fell a lusting, and said, who shall give us flesh to eat? we remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely; the cucumbers, and the melons; and the leeks, and the onions; but now our souls is dried away, there is nothing at all besides this Manna before our eyes. So Chap. 2. 5. And the people spake against God, and against Moses, saying, Wherefore have ye brought us out of Egypt to dye in this wilderness? For there is no bread, neither any water; and our souls loath this light bread.

Here Gods own institution, that once was welcome to them, and being new, they was mighty eager after it, insomuch that they could dispence with breaking a law, to gather it as Exod. 16. at large proves; where we read of its first institution: this Manna that the Holy Ghost, Psal. 78. 25. calls Angels food: they now loath, and call light bread; this Manna though Gods own appointment, that fed them to the full, and was to continue with them till they come to eat the old corn in the Land of promise. Josh. 5. 12. yet this they loath under its constant enjoymment, and wish for Egypts food again.

How zealous were persons in this age, twenty or thirty years ago, when truth begun more clearly to break forth? no cost or early pains mattered; happy were they that could come soonest; then were assemblies crouded; good men encouraged to labour, Gods name delightfully worshipped; insomuch, that without wrong one might say, since such days the Kingdom of Heaven have suffered violence, and the violent take it by fore.

Is Gods hand shortned, that such workings of heart are not now as was then? Is not now assemblies thin, performances small, seldom and late? Is it because
God

God is a Wilderness to his people? Is it not because they *surfeit* under fulness? Doth not many run too and fro, that knowledge is increased, and sons and daughters prophesie? How then may this serve to rebuke that slothful Spirit in any, that are careless to assemble, and calls on them to be restless with God, till they are again restored to such a *Spirit of zeal*, as they had in the days of their first *Esposal*; *lukewarmness* here, being that *inlet-fin*, to spiritual spoiling; disappointing God of gracious opportunities to enrich them. and thorow this neglectance, offers daring occasion to the Devil to tempt them; Doth not the holy Apostle. *Rom. 10. 14, 15.* plainly imply an impossibility of believing in him, of whom they have not heard? *And how shall they hear, saith he, without a Preacher, as it is written?* how beautiful are the feet of them that preach the Gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things? doth not this saying, in so many words declare the reason of perishing, to be want of knowledge? *Hos. 4. 6* And the cause of ignorance, the want of *preaching*: How doth this then commend Gods high approbation of assembling, it being the proper season for preaching. *Then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another, and the Lord heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and thought upon his name:* In an evil time when many grew weary; and said, it is a vain thing to serve the Lord, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully before him; then such as met often, were highly esteemed of in Gods account.

Alas! Alas! Is not preaching, though accompanied with never so much inward and outward pain-taking, then matter of scorn to standers by who live

6 Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian.

vainly; also grateful to the Devil our grand adversary, when few attend it, and of those, most part flat, low, indisposed, and weary, having little spiritual life or vigor in them; on whom common custom to assemble, hath eaten out the spiritual relish that should be in them: but I shall close this with Gods counsel, Heb. 10. 24, 25. *Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love, and good works. Not forsaking the assembling of our selves together, as the manner of some is: but exhorting one another, and so much the more, as we may see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin. Doth not this dismal conclusion, v. 26. proffer it self, as the most probable end of such as cease to assemble, and makes way for their fearful and inevitably ruine? shall any dare then to content themselves with light excuses, to hinder their assembling, and not rather provoke and exhort one another to so good a work?*

But I shall conclude this first Sign of dying to Christ, with offering briefly three Remedies how it may be removed, where begun, or prevented, where like to come.

First, consider and lay to heart; That to assemble is a very weighty duty, and requires all your heart; Isa. 55. 3. *Encline your ear and come unto me; Hear, and your souls shall live; see Prov. 8. 34, 35. Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching dayly at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors: for whoso findeth me, findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord* Plainly noting, that diligent hearkning, which cannot be without assembling, is the way to life; therefore not to be slightly looked at, Acts 3. 23. *Every soul that will not hear this Prophet, shall be cut off from amongst the People.*

Per-

Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian. 7

Persons may think it a light thing to forbear hearing and an offence only to the assembly ; but God will count it a despising him, and the means he hath ordained ; *The Children of Ephraim being armed, and carrying bows, turned back in the day of Battel : they kept not Gods Covenant, but refused to walk in his Law: therefore the Lord heard this ; and a fire was kindled in his wrath against Jacob ; For their hearts was not right with God.*

Let us take heed therefore, that we refuse not him that spake from Heaven ; but as we must consider, that it is a weighty duty to assemble, so it requires that we come with all our hearts ; this God calls for, and where it is wanting, performances will not be acceptable : *This people draw nigh me with their mouths, and honour me with their lips but their heart is far from me.* Isa. 29. 13. it is Gods complaint by Jeremiah, *Judah hath not turned to me with her whole heart, but fainedly ; with a heart, and a heart, a heart as much a contrary way, as that way ; they were indifferent, as willing not to turn as to turn ; this makes offerings to be abhorred, the contrary by Christians must be made at ; Blessed are they that seek him with their whole heart.* Psal. 119. 25. Less then the whole heart begets jarring, prevents harmony, hinders the spiritual building.

2. A second Remedy is to consider, that it is not possible to prevent this spirit of indifferency, but by continuing as industrious to keep what ye have gained, as you were to get it, the prayers, the tears, the searchings of heart, the attentive hearing, and frequent assemblings, that you in order to your first Espousal did diligently follow, you must still hold on in ; that you may keep and increase the same, for the promises run in no other channel, Prov. 2. 4. If
thou

8 Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian.

thou seek for wisdom as for silver, and search for it as for hid treasure: Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. Hos. 6. 3. Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord, his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come to us as the rain; the latter and former rain unto the earth. God will be to such as follow on to know him in his way, as the former and latter rain is to the earth, which without it is dry and barren, but being refreshed therewith, proves green and fruitful.

Now alas, persons when once they are gotten into Christ's Fold, think their work well nigh done; but God knows it is but then begun, their Labour before was but to come into the vineyard, and there I am sure they must not be idle; they are put there to work, to be lights to others, and shew forth Christs virtues; and there God will prune them, dress them, water them, but it is that they may be fruitful, else they must be plucked up as cumberers of the ground; do not therefore think your work is now neer done, for you are but now begun, you are now entred into the War; listd under your Captain Christ Jesus, and must till death, continue fighting, striving, and overcoming, that at last you may overcome: therefore if you read, prayed, fasted, watched, weeped, assembled much before, now do it much more, 2 Cor. 5. we labour, (or made a busines of it) to be accepted of God; and saith the holy Apostle St Peter, writing to them which had obtained like precious faith, through the righteousness of God and Jesus Christ our Saviour, and had escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, exhorts them, to give all diligence to add to their faith, virtue, and to virtue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godliness, and to godliness brotherly

Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian. 9

ly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you neither barren nor unfruitful: But if they lack these things, they are blind, and cannot see afar off, but have forgotten they was purged from their old sins, 2 Pet. 1. 2. One would think that persons that had gone thus far, as to obtain like precious faith with Gods elect, and were purged from their old sins, having escaped (or were escaping) the corruption that is in the world through lust, might have well nigh done their work, yet the holy Ghost here shews them, that now their work is but begun; and saith, they must give all diligence; so saint Paul to the Philippians. Chap. 2. 12. *My brethren, as you have alwaies obeyed, both in my presence, and absence; work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; from all this we may learn, that its not being idle in Christs Vineyard, if it cost us much diligence to get in, it must cost us much more to keep in: so I shall conclude this second Remedy with the holy Ghosts counsel to the Church of the Hebrews, Chap. 6. 11, 12. And we desire that every one of you (mark it well) do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end, that you be not sloathful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

Thirdly, a third Remedy may be this, that you would humbly and constantly endeavour to profit something in every assembly, make it your care to be still doing or getting good; then you are about your days-work, content not your selves to come together from day to day, and wait under the ministry, going away without gain; but come to the assembly with sensibility of many things you yet want; this will quicken your zeal, ripen your expectation, and prepare way for God that delights to be rich in giving, to give you richly.

You

10 Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian.

You will profit little, though you want never so much, if you are little sensible of your wants; and God will give you little because you will be but capable to improve little, for where the sense of want is low, there the pulse God-ward will beat faintly; and nothing more doth occasion this indifferency to assemble, then seeing it amount to little in the profit and advantage to persons that are frequent in attending, it makes them count, better stay at home, than be never the better for their meeting together, *Mal. 3. 14.* *You have said it is a vain thing to serve the Lord; and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinances, and walked mournfully before the Lord of Hosts:* They went not surely the right way to expect profit, nor had their eye upon right profit; but something they did propose to themselves in coming that they got not; and so cries out, it is in vain to serve him; it is even thus among professors. Now, if they see meetings come to little, though the fault be only in themselves, it tends to make them think lightly of assembling; *Who is there among you, saith God; Mal. 1. 10. that would shut the doors for naught, or kindle a fire on my Altar for naught; he that ploweth, ploweth in hope and he that soweth, soweth in hope;* that is, persons that do work, expect and count upon fruit therefrom; they will not do it for nothing, and indeed it is but reasonable, he that plants a vineyard should drink of the wine thereof; great layings out, preparing the heart for expectations of great returns, and when persons do lay out, and count upon answerable returns; as they righteously may, God being pleased they should, and this coming to pass tends much to their encouragement.

Object. But some may say, I have gone (long to the assemblies, and gone on purpose sensible of many wants and have counted upon to profit, (as here you direct me)

Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian. LI

me) yet for all this I am ready to grow weary, for I see it come to little, I am still shallow in my understanding, and weak in my memory.

Ans. I shall answer this objection two ways: first, by praying you to enquire, whether that little you do know and have learned, you do put into practice; What can ingage God more to teach you to know more, then walking up to what you do know? *Oh thou that art named the house of Jacob, is the spirit of the Lord straitned, are these his doings? Doth not my words do good to them that walk uprightly, Mica. 2. 7.* see to it, whether you live not much short of what you do know, and if you find you do, as some such defect must needs be the cause why you profit so little, then you will see great reason God should not trust you with five Talents, seeing you improve not two.

But secondly, seeing you do profit little, Be troubled much, let it be your burthen; while persons in assembling gain but little, and are but little troubled, they are not like to have their condition much mended: To come often and profit little, is very sad; but to be *unsensible* of ones wants is much sadder: Whereas on the contrary, to be in want, and so sensible of ones want, that they go burthened up and down, is the best way to get remedy; when *Joseph* was in affliction, some that were concerned to bear part of his burthen, were so unsensible, that God complains against them, *Amos 6. 6.* *They were not grieved at the affliction of Joseph;* they were so far from easing him, or freeing themselves from provoking of God to bring them into such like trouble, that they were not so much as grieved; had no burthen upon them, were therefore fit matter to be indeed deservedly brought themselves into the like condition; a most
remark-

12 *Signs of a Dying or decaying Christian.*

remarkable and profitable example, if heeded by Christians; we have to this very purpose, in *Daniel* that holy man, *Chap. 9. v. 2.* when he understands by reading, that there were a number of years for *Jerusalem's* captivity, how was he burthened that he might know it, is evident, if you read but what he did, *v. 3. I set my face to seek the Lord God by prayer and supplication; with fasting, and sack-cloth and ashes;* behold here a gracious pattern for Christians, that want to know great things from God, *Daniel* sets his face unto the Lord, with such qualifications attending this performance, as though *Daniel* would be content with no denial; so *Chap. 10. 2, 3. A thing was revealed to Daniel, but the time appointed was long; In those days, I Daniel was mourning three full weeks; I eat no pleasant bread, neither came flesh, nor wine in my mouth, till three whole week, were fulfilled:* That such manner of burthen and trouble as this, at the sense of ones ignorance, is not only the way to get profit; but indeed a most acceptable way with God, and so liked as to speed presently.

Let us see then what is written in *Dan. 9. 23. At the Beginning of thy supplication, (mark that) the Commandment came forth, and I am come to shew thee; therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision.* Had not *Daniel's* Supplications, Fasting, Sack-cloth and Ashes, proved a prevailing cause with God, to send an Angel to make him understand; Wherefore serves this thus written? At the beginning of thy Supplication; so *Chap. 10. 12. An Angel said in a vision, Fear not Daniel, for from the first day that thou didst set thy heart to understand, and chasten thy soul before thy God; thy words were heard, and I am come forth because of thy words.* Doth not all this call upon Christians to do three things.

First,

Signs of a Dying or Decaying Christian. 13

First, to get a mighty sense of their ignorance, which is the grand cause they do not profit.

Secondly, to be greatly burthened that it is so with them.

Thirdly, to set their faces towards the Lord God by prayer and supplication, without ceasing, both to be and to abide otherwise: Is not the Prophet *Daniels* Writing for our learning, and to encourage us to take the same course? God sorely dislikes the contrary, *Isa. 32. 9. Rise up ye women that are at ease, (not troubled or burthened) hear my voyce ye careless Daughters, and be troubled:* Thus much may serve to inform a willing mind, how to get from under the power of this Dying Sign of indifferency to Assemble, and so pass to the second.

CHAP. II.

Containing three Causes of weariness to spiritual Worship, and the principal Reasons thereof.

SIGN II.

WHen in your solemnest Worship, you are quickly weary without warrantable cause.

It is possible to come to this pass, at but a seeming occasion, and persons create some kind of pretence why they are weary; if it happen that at some time they are not so particularly and personally concerned, in that part of Gods Worship, where they are present; It so falling out, that the matter God is intreated about, they are not so at want in, or what is preached, they to some considerable degree are informed in already: This may fall out in numerous Congregations, where different conditions, ministers different occasions