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WE ALL DO FADE AS A LEAF.

ISAIAH lxiv, 6., (last clause).—*We all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.*"

The lessons afforded by the changing aspects of nature, have been the subjects at once of the poet, the moralist, and the preacher—to point their moral, or adorn their verse, or enforce their admonitions. Nor do the sacred writers disdain to draw lessons from the same source. A beautiful instance we have of this in the words of the prophet, as quoted above.

The prophet was referring to the languid state of religion among God's people. There were none that called upon the name of God, that stirred themselves up to take hold upon him. They had rebelled against God, and he was wroth, and hid his face from them, and consumed them because of their iniquities. By their sins, their rebellion, their prayerlessness, they had provoked God to blight their souls, by withdrawing his favour, hiding his countenance, withholding his grace. They faded therefore as a leaf in autumn, when the sun withdraws his more genial rays, and the winds and the rains wither the formerly green and flourishing foliage. Nor was this all—The leaf is not only seared—not only fades—takes the yellow tinge, and hangs loosely on the branch—but it is soon disunited, and is blown away by the wind, to be trodden under foot, or to mingle with its sisters of the forest. So they were borne away by their iniquities—separated from God, carried into captivity, and for a time blended with the other nations of the earth. How apposite the figure of the prophet, taken in this sense. The soul under the displeasure of God, deserted by his grace, blighted by his

wrath, given over to itself, could not be more appositely represented than by the faded leaf, which the chill blasts and cold damps of autumn have seared and withered. Allow the soul to be really under the influence of grace—to be spiritually, devoutly, and prayerfully exercised—but it has not been so earnest in calling upon God: it has not stirred itself up to take hold upon Him: it has suffered a temporary blight or decay; and God, in the exercise of his sovereignty, has withdrawn his spirit—removed his gracious influences—hid his countenance—so that the soul grows worse, becomes more negligent of prayer and all spiritual exercises: its faith becomes less vigorous—its love less ardent—its devotion less sincere—its delight in God's law less lively—its whole state seared, and withered, and dead. It fades as a leaf. It no longer shows greenness, life, beauty. It expands not in the sun of God's favour. It catches not his genial rays. It reflects not his colours—it has a hue which it gathers from nether influences—from the earth—not from Heaven. It is sickly and ready to die.

Is this descriptive of your condition, reader? Have you the grace of God in your soul? Has your soul, under that grace, made some progress in the divine life—have you received the truth of God? Have you put forth some of the freshness of spiritual life, spiritual beauty? Have you been living to the praise of God? Have you been exhibiting a relish for the truth? Have you felt its power? Have the graces of the spirit been manifest in you—the beauties of divine holiness upon you? Have you been cherishing the love of God, walking in his law, rejoicing in his favour?—