

passion he mixeth all with abundance of mercy, 2 Chron. 36. 15, 16. *The Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by his Prophets, rising up betimes and sending them, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: That is, he was very pitiful, loth to grieve or afflict them, till there was no remedy, Justice called so long and loud for vengeance upon them, as Psal. 106. 54. They did not destroy the Nations, but were mingled among them, and learned their works, and served their Idols; therefore was Gods wrath kindled, insomuch that he abhorred his Inheritance: Nevertheless he regarded their affliction when he heard their cry, and did pity them.* Hosea 6. 4. compared with Chap. 11. 7, 8. *How shall I give thee up? what shall I do to thee? What less doth all this signifie then thus much? that though God be so provoked, that nothing but Judgment must come, yet like a tender Father to an unruly Child, mourns over him, while he corrects him.* We shall leave what hath been said to consideration, and pass to the Twenty third Sign of dying to Christ.

# CHAP. XXIII.

*Proving those Christians under great Decay, that pray more in Affliction to have it removed, then sanctified; With three Causes of this Decay.*

## SIGN XXIII.

**W**hen you pray more for Afflictions being removed, then sanctified.

That is. not only mindless of Afflictions Cause, but indeed mindless of Afflictions end; it is easie and ordinary

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dinary for persons under Affliction to be brought to their knees to prayer; not only good men, but bad men in affliction will be ready to cry for help, *In their affliction they will seek me early.* Hos. 5. 15. That is one of their first works, then they will mind to be doing, till then God is forgotten, they having lost much their spiritual feeling; but now being touched in their outward senses, they will cry for relief. Then wicked Pharaoh, that in *Exod. 5. 2.* could say, *Who is the Lord that I should obey his voyce, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go;* in Chap. 8. 8. When his Land was full of Frogs, cries to Moses to pray to this God for him, he had but little before disdained: See that known Text for this, *Jonah 1. 5.* *Then every man, (that is, when they was in affliction) cries to his God;* the tempest being great, and they all like to perish, not only cries to their God, but with a high hand saith to Jonah, *What meanest thou O sleeper? arise and call upon thy God, that we perish not.* So 2 Chron. 33. 12. *Manasseh when he was in affliction, sought the Lord his God:* By all which compared, it is very usual both with good and bad men in affliction, to be early at prayer to God.

Now Affliction you know, we have in the last Sign proved, is Gods Furnace to try the Nature of every Mettal by; so that you may truly pass judgment upon your selves, whether or no you are of the dying hand; not by your praying, here you may deceive your selves, though you pray mightily, for it is easie to do so in Affliction; but if you pray more for Afflictions being removed, then sanctified; that is, put up strong cries to be eased of the trouble, but scarce posselt with faint wishes to answer Gods design in the trouble; never inquiring, *what have I done?* or saying, I must be more humble, more thankful, more pittiful,



pittiful, more fearful, more careful all my days. What shall I do, saith the zealous man, to get good by this Affliction? his voyce cryes louder for spiritual advantage, then his pain for natural freedom. Let us think of this, and deal plainly with our own hearts, and see what way the pulse beats most; for as the staff you set up, will fall one way or other; so persons being more or less spiritual, will easily discover it in Affliction. *Israel* of old might be read in this, and you know how God dealt with them, of six hundred thousand, there was but two, namely, *Joshua* and *Caleb*, that entred the good land of promise; they early begun to show how carnal they were. *Exod.* 12. 13, 14. When they enjoyed their great deliverance from *Egypt*s bondage, *Chap.* 15. Then sang they Gods praise; but being put into some strait, they murmur presently, and wish to God they had dyed in the Land of *Egypt*, as *Psal.* 106. shews at large, where we may read of Gods dealings with them at large, and their dealings with God: while they had what they wanted, they were pleased and liked the Lord should be their God; but (when though for their own good) they were straitned, and did miss their wonted fulness, then they lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. *verse* 14. We do not read it was upon their hearts to make any spiritual use or advantage of Gods different dealings with them; when they had not what they would have, instead of learning to cease to murmur, they strengthened themselves in murmuring against the Lord, who was graciously careful for them, and suffered not any more straits to befall them, then what was in order to their truest good; although they were, as many now are, full of complaints, yet their greatest want was slackness to those strong cries that ought to be found in  
Christi-

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Christians, for a sanctified use of whatsoever doth befall them, taking care to the one thing needful, *without which all Order, is Disorder; all Mercies; Miseries, all Blessings, but Cursings;* What shall it profit a man, whatsoever he hath of fulness or scarcity; health or sickness; desire, or want of desire, if Gods end in all, and our happiness in all, be not gotten? to wit, that *eternal Salvation* that freeth from everlasting *Damnation*, that being the great work that all other works ought and must give way unto: But I shall proceed to the Causes, why persons pray more to have Afflictions removed, then sanctified,

First, Ignorance of the Cause of Affliction.

Secondly, Ignorance of the Necessity of Affliction.

Thirdly, Ignorance of the End of Affliction.

First, Ignorance of the Cause of Affliction; No chastening for the present is joyous, but grievous, bitter and sharp, having with it an unpleasant tast to whomsoever it comes; therefore in itself certainly not welcome to any, although they bring it upon themselves; Who is it that runs not from pain naturally, and will part with what is outwardly dear to them, rather then expose themselves to that torturing that attends some kind of Affliction? Now if as plainly and as certainly it appear, there is unwillingness as well in God to Afflict, as there is in the creature to chuse Affliction; then it will naturally follow, that there is a Cause, Ignorance of which is a main reason, why we pray more to have it removed, then sanctified.

For the proof of this, that there is as great unwillingness in God, from whom Affliction comes, to give it, as we to receive it: mind a little some texts of Scripture. 1 Pet. 3. 8. *And who is he that will harm*

you,



you, if ye be followers of that which is good? in the words going before you have it thus written, *But the face of the Lord is against them that do evil*: That is, his favourable countenance is set against such, and their portion is bitterness. *Levit. 26. 17.* But if ye be followers of that which is good, who will harm you? Here seems to be a holy challenge, to whatsoever may harm us; as if the Spirit should have said, What indeed can harm you, if God be for you? and God will not be against you, if you are followers of that which is good; For he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men, to crush under his feet the prisoners of the earth. *Lam. 3. 33, 34.* Wherefore then may it be said, *Doth the living man complain?* the holy Spirit gives the answer; For the punishment of his sin. The joy of our heart is ceased, our dance is turned into mourning; the Crown is fallen from off our head, *Wo unto us for we have sinned,* *Lam. 15. 16.* A multitude of Scriptures might be further urged further to prove both unwillingness in God to Afflict, and that the very Cause of all our Wo both temporal and eternal, is our misdoing; O that my people had hearkened to my voice, and walked in my ways, I should have soon subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries. *Psal. 81. 13, 14.* Now in reason were the Cause of Affliction considered to be only from our selves, procured by our misdoing, and sent with tendency to our mending, we should surely pray more to have it sanctified, then removed.

• Secondly, Ignorance of the Necessity of Affliction, is a Cause of this Decay; the very unwillingness of God to bring it, and the creature to indure it; fully proves, that there is Necessity for it; there cannot be more undelightfulness in the creature to undergo languishing, then there is in God to put him under languishing.

gushing. *How shall I give thee up O Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee O Israel? How shall I make thee as Adma? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together.* Hof. 11. 8. *When he was come near, and beheld the City, he wept over it.* Luke 19. 41. Now Gods unwillingness, proves the creature cannot live at any spiritual rate without it; and indeed Experience proves the same, *Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word.* Psal. 119. 67 *David wandered from the Fold, and was like to continue till Affliction spoke to him, he forgot himself and what he was a doing, The wicked, saith the Psalmist, are not in trouble as other men, neither are they plagued like other men; therefore pride compasseth them about as a Chain, violence covereth them as a garment; and what use do they make of it? they say how doth God know, and is there knowledge in the most High? This clearly notes, that a condition freest from trouble or affliction, generally is attended with carnallest behaviour Godward, when I had sed them to the full, they then committed Adultery, and assembled by troupes into Harlots houses.* Jer. 5. 7. By all this it appears, that it is from ignorance of Afflictions necessity, if we pray more to have it removed then sanctified.

Thirdly, Ignorance of the End of Affliction, is a Cause of this Decay; now the Cause being Sin, and the Necessity being to humble; the End is to save. Now all Gods dealings are mercy, whatsoever he doth to the creature, is like himself, and in its self is mercy, if he give us all we desire and would have, it is Mercy; if he keep us without it, it is Mercy; Health from him is Mercy, so is Sickness; Plenty from him is Mercy, so is Poverty; Health, Life, Strength, and such like Favours temporal, every body will acknowledge



knowledge to be Mercy; but their contrary few or none will account Mercy, yet this is Mercy also; for this Checquer work the World is made of, some at the same time are wringing their hands for sorrow, while others are clapping their hands for joy; some with straits, through Sickness and Poverty are Weeping, others through Health and Plenty, rejoicing: Now the great difficulty is, how to bring the heart to look upon the state of Weeping as truly Mercy, as the state of Rejoicing: For which end consider, why we do account Health, Plenty, and such like Injoyments Mercy, but because they have in them an esteeming and desirable good, a seasonable and suitable good; it is the same with the contrary, they are as seasonable and as suitable, could our frail hearts so receive them, for they are as truly from the Lord as the other, and as truly have the same end in them. There are two great Ends in all God doth; one is his Honour; the other is our Salvation. Now if God give us what we would have, his End is the same; and if he give us the contrary, his End is the same, and Christians certainly misconstruing his End to be Mercy, is the Cause they misconstrue his Actions to be Mercy, that both are Mercy, read *Exod. 13. 17. There God led them through the wilderness, an unbeaten way, where they wanted both bread and water; and yet both End and Action Mercy to bring them to Canaan, and deliver them from harm by the Philistines: Remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years, through that great and terrible wilderness, wherein was fiery Serpents, and Scorpions, and Drought and no Water, that he might humble thee, and prove thee to do thee good at thy latter end.* It is too evident, that Israel construed this [hard dealing from God] but it was great Mercy as the text fully proves. Ignorance therefore of the End

of Affliction, is a Cause why we pray more to have it Removed then Sanctified.

## CHAP. XXIV.

*Containing in it six Seasons, in which Christians ought to humble themselves by fasting; proving those under great decay, that in times of calamity can find no necessity for fasting.*

### SIGN XXIV.

**V***V* *Here under Gods Calamity, you can neither find necessity, nor excellency, to humble yourselves by fasting and prayer.*

As prayer rightly put up to God, is a way and means by which he many times is prevailed with, both to remove judgments and sanctifie them; even so fasting is Gods way, in which he hath often been found. and it is the more prevailing with him, insomuch as it hath in it a gracious tendency to abase and humble the soul, and make it more to fit to receive the kind impression of his precepts, in opening of his promises, together with the reverencing him because of his threatenings, it being a season not only of laying the soul low in its own eyes, at the sensible sight of his own vileness, but a marvellous exalting the gracious and long forbearance of God, forcing the heart to cry out, what manner of love is this that we should be called the Children of God? Who was before wallowers in the works of darkness, that leads to the Chambers of death, but now by his grace, though once far off, made nigh, of an Alien made a home-dweller; All these things are brought to remembrance. very fresh in fasting Seasons, that being a time of calling to mind things



things past; and though calamity be as truly Gods mercy, as the contrary, having in it the same design of Salvation-good; yet it is more properly sent in order to reducing from those strayings it finds such persons in, as it comes upon, and because of the smart and unpleasant tast it brings with it, calls them with a louder voyce to make inquiry, why am I thus? Which prosperity in all probability could never have so done, being not so much of that piercing kind, to the external senses, as adversity or calamity is; and this the Prophet. *Isa. 26. 16.* seems to make his great observation in these words, *Lord in trouble have they visited thee, they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them: For I will be unto Ephraim as a Lion, and as a young Lion unto the House of Judah: I even I, will tear and go away, and return to my place till they acknowledge their offences, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early.* *Hos. 5. 14, 15.* Plainly implying, that it is not only the design of God to send calamity upon persons for this end, but that also that they are most aptly provoked to it at this Season; see that remarkable text for this *2 Chron. 33. 10, 11, 12.* *And the Lord spake to Manasseh and his people, but they would not hearken; wherefore that he might speak by this rod, as well as his word; the Lord brought upon him the Captain of the Host, the King of Assyria, which took Manasseh among the Thorns, and bound him with fetters, and carried him to Babylon; and when he was in affliction he besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly. While the rod was but shaken as it were, Manasseh remained refractory, but when he was bound in chains, he humbled himself greatly. Must it not then from hence needs follow, that calamity calls for fasting and humbling wherever it comes, being designed to that reduce-*

ing end. And may not the decay of some grow to that pass, even so ripe for reaping, that except they should from a deep sense of their state, be mightily brought down to humble their souls with fasting, as the last remedy left or prepared by God, for such conditions to betake themselves unto; and that if they here should fail, then to be given up to the mouth of ruine. *Hear this ye old men, give ear all ye inhabitants of the Land, hath this been in your days or eve. in the days of your Fathers; tell ye your Children of it, and let your Children tell their Children, and their Children another generation: that which the Palmer worm hath left, hath the locust eaten, and that which the locust hath left, hath the canker-worm eaten, and that which the canker-worm hath left, hath the caterpillar eaten; sanctifie ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the Elders, and all the inhabitants of the Land, into the House of the Lord their God; and cry, alas, alas, for the day of the Lord is at hand, and as destruction from the Almighty shall it come.* How evident is it that this was this peoples last remedy, and except they now find mercy, nothing but destruction will be their portion?

But some may Object and say, how shall we know when danger is such, that without humbling our selves with fasting joyned to prayer, we are like to meet with ruin?

*Answer.* There are six seasons that of necessity calls for Fasting with prayer.

First, when long patience is abused.

Secondly, when just judgments are threatned.

Thirdly, when just judgments are executed.

Fourthly, when iniquity in Churches gets a head.

Fifthly, when Churches grows secure.

Sixthly,



Sixthly, when some great thing is by them to be obtained.

First, when long patience is abused; patience or forbearance in God, is long exercised to both Churches and people, before with judgment he sweeps them away, the rod is shaken again and again, while they are under visible decay, and though God wait long upon such as grows luke-warm in all their active graces, yet will he at last speak home to them; it was thus with *Israel* after they had rested from their troubles, they did evil again and again, for which God did gently whip them; then they turned for a while, and cried, but presently after, went to their old course, *Yet many years did he forbear them, and testified against them, by his Spirit in his Prophets, yet would they not hear, therefore gave he them up into the hand of the people of the Land. Nehem. 9. 30.* So in *Jeremiahs* time, they provoked Gods patience long, *So that the Lord could no longer bear, because of the evil of their doings; clearly noting, that they had long abused his long forbearance, therefore was their land made desolate.* But,

Secondly, when just judgments are threatned, when God hath waited long upon his People or a Nation, and called that way for reformation; but it will not do, he is wont still in mercy for their true good to walk in another Method, and that is to shake his Rod, or threaten them what he will do, except they repent.

The old World did provoke God long, and he warned them Fourty years together while the Ark was preparing, and threatned them all that time with a deluge of Water to destroy them, on purpose for their reclaiming; though he knew what *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* had done, yet he would inquire whether it were

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according to the cry : For the Honour of all his blessed Attributes ; he will not kill before he Judge ; he will not bring the Rod, before he give warning of the Rod ; and if the warning take us in the case of *Nineveh*, yet forty days and it shall be destroyed ; this was *Jonahs* Commission, and he must go through all the streets, and proclaim it : a Judgment is coming, but yet *Mercy* pleads for forty days respite, to consider whether they will Repent and turn, or be Destroyed ; and though many times because Sentence is not speedily Executed. The hearts of the Sons of Men are bent to do wickedly ; yet *Nineveh* repents, and the Judgment is prevented : For they believed God, and proclaimed a Fast ; and put on sack cloth from the greatest to the least : and God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way ; and God repented of the evil he said he would do unto them, and did it not. Chap. 2. 5, 10. This was Gods very Method to those decaying Churches in *Asia*, he sent his Angel to tell them he had knowledge of their works, he commended what was good, and blamed what was bad, and called for reformation, else threatned them, that in Justice he would unchurch them, except they Repent.

Never was Nation, City, Church or Family destroyed by God without Warning, and patient Waiting ; not only to teach us to walk in Gods Method in all our subordinate affairs, Superiours to Inferiours, Judges to Malefactors, but also to exalt Judgment and Justice in God, to the acknowledging as *David* did, *Psal.* 51. 4. This is done, that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and clear when thou judgest ; shall not ( saith Father *Abraham* ) the Judge of all the Earth do righteously.

But Secondly, It is a season that calls for of necessity, self-humbling by prayer with fasting, when just judgments are executed, &c.

Thirdly,



Thirdly, when just judgments are executed, is a season for fasting joyned with prayer, that they may be again removed; *Then Hanani said, the remnant which are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproch, the wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and the gates thereof burnt with fire: and it came to pass when I heard these words, I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and Fasted and prayed before the God of Heaven, Nehem. 1. 3, 4.* This way good *Nehemiah* took, and it was prosperous with the Lord.

Fourthly, when iniquity gets head, that is, when sin and sinners in Churches, grows so numerous and heady, that they are like to out-voice the better party, it is high time then to be night and day with the Lord in fasting and prayer, that iniquities head may be broken, by the sword of his mouth; there was a few names, and it was but a few in *Sardis* Church, that had not defiled their garments, the greatest part were readie to die, and the Lord threatens to unchurch them except they repent. *Rev. 3. And now you call the proud happy, yea, they that work wickedness are set up, and they that tempt God are even delivered: then they that feared the Lord, spake often one to another. Mat. 3. 15, 16.*

Fifthly, when Churches grow secure; that is, as safely sheltered in their account from iudgment, though a dying to every duty, as if they were in a growing, flourishing state, contenting themselves to be told it is not well with them, but sit still from using either means of information or recovery, as though they were minded to suffer their distemper to grow mortal; *Thou saist I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked.*

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*ked. As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: Be zealous therefore and repent. Rev. 3. 17, 19.*

But Sixthly and Lastly, when some great things are by them to be obtained, or great judgments executed; and the cause is not fully discovered, there is no getting cure till we know the Cause, nor no knowing the Cause but by Prayer and Fasting; It is Gods usual Method when he hath some great blessing to bring upon a Nation or People, to set it upon their Hearts long before, to be in a burning zealous frame of Prayer; for the hastening of such a blessing. And on the contrary, it is very observable in experience, that when judgments are a coming upon a People, Family or Person, there is certainly a great stupidity in them, and great degrees of security in them, bespeaking health and happyness, *when wo and anguish is at the door.* For when they shall say **PEACE AND SAFETY** to themselves then **SUDDEN DESTRUCTION** cometh upon them, as Travail upon a Woman, from which they shall not escape. *1 Thes. 5. 3.* The old World preached Peace all the while the Ark was making, though every Hammer and Nail preached War; and in their Security, Eat, Drank, Bought, Sold, Builded, Planted, or gave up themselves to all these, not minding till the Flood came and took them all away. When the Church of God had a *John-Baptist* beheaded, and a *Peter* also kept in prison, and near to be made another sacrifice; what do they do? Fall upon the work of Fasting and Prayer till God works a miracle, then Prayer was made of the Church of God without ceasing; so *Daniel* understanding by Books, the number of the years of *Israels* Captivity. Now great is his strait how to understand Gods time, what doth he do in this great strait. *Chap. 9. 3.* let us behold this blessed Copy and



and learn to write after it; And I set my face to the Lord God by Prayer and Supplication, with Fasting and Sackcloth and Ashes. (Mark that) Daniel gives up himself to work with all his might; he laboureth like a Marriner at the Pump when the ship leaketh, and Death approacheth, cease pumping and quickly followeth Sinking; here they work as for their lives. Thus did good Daniel, and God was intreated, and met him with an answer, *Fear not Daniel; for from the first day that thou didst set thine heart to understand and chasten thy self before thy God, thy words were heard, and I am come because of thy words; Oh that this example may be blessed of God to Churches that have great Corruptions to Conquer, and great Blessings to obtain, that they would set themselves as one shoulder to this work of Fasting and Prayer; so shall they not need to go drooping all the day long; but thus Seeking in faithfulness, shall undoubtedly Find the approach of answerable blessings; to which blessed end, for the good of Churches, Families, and every individual member; the good Lord bless these Cautions, Amen.*

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CHAP. XXV.

*Containing in it the evil of Ignorance, in not knowing wherefore Gods Rod is come, nor what good it hath done: with three Directions how to know when persons are under this Decay; and three Remedies against it.*

SIGN XXV.

**W**Hen Gods Rod worketh so little upon you, that you can neither tell wherefore it is come, nor what good it hath done.

• People

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People under this Sign are very miserable, for they are not only miserable in general, but miserable under the means of reducement; the Sun of such is setting, and the Lamp a going out. It is a misery to be in need of the Physitian, but to remain in misery (after their best application as to healing) must needs be miserable; for then there remains no visible hope of remedy; When correction by the Rod will not do, (that is, will not reclaim,) then is giving up the next work.

It may be necessary to open the meaning of Gods Rod, it signifies his stripes, or chastisements; and saith the decaying Christian, it is true, these and these miseries lie upon me, and have for some time, but I know not the cause, nor what is amiss, or how to have it removed, nor wherein to be bettered. The Scripture gives us many sad instances of such a people as these, *Jer. 2. 30. In vain have I smitten your Children, they have received no correction;* though I do correct them, yet they do not receive it; that is, they remain the same under it. *as Jer. 5. 3. Thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved, thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction; for the people turneth not to him that smiteth them; strangers have devoured their strength, yet they know it not; though gray hairs are here and there upon them:* Such as these have lost their spiritual hold, and feels not the force of Gospel-arguments, and now the Devil may take their Religion from them, if he brings but something by way of exchange, that serves and suits their external senses. It is easie for such to sell their Master for thirty pieces of Silver, just like Israel of old. *Exod. 32. When they saw that Moses delayed his coming (though he is gone up to the Mount with God) yet they make themselves new Gods: meer shows, and forsake*



forfake the true God; this is a most miserable state, but how shall we know we are under this dying Sign, and get help against it.

First, When no affliction or Rod that comes upon you, doth so much trouble you, as to provoke to a diligent search what is the cause of what is come. Jer. 8. 6, 7. *I hearkned and heard, but they spake not aright, no man repented him of his evil, saying, what have I done? The Stork, Turtle, and Swallow, observe their time, but my people know not the Judgments of the Lord; They know not wherefore my Rod is come, but if I afflict them, they get it off as soon as they can, not considering, that if it do not mend them, I shall bring seven times worse Judgments upon them; As it is with some, and our experience can speak to the truth of it: Let God visit their family with sickness, they will send to the physitian, and if he goeth further and bring death, they will bury their dead, as fashionably as they can, but hardly inquire, what have I done? or what ought I to learn?*

Secondly, When if you are wrought upon to inquire after the Cause, you center in generals; that is, some sin or other not descending to particulars; for this and this evil, it is thus and thus with me!

Thirdly, As God never speaketh without Cause, so he never speaketh but to purpose, what doth not help shall further hurt; his Word and Sword shall not return in vain; Herein lyeth the skill of Christianity, not to acknowledge in the general, that they suffer for sin, but to fall knowingly upon particulars; thus and thus have I done, the Devil is not wanting here to use his skill; for the keeping blind-fold a decaying Christian from sight and sense of the wound and cause wherefore it came, as the surest remedy against

gainst reformation; and certainly it is Gods Lesson that we read the Rod, and wherefore it is come; even his common Judgments teach this. For seldom or never is a sin Punished, but a curious eye may easily read the sin in the Punishment; the sin of Wantonness under Fulness, may easily be read in the scarcity of Bread; the sin of a haughty stretched out Neck, and Wanton eyes, may be easily read in a Leprous Scab; instead of a sweet smell, a stink; instead of a girdle, a rent; instead of well set hair, baldness; instead of beauty, burning. How doth the City sit solitary, that was full of people, she that was great among the princes is become Tributary; she weepeth sore in the night, her tears are on her cheeks, her adversaries the chief, her enemies prosper; Wherefore is this? The Spirit of God makes answer, *The Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her Transgressions.* Lam. 3. The hand of the pitiful Women have Sodden their own Children, they were their meat in the destruction of the daughter of my people, *The Crown is fallen from off our heads, wo unto us for we have sinned!* Chap. 5. 16. Here is our punishment, and in this you may read our Wantonness in Sin; we were full, and now are hungry; we abused our plenty, and it is turned into scarcity. When *Englands* Peace was blessed with Plenty, and that Plenty abused with Pride; God sent or suffered a Civil Sword to witness against its Pride; and complained of the abuse of its Plenty: poor *London* in sixty five, and sixty six, might read in legible Characters its Sin in its Punishment, when the fire left us no house, and the Plague left us no inhabitant; Pride and fulness of bread, and abundance of Idleness called upon us to come; *And behold the works of God, what desolation he had made in London.*



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But Thirdly, When though you may confess in the general, and descend into particulars, yet if there be not right sorrow for, and turning from sin, you are still under this dying Sign; It is possible to confess in the general, and rest here.

Lord have mercy upon us poor sinners, and not consider wherein, and for what we make this confession; this is common among the Sons of Men at one time pray this prayer on a general fasting day, in point of confession: but anon, Lord I thank thee I am not as other men, nor even as this Publicane in point of Justification; in the one, forget or know not the sin or sins sensibly, for which they have made confession; in the other, plead self-acceptance, and shut out Jesus upon the point of some particulars of common honesty, or justice, which they make their Idol. But further, It is possible to confess in general, and to descend into particulars, yea, the very sin or sins for which the Rod is come, and to center here, and to take up our rest, short of the God of rest; coming thus far will be but woful if alone; and therefore confession must be particular, and accompanied with Sorrow for, and turning from. In *Jeremiahs* time, there was a people very secure in going but thus far. Chap. 7. 4. *Trust not in lying words, saying, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord are these, If ye thoroughly amend your ways, as well as confess them, then will I cause you to dwell safely; though you cry the Temple of the Lord, and that be a truth in it self, it is a lying word in your mouth, and will end in disappointment, except you thoroughly do as you say; The good Lord help vs from hence, to cut off every IDOL, and to cut down every GROVE, and to forsake them as well as to confess them; and if thy right eye offend thee, pluck*

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pluck it out, its better enter into life blind and maimed, then having two eyes and two hands to be cast into Hell, where their worm *never dies*, and the fire *never goes out*.

Now as Remedies against this dying Sign.

First, Keep your Judgments under continual information, from those Texts of Scripture, that declares what the Rod is sent for. *Deut. 17.* may well be al-  
luded to, the King must have the *Law by him continually*, that he may read therein, and why? That his heart be not lifted up above his brethren; and that he might learn to fear the Lord his God continually. So that you see he was daily to be informing his Judgment in the Law, as the proper way to fear the Lord his God, and to avoid sinning against him: once informing the Judgment will not do, so as to carry force to the keeping from doing evil, except there be a daily tutoring the mind in the same things again, and again; as often rubbing the hands causeth heat, and often whetting the instrument keepeth from rust, and maketh sharp; even so, often informing the understanding and Judgment with some such Texts as these, bears such a stroak upon the heart, as to deliver it from going in that path, attended with such woes from Heaven. *Levit. 26. 14, 15, 16, 17.* If you will not hearken to me and do all my commandments, I will appoint over you terror; yea, and set my face against you, and plague you for your sins. *Job 36. 18.* Because there is wrath, beware, lest he take thee away with his stroak when a great ransom cannot deliver thee. The Prophet *Isaiab* in Chap. 5. from the 8th to the 23d. verse pronounceth woe upon woe six times over, cloathing transgressors with woes, as a man is cloathed with his garment.

Secondly,



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Secondly, Content not your selves on this side a heart so tender, as to be under continual feeling fear of God and his Judgments. Christians should be restless and not cease by prayer to cry night and day, that God would make them large sharers in the promises of the new Covenant. *Ezek. 33. I will take away thy stony heart, and give thee a heart of flesh; thy hard heart, and give thee a soft heart; Mans heart is like mettall, and mettall you know that is hard and unweldy, that will not receive an impresion, is put to the fire to soften, to make it receive the stroak, in 2 Chron. 34. 27. you have a lively instance of a soft heart; because thy heart was tender, and thou didst humble thy self before me; my flesh trembleth for fear of thee, I am afraid of thy Judgments. Psal. 119. 120.*

Thirdly, When at any time a Rod from God comes upon you; pass Judgment still that there is some cause, and cease not praying and searching till you find it out: This will certainly preserve you from being under the possession of this dying Sign. *Josh. 7. Israel comes to loss, what doth he then do? Cry, alas O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought these people over, to deliver us into the hands of the Amorites to destroy us.*

Hear they cry to *Joshua*, he cries to God, *O Lord God! What shall I say, when Israel turns their backs before their enemies; for the Canaanites, and all the inhabitants of the Land shall bear of it, and cut off our names from off the Earth? And what wilt thou do for thy great name? Here Joshua pleads with God, rents his Garments, falls upon his Face, casts dust upon his Head, and cries mightily to God for relief, and in the close of the day meets with his answer; get thee up, wherefore lyeest thou thus upon thy face? Knowest thou not what Israel hath done, make speedy*

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dy inquiry for they have sinned, therefore they cannot stand before their enemies, neither will I be with them any more, except they take away the accursed thing from among them: God here tells them, there is a cause sets them upon the work of Search. Now the Lot is cast, and it falls upon *Achan* who had seen and coveted a goodly babylonish Garment, (which shows that Sin may look with a goodly Countenance, whilst it is but the *accursed thing*) two hundred shekels of Silver, and a wedge of Gold, of fifty shekels weight, till all these with *Achan*, and all his, is stoned and buried under the heap, the fierce anger of the Lord is not turned away, although a *Joshua* is at Prayer, that at another time so prevails, that the Sun stands still for a whole day together; *was there ever such a day as this, that God hearkened to the voice of a man?* Yet now cannot be heard until the cause be found out, and the Camp purged; I shall leave this to consideration and Gods blessing, and so pass to the 26th. Sign.

CHAP. XXVI.

*Shewing where sin takes its beginning, and how by degrees if hearkned to, it works ruine; With six special Marks, how persons (though pardoned) may know when God will suffer them to fall into sin anew.*

SIGN XXVI.

**W**Hen the thoughts of your bosom-lust, or any other sin, is more prevalent with you, then pleasing God.

Thought



Thought is the first door of the mind inwardly, as the eye and ear are of the body outwardly; here sin takes first place, and if here it be not first slain, it will increase to conception, and from thence to action; the eye and ear carry things to the thought, and the thought carries things to the conception, and conception to affection, and affection to consent, and consent to action; and thus you may behold how great a fire a little spark kindles: Now every good man hath had a dearest lust, and every wicked man hath a dearest lust, that he most hugs, loves, and serves; though evil men do obeysance to any sin that suits with their liking, yet there is some particular sin to which they have most single regard; and the best of Gods people are under more particular inclination, to some one particular sin then other, and indanger to fall and be overcome thereby. 1 Kings 8. 38. there the Scripture notes this, under the name of heart-plague; also Psal. 18. 23. *Ah mine iniquity.* Now this comes to the thoughts for entertainment, and there is greatest possibility of finding entertainment; for which cause Gods word so much inveighs against thoughts, when they are about evil exercises. Gen. 6. 5. *Every imagination of the thought of his heart was evil, and only evil.* Jer. 4. 14. *How long shall thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?* Prov. 24. 9. *The thoughts of foolishness is sin.* Thought is the least motion of the mind, and whether it be wicked or good, is not hid from God, nor from Gods Vice-gerent, even Conscience; *No thought can be with-held from thee.* Job 42. 2. No secret design, though in the very heart of man, can be so carried on as that God cannot be privy to it. Amos 4. 13. *That declareth to man what is his thought.* Now thought, though the least motion of the mind, yet being employed with continual good objects, as the Resurrecti-

on, and Judgment to come, thinking still what shall be the estate of the saved and damned, hath blessed force both upon the heart and conversation, to regulate things there, and by all possible means labours to work such up to Gods likeness, that they may have boldness in judgment; even so (and let conscience now speak) letting the thoughts have to do, (so as to like of) those vain shady delights, that the hearts of men are apt to set up to themselves, as Uncleaness, Covetousness, &c. hath as great force on the conversation, to carry it Hell-ward. It highly concerns Christians therefore, to be upon the examination of their state, as to thriving or decaying, and to see to the Thought what branch it bears; the beginnings of sin inwardly being there, and be certain to pass this judgment upon yourselves, that if to your thoughts, your former dearest lust in any branch of it, or any other sin be pleasant to you; that is, tall, lovely, comely, or desirable, and not rather hateful, frightful, burthensome, black and hellish; you are a dying or decaying to heaven, and heavenly things; and very seasonable to such may the counsel of Peter be, *Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray God the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee.* I shall from hence take occasion to give you six Marks, by which you may know when God will suffer your Return back to your old dearest lust, or some other sin; and they may by Gods blessing and your care, slay iniquity in its first motion.

First, The first Mark may be this, when after God hath pardoned the sins you once lived in, you are not abased in your own eyes, so as to walk humbler with God all your days: Now this is Gods great end in forgiving all sin. *Ezek. 16. 62, 63. I will establish my Covenant with thee, and thou shalt know that I am the Lord, that thou maist remember;* (mark that) and



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be confounded, and never open thy mouth more, because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee. So Ezek. 36. 29, 30, 31. I also will save you from all your uncleanneses, both guilt and filth, then shall you remember your own evil ways, and shall lothe your selves in your own sight, for your iniquities, and for your abominations. So that you see, God expects to receive the fruit of self-abasement from the pardoned.

But Secondly, When because of your graces, you are in any measure lifted up, to admire grace more then giver: By grace here, I mean the Graces of gifts, as ability to pray or preach, &c. distinct from the Graces of Humility, Meekness and Charity; for a man may be rich in the one, and yet poor in the other. 1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3.

Now you must distinguish between Graces and Gifts, with what allowance the Scripture gives, otherwise ye will confound both by mixing them together; for though Graces be Gifts, and Gifts be Graces, yet are they not such as prove, that of necessity where the Gifts or Graces of Preaching, or Praying, or Knowledge, or Tongues are, there will be the Graces of Humility and Thankfulness; though it will prove there should be such Graces; the reason I conceive lyeth here, and it may be worthy our noting, (thus) The Graces of gifts in the sense we distinguish, are more properly given of God for the benefit of others; as he gave his Spirit to *Saul*, for the benefit of *Israel*: Now other Graces are most properly given for the profit of our selves, because with the one we may perish, without the other we cannot be saved. Now both this dying Sign, and the distinction may be of use, if considered among Churches, for experience tells us, while the humble in heart have stood with their low and mean parts, in the mean time those tall in Gifts have fallen like *Dagon* before the *Ark*; and

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it is good none here be secure, for though Gifts be Graces, and that from God the giver, yet may a person fall in love with the Gift, and himself for the Gift, as to be lifted up to the forgetting God the Giver, 2 Chron. 26. 15, 16. compared with Chap. 32. 25.

Thirdly, A third sign of Gods suffering persons to fall into sin, may be this; When signal favours from God given you are not minded, but forgotten: There is none that lives but are more or less tryed by God in this very kind, some time or other of their life, for they are not only sharers in Gods common favours, that he daily bestows upon all, as Rain, fruitful seasons, Food, rayment, health, strength, and the like; but also signal and special favours, as Redemption from the Grave, when at the very brink to visible view, even favours of such like kind as *Israel* had, when the first-born in *Egypt* dyed, not a Dog barks against *Israel*; when Plague or Sword sweeps away by hundreds, on our right hand, and on our left, and we remain untouched; this certainly is never to be forgotten: so the red-Sea deliverance, the Pillar of Cloud by day, and of Fire by night, together with the dividing of the Waters of *Jordan*, are Parables doubtless in Gospel days, and we under as gracious Obligations to remember with thankfulness Gods loving kindness. *David* that good man, makes observation in this case of old *Israel*, and hath left their stain for generations to come, to read and take warning by. *Psal.* 106, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13. God rebuked the red Sea, and it was dried up, and redeemed them from the hand of their enemies; yet they soon forgot his works, and waited not for his counsel; So 2 Chron. 32. 24. *Hezekiah* was sick to death, and he prayed to God, and he gave him a sign; but *Hezekiah* rendered not again according to the benefic done



done him; ( mark that ) his return was not as signal as his favour, therefore God suffers wrath to come upon him; by all which it is clear, that more then ordinary favours, calls for more then ordinary returns; and where its a wanting, God is provoked to suffer such to fall: I pray God make this hint as acceptable, as it is seasonable to those that shall meet with it.

Fourthly, A fourth Mark how persons may know when God will suffer them to fall into Sin; When under great straits, you are not much with God for wisdom and counsel; Neglect here must needs be dangerous, for it is a kind of tempting God, a daring as it were the holy One of *Israel*; When under great straits that for good ends he brings upon them, they are careless to request his help for their escaping, and answerable gaining. No man that trades in the way to heaven, but at times is exercised with great straits of one kind or another, the very entrance into it promisseth nothing less. *Mark 8. 34. Whosoever will come after me, let him take up his Cross daily and follow me*; So that Jesus Christ would have persons count upon meeting with hard things, that will be his Disciples; *For man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward. Job 5. 7.* Now that none may sink under them, Jesus Christ hath made provision, which if they neglect they are like to perish. *Mat. 26. 4. The Shepherd shall be smitten, and the Sheep all scattered*; now the best preservative against such a danger, is, *Watch and pray that ye enter not into temptation. Luke 21. 26. Mens hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after what shall come to pass; for the Powers of Heaven shall be shaken*; Therefore watch ye and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape. By these Texts, together with *Phil. 4. 6. Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, let your requests*

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*be made known unto God.* Clearly noting, that persons under straits, are not in Gods security out of the way of prayer; well therefore may this prove an acceptable caution to every Christian, when he undergoeth his share in the Cross of Jesus, to make his complaint and earnest cries to him by prayer, with supplication; No doubt but such will find Christ seasonably helping him: but if you find a secure drowsiness attend the heart, then conclude your misery is not yet at the height: The Disciples are found asleep three times together, and cannot watch with their Lord one hour, before their misery will be greater by his being taken from them: but I shall end this Mark, leaving for our gracious pattern the example of Jesus Christ, *who being in an Agony and sweat, as it were great drops of blood, he at that time, prayed the more earnestly.* Luke 22. 44.

Fifthly, When you readily close with occasions to sin; this tempts the Devil to tempt you, and tempts God to leave you; *Sampson in Judges 14. seeks to take a Wife among the Uncircumcised, that he might seek an occasion against them:* Even so, doth not the Devil make his attempts, whereby he may give an occasion to Gods People to sin; The ready closing wherewith, tempteth him further to tempt them; and indeed tempteth God to leave them: Now occasions to sin comes many ways, and from different objects, that may have but little beginning, and yet tall conclusions; sometimes the ear heareth that which sets the heart on fire; sometimes the eye seeth that which brings wo to the mind; witness *David*, who at the top of his roof, as he was walking, seeth *Bathsheba* washing her self, and her beauty passing through the casement of his eyes; this small occasion took possession, and made him a prisoner to his great overthrow,



throw : So Josh. 7. 21. *Achan saw among the spoils, a goodly Babylonish Garment, and a Wedge of Gold; his eye looked and his heart lusted till he was ruined.* Now every man that knoweth any thing of sins way, knows that it seeks and takes occasion from very small beginnings; *Behold how great a fire a little spark kindleth;* it begins by little, taking its degrees, and is carried through the eyes to the thoughts, then to conception, then to affection, then to consent, then to action : Now the provision the holy Scripture makes in this kind, is positively engaged by way of Precept, *To abstain from all appearances of evil,* 1 Thes. 5. 22. Clearly noting, that in order to persons certain security from the commission of all evil, they must abstain from its Appearance: very observable is Gods care to Israel of old, no sooner were they out of Egypt, but he seeks to take all occasions of sin out of their way. *Exod. 13. 17. And it came to pass, that when Pharaoh had let the People go, that God led them not through the Land of the Philistines; although it was near. (note that) lest peradventure the people see War, and return to Egypt again.* So *Exod. 23. 13, 33. Also Deut. 7. 25. Prov. 22. 24, 25. They must cut down their graven Images, and burn them with fire, and desire none of the silver thats on them, lest they be a snare unto them.* So the wise-man, counsels to make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man; no not to go, lest we learn his ways, and get a snare to our souls.

Sixthly, When you are not pitiful to the tempted, but in your prosperity forget their calamity; God is pleased many times to suffer Satan to be let loose upon some Christians, and to try them sorely, yea, to engage them deep in actual War, whilst other Christians as it were, are lookers on, to let the one see how

weak he is in the hands of this spiritual Adversary, if left to himself; and to try the other, what frame of heart he carries towards his brother in distress, and this if wisely improved turns to the great advantage of both: The personal sufferer, if he endure, becomes heir to the promise, annexed to the condition of the tempted. *Jam. 1. 12.* And the looker on, if he by beholding is so enflamed with zealous love and pity to his suffering brother, that he greatly suffers also: *The one is offended, the other burns. 2 Cor. 11. 29.* When all the strength a poor tempted soul hath, is engaged in hot fight with the Devil, Flesh, and World, then pity from lookers on, proves like a fresh recruit to a shattered Army, it so suits with Gods will, and with the tempts want; whereas on the contrary, want of pity in lookers on, as it strengthens the hands of the Adversary, and tempts the courage of the troubled to grow flat. Now this sixth Mark is framed to that end, if the Lord will, that lookers on may not only know what frame of heart they are to be of in such season; but to provoke them to make hast to it; in *Amos 6. 4.* there was neglect to this duty, and it meets with a sad salute; *Wo to them that are at ease in Zion, that lie upon upon beds of Ivory, that drink Wine in Bowls, but are not grieved for the Afflictions of Joseph: No iniquity (mark that) so provokes God as to be preferred in punishment before this; They must go into Captivity, with the first that go Captive. Amos 1. 11. Numb. 20. from the 14. to the 22.* God will not bear such a pitiless heart in his very Enemies. *Isa. 47. 6 I was wrath with my People, and gave them into thy hands; and upon thy ancient very heavily hast thou laid thy yoke; Therefore in one day shall come upon thee loss of Children, and Widow-hood. Remember therefore those that are in Bonds, as bound*  

*With*



*With them, and them that suffer Adversity, as being also of the same Body. Heb. 13. Read and consider, and the good Lord give you understanding; Amen. And so pass to the 27th. Sign.*

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CHAP. XXVII.

*Shewing Satans way, by which he gets in our day most advantage upon Churches; and a plain discovery of the first rise of the Quakers; shewing also the great Law of Edification, to be preferred in all Doctrine; with Cautions to such as live out of all Church way; With Cautions how Churches are to behave themselves in time of rest from persecution.*

SIGN. XXVII.

**W**HEN you are mighty curious about the lesser matters of Gods Law, and mighty careles about the weightier.

When Satan the grand Engine of begining and perfecting a Christians ruine, cannot at once knock his heart and hands from off the Ordinances of Gods House, thereby to make him destitute of the very means to good, he usually works this way, where he finds meet subjects to be working upon, viz. Make some more curious by far then God would have them; and so wholly taken up with the lesser matters of Gods Law, that he may have the fairer opportunity to make them as careless in the weightier; by this manner of dress he deceives far more, then by his common known dress of visible prophaneness; this being so far from the road of the rude ranting way,

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that it shows, yea and pretends to exceed Christians in their right Saint-like way, carrying with it profession of, and contention for commands of God. Which spirit meeting with ignorant and inconsiderate people makes a noise as though it would drive the world before it, while the fairer, surer Christian, that carries on his matters temperately, giving due respect to every command, yet seems in their eye to burn so dim, that they are ready to bid him stand further off, they are holier than he.

This deceit is a wonderful mysterious one, and without all doubt worketh mightily, not only among the Churches, but in and among the People called *Quakers*, whose spirit is yet kept under by the wise God, till a riper season, from shewing it self in that Atheists dress, that certainly it did rise from, and certainly will end in. They being of all people Pharisaical like, out of all cry, contenders for that that comparatively is but the shell of Christianity, and are so far from contending for, that they set themselves even against the kernel or substance of Religion; and the Church of God can truly witness this, for from among themselves are some gone out, with as fair pretences as can be, of living more to God in the Spirit and power of holiness, and yet quickly shewing themselves in the mystery of carrying on most abominable Atheistical principles of denying both the Resurrection of the body from the grave of the earth, and Judgment day to come; And so bend their bow at the overthrowing the very foundation of godliness, in the mystery of *Egyptian* darkness, and yet under the highest pretences of Angel-light. It is clearly evident, that the first rise of that spirit laid its beginning upon these very materials, of being curious in the lesser, and careless in the weightier, making nothing secretly to a gross abomination



abomination ( as some can witness ) yet to publick view, where they might have the fairer advantage to deceive the simple, did make great shew of tender respect to some lesser matters of Gods Law ; and indeed out-talk every body, while God knows they did not thus plead out of true love to Gods Law that they had , but because no bait would so fit their hook, and carry on the business they designed like this.

Now Satan himself full well knows, that it is in vain for him to expect the accomplishing any great design among the separated Churches, any other way, for filthiness of flesh is so manifest, that every body among them that knows but any thing, knows they are redeemed from that, but filthiness of the spirit which works secretly, and yet ends carnally and mortally, is his grand working way ; which doubtless the Apostle well knew, when he gave this exhortation to the *Corinth Church*, with this description, which I pray observe. *Chap. 7. 1.* where he beseecheth them not only, *to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of the flesh ; but by way of distinction, filthiness of Spirit also ;* and that in order to their perfecting holiness in the fear of God. Read also *Isa. 30 21.* And by this mysterious means he takes in some place, and among some people by companies, that most of them in their true Church standing were the carnallest, mean, and ignorantest Christians, having in them as little experience as could be of the power of Godliness ; so little, that if they had any less, would have had too little to be born by the Church ; yet intangling themselves with this spirit of deceit, ( or filthiness of spirit ) have grown mighty confident, bold, and lifted up, too wise for their teachers, despising those far before them in grace, yet far behind them in their account

count; and very justly may and doth the Lord let such fall into spiritual deceit, notwithstanding they plead for some of his own law, they being most careless, where he would have them most careful; so renders their care in the lesser, while careless in the greater, of no account with him at all, he taking no pleasure in such, but greatly disdaining them. *Mat. 23.*

*23. Wo unto you Scribes and Pharisees, for you pay tyth of mint, Annise, and Cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the Law.* They are under Gods wo, though they do what they ought to do, yet in leaving undone something weightier, that ought to be done also. Multitudes as the Scripture witnesseth have been, and God knows in our days are, deceived in this matter, who content themselves, some in being mighty just between man, and man, which in it self is good, yet loose in other matters; others great Church-men, yet abominable proud, covetous, or both, much like those. *Isa. 58. 2. That seek God daily, and delight to know his wayes, (mark that) as a Nation that did righteousness, and delight in approaching to God; yea, they fast and afflict their Souls.* How excellent are all these things mentioned, and worthy our noting? that though found in this practice, yet sent to by God to be told of their sins; all which noted together proves, that faithfulness in some truths, while unfaithful in other truths, more, or as material; renders the services of such to be of no account: all which I have briefly noted for caution to two sorts of people in special.

First, Such as live out of most way of Gospel separation, and yet keeping themselves under the observation of some truths, that conscience and the light of nature dictates to them, though under apparent neglect, and in disobedience to many known Gospel-truths;



truths, that they know or easily may know, following the Counsel of God, to cry after knowledge, and lift up their voyce for understanding; searching as they search for their silver; digging as they dig for their hid treasure: That is, taking as great pains for the knowledge of the true treasure, as they take to possess themselves with worldly treasure; for the getting whereof they rise up Early, go to bed Late, and eat the bread of painfulness; but all this while content themselves with lazie desires, and faint wishes after the true treasure, and will not close with any thing that proves costly in getting or keeping. *James 2. 19. Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well, the Devils also believe and tremble; but thou wilt know O vain man, that faith without works is dead, being alone;* Therefore faith must be of a Gospel kind, and proved to be so by Gospel works: Though a man should beg pardon of his sin, of lying, cheating, covetousness, or uncleanness, or such like works of the flesh all his dayes, and yet continue in any, or all of these; yea, though he could cry for it, till his heart-strings break, he must miss of it, asking out of the way of the promise, in which pardon is decreed by the God of Heaven to be given; so that every repentance supposed to be right, may be wrong, and that faith not of a Gospel kind, though of a Gospel shew; If a man would have Salvation with his sins, or Christ and his sins too, he goes out of the channel of the penitent, who are wont to meet God in sorrow for sin, and turning from sin. *Prov. 18. 13. He that covereth his sins, shall not prosper, but who so confesseth and forsaketh them, shall have mercy.*

Now deceitful hearts, through the Devils wiles, misconstrue promises of Glory, taking part for the whole, having confident dependance upon the promises

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ses of life; and can cite many Scriptures wherein are gracious promises made by God to sinners; but never consider what kinds of sinners they be, to whom the promises are made, neither take any due care to perform the condition the promise is made upon; so please themselves in the hope of Heaven, not diligently weighing the foundation their hope is built upon. It is like to prove with such, *as with a hungry man, he dreameth, and behold he eateth, but he awaketh and his soul is empty.* Isa. 29. 8. Many will say to Christ in the great day, *we have eaten and drunk in thy presence, and thou hast taught in our streets, therefore Lord, Lord, open to us; depart from me ye workers of iniquity; whose hope must perish in being not of that purifying kind, that renews the soul God-ward, but still allows the flesh a commanding power, forgetting that great mark, which proves the hope of Gods Elect to be of the right kind.* 1 John 3. 1. *And every one that hath this hope in him, purifyeth himself even as he is pure.*

Secondly, Let this serve for caution to such in Churches, as are, or are like to be curious in the lesser, whilst careless in the greater. Great hath been the trouble of such Churches as can witness this decay to have been amongst them; it still took the most inconsiderate, that lived too much below comparison in Gods Law, where or when to be more or less in condescension in order to the best maintaining edification; which is the great end of all institution: they forgetting, or not knowing this, have gone so unseasonable about setting up the lesser, that they have debased the weightier; making the remedy prove far worse then the disease; carrying on this work with such manner of management, that an indifferent stander by could not but imagine, that sure the whole will of God, lay



lay in the one, two or three lesser things, that they so pleaded for; especially, seeing it carried on with that heat of Spirit, and resolution of taking place, that the bonds of love, and Church-Communion could not hold them.

Whence hath the divisions among these Gospel-Churches, both in affection and practice risen, if not from this very root? Cannot hundreds witness, yea and mourn for what they know in this matter? Hath not the great law of love, and the great design of all Ordinances, to wit, Edification, been sacrificed for the will of some novelties? I know what I speak to be truth, and that I have many witnesses.

The honour of God, the credit of his Religion, when it hath come in competition, hath been less preferred then some new apprehension, if not some old error newly espoused; doth not this preach persons wonderfully carnal, and wise in their own conceits? How far have such gone from Christs good example? *I have yet many things to say to you, but ye cannot bear them now.* Let us mind a little, their best season of receiving was Christs best season of declaring: Doth not Christ by this, teach every Disciple of his, to digest well themselves?

First, What they have to offer before they offer it; and the best season too; may not, nay have not some by seeking before due season, to set up some one lesser law, thrown down several greater laws; nay hath not some unseasonably bringing in the truth, together with the ill management thereof; brought into the Church by head and shoulders, *Envying, Strife, and Division*, and cast out *Humbleness of mind, Long-suffering, Gentleness and Bowels*? Doth not the holy Apostle set a copy for all, how to walk in this respect? *1 Cor. 3. 1.* *And I Brethren could not speak unto you, as unto spiritual,*

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*ual, but as unto carnal, even babes in Christ; I have fed you with milk, and not with meat, for hitherto ye have not been able to bear it, neither yet are ye able. Doth not he here consider their inward constitution, and prepare his dish to their stomach? And is not this Heavens road-way to bring in the greater? By an orderly first bringing in the lesser; witness this holy Apostles carriage. 1 Cor. 12. 17, 18, 19. Did I make a gain of you, by any of them I sent to you; I desired Titus, and with him I sent a brother; did Titus make a gain of you? We speak before God in Christ, we do all things dearly beloved for your edifying: he had respect to the great design, Edification; and when requiring their performance of a lesser duty, to wit, giving their temporals to them from whom they received spirituals, even as the Lord hath ordained; that they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel: Yet as I said but now, if the calling for the performance of this duty, will not stand with their edification in the main, he will rather preach the Gospel of God freely. 2 Cor. 11. 9. But when I was present with you, (And wanted) I was chargeable to no man, and in all things I have kept my self from being burthensome to you; and so I will keep my self: you see, though he wants necessaries, he will take nothing of them, but rather over-burthen other Churches that are better spirited to bear it, then among this people labour in vain; may not all mourn for Gospel-loss, through the want of such walking one towards another in our days? How prosperous in probability, may not I say in certainty had the truth been over it is, through our Nation, had it not been for those divisions that now are among the Churches? Whose beginnings came in this way? I do secretly rejoyce, to think what a blessed issue would have been resped of general harmony amongst Gods Children,*  
*while*



while all persons in all places, and among all people spoke the same things.

But on the contrary, here the Church rests from Persecution or Trouble without, what then follows? Doth she not settle upon her Lees, while she was troubled, she united and became one shoulder to every burden, now she hath rest? What doth God call for, that then she be edified, and walk in the Fear of the Lord, and in the Comfort of the Holy-Ghost, and increased, growing more in goodness and greatness, may it not be for Lamentation, that Experience hath told us the contrary, when the Church had rest in times past, grew she not *Carnal, Froward, worldly, Proud, Censorious, Envious, Quarrelsome*, and fell from *Humility and Gentleness*, into *Emulation, Wrath, Strife, Sedition*; and for this hath not God scourged some to loss of Substance, others of Life it self, and driven all back into *Egypt*. Again, shall twelve years experience be sufficient to Warn us for ever to Live in Love, seeing now there is like to come a little time of reviving again? Would we have it last long, and end in Weal? Let us labour with might after the good Apostles Spirit, to be all things, and do all things to Edification. My Fellow Travellers for *Jerusalem* the City of God; let us study that Lesson, not resting short of living the life of it. *Phil. 2. 3. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better then themselves*; This will bring into their Candlesticks those two glorious lights of Gods-House *PEACE and LOVE*, while we esteem others better then our selves, there will be Love, and where Love is, there will be forbearance; it beareth all things, it hopeth all things, endureth all things, and is kind; and where this Love is, there will be

O

peace;

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peace, and a habitation fitted for the Prince of peace to take up his abode in. Alas, Alas, Doth not the Adversary hinder the Building greatly? while he can truly say, do you not see how they are divided among themselves, and lay low one another? Doth not also the conscious seeker stumble greatly at this, and say, what shall I do? Where to settle I cannot tell? Doth not the carnal Christian because of this please himself, that he is got into the world of liberty from all Church-way? O that the Lord would be intreated to awaken the upright! yet to make it their prayer, and care night and day, how they may in *Places, Times, Things*, especially in the main, both to speak and do the same thing; this will be blessed with better success to God and Gospel, in one year, then the best indeavours of another kind, for time past hath been in twenty years.

*Thus* I have done, and the good Lord begin to set this my humble caution to Churches home, that they all may take the good Apostles rule. *1 Cor. 14. 26. How is it then brethren, when you come together, every one hath a Psalm, hath a Doctrine, hath a Tongue, hath a Revelation, hath an interpretation: Let all things be done to Edifying.*



CHAP. XXVIII.

*Shewing the necessity of humble waiting, and confident depending upon the holy Spirit, to help in the great work of mortification; the necessity whereof is shewed in seven particulars, with six directions how to get and keep this holy Spirit.*

SIGN XXVIII.

**W**Hen the holy Spirits help to the great work of mortification, seems not of absolute necessity to you.

That is, its working help, and way is not taken heed to: necessity of the holy Spirits help in this matter of great concernment, cannot be known, so as to be to this great end worthily improved, without knowledge to a good degree, how in this great work the holy Spirits help is concerned, and whether so concerned, that without its help, mortification of sin in its right order, cannot be brought about. Now where the holy Spirit is sought unto, and humbly waited upon for help, he doth shew himself helpful in these particulars.

First, In fortifying the mind of a Christian with spiritual materials, meet to wage war with the spiritual adversaries, *Flesh, World, and Devil*, all which are strongly ingaged against a poor convert. *Gal. 5. 7. The flesh lusteth against the Spirit*; desiring and striving to do what is directly contrary to the Spirit, like a perfect opposite, aiming and striving to set up all impurity, contrary to, or against the Spirits purity. Now the

mind being the most noble part in man, that the flesh is most engaged against; so that Peter in his 1 Epist. 2. 4, 12. cautions to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul, or mind; therefore saith the holy Apostle St. Paul. Rom. 7. 23. *I see a Law in my members, warring against the Law of my mind, to lead me captive to the Law of sin, in my members; And saith Jesus Christ. Mat. 22. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.* All which together, proving the mind to be the most noble part, at which the holy Spirit to possess with good, and the adversary to possess with bad, hath a chief and only aim, knowing right well, that conquest there carries away the whole man; and therefore the actions of good men, and wicked men, are more or less reputed good or bad, as they are more or less managed with the Mind. Nehem. 4. 6, 7. *The builders that wrought upon the wall, with one hand, held a weapon, and with the other hand wrought in the work; for the people had a Mind to work: which notes how mightily a willing mind doth contribute to a successful work; and that this is greatly esteemed off by God.* read Isa. 26. 3. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee; thou wilt keep them, such are the proper subjects of Gods great care, whose minds on God is stayed, and they shall have peace, peace, that is, peace in its best performances, and in all its degrees. Peace at home, abroad, in storms, in calms, within, without, equivalent with that blessing annexed to commandment-keepers. Dent. 28. Beginning. But on the contrary. Prov. 21. 29. The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination to the Lord; how much more, when he brings it with a wicked Mind; So that at the best the wickeds sacrifices are abominable, but how much more, when they come with*



with a mind set on wickedness? *Phil.* 3. 18, 19. For many walk of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, they are enemies of the Cross of Christ, who mind earthly things: Now all this premised, bespeaks the necessity of the holy Spirits help to fortifie the mind with spiritual materials, meet to wage war with the spiritual adversary; for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness and truth, proving what is acceptable to God; and is therefore put in opposition to the works of the flesh. *Ephes.* 5. 9, 10. *Gal.* 5. 22. But the fruits of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, meekness, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith; now a mind destitute of this holy Spirits fruit, is no way able to withstand the motions of the flesh; but is carried captive with every lustful bait at the tempters will; for they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; and as it is the care of the evil one, to have the mind of sinners in his possession; even so the first work the holy Spirit doth upon the converted, is to put Gods law into their mind, by demolishing those dark works, in those that turn to God, both in Debasing what was, and in Exalting what was not. *Ephes.* 4. 17. This I say therefore, and testifie in the Lord, that you walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanities of their mind. verse 22. But that you put off concerning the former conversation, the old man with his deeds; and then is a necessity of putting on the new man with his deeds; for if the house, or heart be empty, swept, and garnished from all bad, and yet not possess'd with like good, the evil one enters again, and makes the case worse then before; All which notes the necessity of having dependance upon the holy Spirit. *Ephes.* 3. 16, 17. To fortifie the mind with spiritual materials, meet to wage war with this spiritual adversary; and thus I have done with the first mark, and come to the second.

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Secondly, It is the Spirits work, to discover to the Christian man, wherein his danger most lies; that is, by what bait, and to what evil the tempter is most like to draw him; Ignorance here causeth people to go into the tempters way, and without defilement more or less, they can hardly return, and surely Solomon alludes to this in one of his petitions to God for Israel. 1 Kings 8. 38. *What prayer and supplication soever be made by any man, or by all thy people Israel, which shall know every man the Plague of his own Heart:* clearly implying, that among Israel there might be, that did not know their own Hearts Plague, or wherein their danger most lay. Now the holy Spirit was given to instruct them, and so witnesseth, Nehem. 9. 20 *Thou gavest thy good Spirit to instruct them;* the manner how is set out in, Exod. 13. 17. *And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the Philistines; although that was near, for God said, lest they repent when they see war, and return to Egypt again.* It is very questionable, if not out of doubt, that this danger was not in their eye at all, but God led them (saith Moses,) by his Spirit, saith Nehemiah; clearly noting, that persons hearkning, find the holy Spirit not wanting to lead them in the best way, and set before them the greatest danger; one text more and so I have done with this. Isa. 29. 24. *They also that erred in Spirit, shall come to understanding, and they that murmured, shall learn Doctrine:* They that through ignorance went astray, shall come to understanding, or know their best way; and they that did repine, shall learn Doctrine, or be better taught.

Thirdly, The Spirits work is to discover both the strength of the tempter, and temptation, shewing to the Christian man these two things.

First,



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First, That the tempter can but intice, not inforce.  
Secondly, That the strength of his temptation lies in present things.

First, He can and doth prepare suitable baits and snares, but all he doth do, and can do, amounts but to thus much; *Therefore greater is he that is in you, then he that is against you*; which consideration tends greatly to a believers support, while he is able to say, I know it must be my fault if I sin against my God, for the tempter cannot force me, neither did he ever force any, he can and doth proffer his ware, putting the best face upon it, as you may see, *Gen. 3. 4, 5. And the Serpent saith to the Woman, ye shall not surely die; for God doth know in the day you eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened, and shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil.* Here he makes his bait pleasant, and to promise greater priviledge then yet they had; with which the woman is taken; *And when the Woman saw that the fruit was good, and that it was pleasant to the eye, she took thereof and did eat*; contrary to the Law. So *Josh. 7. 20, 21. When Achan saw among the spoils a goodly Babylonish Garment, and a Wedge of Gold, he coveted them*; which notes, that the Devils power to take, centers in preparing fair outsidcs, which carries some after destruction, as the Oxe goeth to the slaughter, not knowing that it is for his life; and indeed as his trade lies in shows, so the people he tradeth among, (without which he could not trade at all to any advantage) are silly people; and though silly people, yet he tradeth altogether in the dark, and therefore is called the *Ruler of darkness. Ephes. 6. 12. And his Kingdom a Kingdom of darkness. Col 1. 3. And dare not come to the light, for fear his deeds should be made manifest.*

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Secondly, As he thus trades, and these are the people he tradeth with; so the strength of his temptations centers in present things; It is all he can make snares and temptations of, as is evident by these Texts. *Rom. 8: 18. The sufferings of this Present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. So Gal. 1. 4. Who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from this present evil world. 2 Tim. 4. 10. Demas hath forsaken me, having embraced the Present world.* Now all these Scriptures speak the tempters strength to lie in present things, which made the holy Apostle have light account of his suffering *2 Cor. 4. 17. For our light Affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* He compareth it with the state to come, gives it the next count to a cypher, calling it momentary; and the utmost we can make, or any sinner that lives at greatest height of worldly pleasure, must confess all present things will amount to but these three.

First, Such as goeth but Shin-deep.

Secondly, Such as may properly be called minute joy, that is ours this minute, but either it taken from us, or we from it next minute, it lasts not.

Thirdly, At the longest worldly pleasure serveth us but till we come to the grave, and there it leaves us.

Having now done with the third Discovery of the holy Spirits help, I shall briefly add two or three more, and pass to the *Twenty ninth Sign of a dying Christian.*

Fourthly, The holy Spirit discovers what unprofitableness is found in sin after committed, working strong convictions upon the heart of the sinner, and forceth him to confess that his eager pursuit after his sin,



fin, now he hath had his hearts desire granted, contracts but wo and sorrow, though sweet in the mouth while eating, yet bitter in the belly when eaten. *Mark 8. 36, 37. What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world, and loose his soul? Or what shall a man give in Exchange for his soul?* When such texts as this is brought home to the conscience, it doth so awaken where not willingly withstood, that sins-hold must needs fall.

Fifthly, The Spirit furnisheth the Christian with spiritual Arguments, bearing such force upon his heart, as makes him able to break out with such replies as these.

First, All the Devil hath to make an argument of, is but present things, and they suit not with my person, for my person is made up of soul and body, and all he offereth, doth but respect and serve that body, that shortly must be worms-meat; and therefore it will not profit me to lose my soul for present things.

Secondly, As all he hath to make an Argument of, suits not with my person; in like manner, it suits not with my condition; for if I have all that heart can wish, it carries me but to the grave, and there leaves me, and wo be to me if such works follow me; for alas I must be raised again, *and he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption.*

Sixthly, The holy Spirit helps in lending the immediate supplies of new strength proportionable to our straits, and will not suffer those that wait on him to be tempted above what they are able to bear, but will with the temptation make way to escape, that they may be able. *1 Cor. 10. 13.*

Seventhly, The holy Spirit helps by striving with the heart, to draw it after holy performances, following

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ing the soul up and down with sweet visits, and secret whispers, prompting and inclining it God-ward, preparing a season for the heart to draw nigh to God, and then preparing the heart for that season: *The Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what to pray for as we ought; but the Spirit it self maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.* Rom. 8. 26. May not all this teach us, to put a high value upon the holy Spirits Help, to the great work of Mortification, by all means striving to please and not grieve this holy Spirit, by which we are sealed to the day of Redemption.

*Object.* Having now spoken of the holy Spirits help, may not some from hence inquire, what may be done to the obtaining, not only its visits now and then, as a wafaring man that tarrieth for a night; but its constant company to abide with the soul?

*Ans.* There may be three Directions laid down briefly for its obtaining; with three Directions for its keeping.

First, For its obtaining; Get a deep sense of its want and worth.

Secondly, Get longings of heart after its supply.

Thirdly, Make humble supplications to the Father for it.

First, Get a deep sense of its want and worth; its Jesus Christs own argument, that the world cannot receive this Spirit, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. John 14. 17. Now by personal examination of that souls barrenness, where the holy Spirit either comes but seldome, or stays not long, may some considerable sense of its want be discerned, and consequently of its worth; all those black sinful works acted by the sons of men, are the effects of the holy Spirits



Spirits absence; and indeed to what degree, a good man is a stranger here, to that degree he is weak & unable, either to make right judgment of the best things, or to withstand the temptations & vexatious assaults of the evil one; and although a man be thus destitute where the holy Spirit is wanting, yet there can be no expectation of his company, till a deep sense both of its want and worth affect the heart, to the rendring the soul capable of setting a valuable estimation of its company.

Secondly, For its obtaining, Get longings of heart after its supply; breathings and pantings from a sense of its want, hastens its coming; a soul that goeth Sadly up and down all the day long, Sick as it were of Love; for its frequent visits to revive comfort and strength; and to discover its own wants, and the tempters wiles; making the soul taller by head and shoulders, then those temptations that frequently attend it, saying with *David*, *As the Hart panteth after the water-brooks; so panteth my soul after thee O God: My soul thirsteth for the living God, when shall I come and appear before thee? Or be filled with supplies from thee. Psal. 42. 1, 2.*

Thirdly, For its obtaining, Make humble supplications to the Father for it; not only sick of love with the Spouse; but also panting and thirsting with *David*, yet rests not here, but is again and again upon its knees, with humble hearty supplications to God, even the Father; like the thirsty traveller, that going from Fountain to Fountain, from means to means, till he get what his soul travellet after: when Jesus Christ were about to leave the Disciples, this was one of the last Legacies he gave them; *And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever. John 14. 16. If ye being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much*

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*much more shall your heavenly Father, give the holy Spirit to them that ask him ? Luke 11. 13.*

In the second place, we may offer three Directions, in order to the sure keeping the holy Spirits company, or holding the constant fellowship, and dear inward intimate familiarity with so happy a companion.

First, A constant withstanding the beginnings of all evil.

Secondly, A ready compliance with new motions to all good.

Thirdly, A retaining in the heart, a high value of its company.

First, A constant withstanding the beginnings of all evil ; is that which will wonderfully engage the Spirits company ; when you crush sin in its least and first motion. Now the dearest of God, Children are liable to temptation, and it is not their sin to be tempted to sin, Jesus Christ was tempted to sin, their sin lieth in closing with the temptation ; but if instead of closing with it, you do in the Spirits strength constantly oppose it : mistake me not here, I pray you, a constant opposing sin, doth not intend less than these three things.

First, A firm withstanding the very first least motion, even a glance as it were, at the eye ear or thought to sin ; *Abstain from all appearance of evil.* 1 Thes. 5. 22.

Secondly, As the first least motion, so in all cases and conditions, whether the temptation set upon you when you are full or hungry, sick or well, strong or weak, rich or poor, in affliction or out of affliction, it will be coming with new assaults in all conditions, waiting to kill you by a Goliath or Bathsheba, temptations more piercing, or more pleasing ;

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[Constant] intends a withstanding here.

Thirdly, Constant intends continual; *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a Crown of life.* James 1. 12. Rev. 2. 10.

Secondly, A second help to retain the holy Spirit, may be this; A ready compliance with new motions to all good; it is as proper for the holy Spirit to be prompting the heart to good if hearkned to, as for the fire to give heat, waiting upon the soul in every season, whether of rejoycings or weepings, whether of doing of Gods will or suffering for his name; still to be putting such as wait upon it into some such action as tends to their enlargement heaven-ward; but it must be quietly and silently heeded, that when it saith, *Seek my face*; the answer may be, *Thy face will I seek*. Great care and fear therefore must be had, that we neither grieve it, by not hearing what it saith, or not doing what it bids; nor yet quench or lightly esteem those gracious services it prompts us to.

Thirdly, A third Help may be this; A retaining in the heart a high value of its company; this is the way to keep, and to be richly encreas'd with the company of the holy Spirit; it cannot dwell where it is not valued at the highest rate; and that because ignorance of its worth and work, incapacitates the soul to high expectations, being ignorant both of the ability and delight, that essentially abides in the holy Spirit, to be greatning in the heart *things to come*, and lessening in the heart *things present*. Christ Jesus could not in one place, do many mighty works, because of their unbelief; the low and mean esteem of him, lessened their expectation from him. Now the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God; We are therefore called upon to be filled with the Spirit; and if

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if we live in it, to walk after it, being strengthened with its might in the inward man, to a full understanding the deep things of God: Labour therefore, praying over this, to retain in your hearts an high value of its company. *Amen.*

### CHAP. XIX.

*Treating of Spiritual Ignorance of our everlasting condition; and five Scriptures tending to reduction from carnal security; and three special Causes of such a damning Decay.*

### SIGN. XXIX.

**W**Hen you are so Ignorant of your Spiritual standing, that you know not whether you grow or decay.

This is not only a Sign of great Decay, but a prediction of a speedy fall, or total throwing off those holy badges by which a Christian is known from other men, such being of a *Laodicean* spirit, neither hot nor cold, yet say they are rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; Being in a besotted, careless state, not minding when they do well or ill; when Professors come to this pass, they grow useless and fit for nothing but to be laid aside; for were such hot, that is, zealous, active, and lively they were fit for encouragement; and were they cold, that is, quite dead, they were to be plucked up by the roots, and cast into the fire: now this sort of Peoples ignorance is a very high crime, it being premised, that their ignorance of their standing, growing or declining in

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