

Ch. 19. *Of the Virtue and Grace of Love.*

CHAP. XIX.

Of the Divine Virtue and Grace of Love to God, &c.

THE choice Virtue of Grace of Love, which alwaies accompanieth true Knowledge and Faith, is as the oil to the wheels, that makes the soul *as the Chariots of Aminadab*, to run swiftly, and perform every duty relating both to God and man cheerfully and willingly; the Lord loves willing and hearty service, and that can never be, unless it flows from the truth of love to God, as well as conscience and duty to him.

This duty and virtue of love, must be,
1. and chiefly to God and Christ above all,
2. To his people for his sake. 3. To all men, to enemies as well as to friends.

1. To God and Christ, as our chiefest *1. To God and Christ.*
good, as there are many excellent and useful new-covenant Gifts and Virtues, being accompanied with love; yet love is the most excellent of all Gifts, and of all Virtues next to Faith; and the Apostle prefers it beyond Faith, that is, that Faith which is without love; there may be (and I fear is) much Faith without love, which will

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will fail in the end : but Gospel-love cannot be without Faith ; for where truth of love is to God and Christ, there is Faith : for no man can love him on whom he doth not believe; but men may have Faith without Love, therefore he prefers Love above Faith, *1 Cor. 13. 2. And though I have all Faith, &c. and have not Charity, (that is love) I am nothing* : the word *all Faith*, not only intends the Faith of miracle, for that is but one sort of Faith, but all Faith in the habit of it, though not in the power and life; for if there were not Faith in the Doctrine, ordinarily there could not be the Faith of miracle, as, *Mat. 7. 21, 22.* Though saving Faith is alwaies accompanied with the truth of Love, and a measure of all the Divine Virtues of the Gospel, *ver. 13. Now abideth Faith, Hope, Charity; but the greatest of these is Charity.* So *Col. 3. 14.* The Apostle having mentioned several choice duties and Virtues, saith, *And above all these things put on Charity, which is the bond of Perfection; or the perfect bond, by all which it appears, that Love, Charity, is a most choice and singular Virtue, and desirable for Christians to be prising and pressing after.*

A description of Love.

What Love is in general ; Love is an affection of the soul fixed upon, cleaving to, and delighting in something wherein it apprehends some special worth and good ; thus it is in natural Love, and thus it is in spiritual Love ; for there is a natural, and there

there is a Spiritual Love: the second it is I am speaking of; and the difference is rather to be discerned in the object than in the root or principle, that being a Divine secret, the rise whence Divine Virtues flow from the secret and hidden work of the Spirit of Grace; yet the Spirit propounds to us the distinction rather by the object than the principle from whence it flows: it lets us to know, that if our love fix sincerely on the right objects, then it flows from the right principle: so then, as natural love fixes on natural and worldly objects, from natural causes; so that is spiritual love that fixes on spiritual objects; natural love never looks so high as God, and Christ, and Glory, to fix there.

So then this is spiritual love that fixeth upon, cleaveth to, and delighteth in God, and Christ, in Grace, and Glory, as its chiefest and most special good: and this is certain, that we can never love God as we ought, and as doth concern us, unless we apprehend him to be our chiefest and most especial good. *Matt. 22. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy heart, and with all thy mind;* which we can never do, unless we prize him above all other good in the World; and so of *Christ: Matt. 10. 37, 38, 39. He that loveth Father or Mother, Son or Daughter, or Life more than me, he is not worthy of me.* Which no soul can attain to, but by being instructed into the

transcending worth of Jesus Christ: this could the Prophet say, *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee; and there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee:* and the Spouses Song, *5. 10. My Beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand:* and Paul, *Phil. 3. 8. Yea doubtless, I do account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledg of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I might win Christ, &c.* And this is that which every soul that loves the Lord Jesus in truth and sincerity can say: so that if you love God and Christ above all, you do then esteem him as your chiefest good, as your alone portion; you do undervalue every thing here below; you can look upon every thing here below to be but vanity, yea, vanity of vanities: *Eccel. 1. 2. Vanity of vanities, (saith the Preacher) Vanity of vanities, all is vanity:* this doubling and trebling of its vanity, argues it to be exceeding vain, little, and contemptible to the soul that loves Christ, in comparison of him; souls that have seen into, and tasted of the goodness of the Lord, and the excellency of Divine things, can say with the Prophet, *Lam. 3. 24. The Lord is my portion saith my soul, therefore will I hope in him.*

Quest.

Quest. How shall I know that I love God and Christ above all, as my chiefest good, as my portion, and lot of mine inheritance?

Answ.

Answ. 1. If you love God above all, as your

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your chiefest good, which you do, if your love be right; your meditation will be much upon him, and about him; that as in the first place you have left all for him, so your thoughts are precious of him: if God and Christ, Grace and Glory be of highest esteem in your hearts, then you love God above all; for what a man loves most, and best, his mind is most upon, be it persons, or profits, &c. a man may know what he loves most, and best, by the running out of his mind after it, and exercise of his mind about it. The worldling hath his mind taken up with the world, runs after his profit, and seeks after his gain from every quarter; and when it goes well on that account, all is well; he troubles himself as little as may be about things of Divine concernment; but the gracious soul *presseth hard after God, Ps. 63. 8. My soul (saith the Prophet) presseth hard after thee.* As the worldling presseth hard after the world, because it is his portion, his all, his chiefest good: so does the soul that loves God as his portion, follow hard after him, that it may know him more, and enjoy him more; his meditations are daily of him; he esteems his *loving kindness better than life*, and therefore his soul is set upon him: *Pf. 104. My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord*; so that in a word, where your minds are most set, and most exercised, and what you most prize, there you love

1. Your meditations will be much upon him.

2. The worldling hath his mind taken up with the world.

3. The worldling runs after his profit.

4. The worldling hath his mind taken up with the world.

love most, and best; For where your treasure is, there will be your hearts also, Mat. 6. 21. O how few that profess Christianity, can approve their hearts to God in this matter.

2. You will love his things.

2. If you love God above all, as your chiefest good, you will love his things, whatever hath his stamp upon it; I mean on the spiritual account, you love it, and prize it for his sake.

1. His Word.

1. You love his Word, and Will, his Promises, his Precepts, all will be precious to you: it is not possible for souls to love God, and not to love his Word, his Will; Ps. 119. 97. *O how I love thy Law, it is my meditation all the day; ver. 103. How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea sweeter than honey to my mouth.* This is a special property of a soul that loves the Lord, to love his Word, and to delight therein, to suck sweetness there-from: ver. 72. *The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of Gold and Silver.* Well, by this you may know, if you love the Lord, you do love his Word, his Will, his Precepts, his Promises, it's all precious to you, and your meditation is much therein; ver. 97. and Ps. 1. 2. Where you have a description of a Godly man, to be one that doth meditate in the Law of God day and night: that is, his meditations are much exercised about the good Word of God.

2. To do his Will.

2. If you love God indeed, you will love to do his Word, and Will; you will love to obey him, to submit to him in every thing.

things. It's a great mistake in persons who pretend to love the Word of God, but do not love to do it; such persons deceive themselves; *Job. 14. 15. saith Christ, If ye love me, keep my Commandments.* This was the voice of the Law, and this is the voice of the Gospel; *Exod. 20. 6. Shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my Commandments.* God never did, nor never will accept any service but that which is done in love to him; and he ever did, and will, accept of those who love, serve, and obey him according to his Word and Will: and if you serve him in love, his Commandments will be pleasant to you. *1 Joh. 5. 3. This is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not grievous.* Then we love God, when we keep his Commandments, and they are pleasant to us, and not grievous: and if in this spirit of love, you live to, and obey the Lord, he will meet with you, and your souls shall meet with him, and have fellowship with him: *Isa. 64. 5. Job. 14. 21, 23.* Read those Scriptures at your leasure.

3. If you love Christ, you do love what he loves, and hate what he hates; you love Holiness, Righteousness, and Obedience, and hate sin, and iniquity, and disobedience, and every false way, though you be hated of the wicked for so doing. *Psal. 97. 10. Ye that love the Lord, hate evil; he preserveth the souls of his Saints, he delivereth them*
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3. Love what he loves, and hate what he hates.

out of the hands of the wicked; i. e. Though the wicked hate and persecute the Saints for their hating and forsaking the waies of the wicked; yet let those that love the Lord, have evil still; for God will deliver them out of the hands of the wicked, that do hate them for their hating of wickedness. O therefore, ye that love the Lord, hate evil, and love goodness; *Amos 5. 15. Hate the evil, and love the good, &c.* This is that which God loves; *Psal. 11. 7. And Christ loves; Psal. 40. 7. Heb. 1. 9. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; wherefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.* Do you love God and Christ above all, then shew it in this way; *Abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good:* it is to be feared, that most that bear the name of Christian in the World, do in truth hate that which God loves, and love that which he hates; an infallible discovery that the love of God is not in them.

4. They love
his appear-
ing.

4. Those who love the Lord, do love his appearing, and long to be with him; surely those who talk of love to Christ, but care not to be with him, desire not his coming, that they might more fully enjoy him; do but talk of love, it is love but *in word and tongue*, not in deed and truth; if the Bride pretend love to the Bridegroom, but desire not the Marriage-day, could be content if that never come, it argues but

little

little or no love, suitable to such a relation. If the Wife pretend love to her Husband, and when he is gone from home, care not where ever he do return, it's but little sign of love: so, for souls to talk of love to Christ, but desire not the enjoyment of him in the nearest relation, do but deceive themselves; they have ground to fear their love is not right; they will be content to go to him, and to enjoy him, when there is no remedy, when they must go to him, or to a worse place, and to worse company: I fear this is the case of most who think and say they love Christ; the truth of this, that they who love Christ, do love his appearing, that they may be with him. See 2 Tit. 4. 7, 8. Tit. 1. 13. Heb. 9. 28. Rev. 22. 20. Whence it's apparent, that it's those that love his appearing, that shall have the *Crown of Righteousness*. It is to them that look for him, that he will appear a second time without sin unto salvation.

5. Those who love God, do love his people also for his sake, (which was the second thing proposed;) because the worth of Grace is in them, Divine Virtue is in them, the Name of God is upon them, they are the children of the same Father, members of the same Body, heirs to the same Kingdom and Glory; and therefore they love them; this is the command of God; 1 Joh. 4. 21. *And this is the Commandment we have from him, that he that loveth God,*
do

5. They love
his people.

do love his Brother also: And the disposition of the Saints, Chap. 5. 1. Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

Quest.

But how shall I know that I love the people of God in truth?

Ans.
It is true
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Ans. It is then true love, when it is sincere, and unfeigned love, not hypocritical, and in shew only: 1 *Joh.* 3. 8. *Let us not love in word, and in tongue (only) but in deed and in truth:* there is much word and tongue-love, but little deed-love; much feigned love, but little unfeigned love: 1 *Pet.* 1. 22. *Seeing you have purified your hearts in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the Brethren, &c.* Our love to the Brethren must be of the same nature as it is to God; because, if we love rightly, it must be for his sake. And surely we cannot rationally imagine that God will accept of hypocritical love, word-love, tongue-love, love in shew, feigned love, no, God abhors it, and so should men. *Rom.* 12. 9. *Let love be without dissimulation: it is sincere love to the Brethren that is right and true: 2 Cor.* 8. 8: *I speak not (saith the Apostle) by Commandment, but by occasion of the forwardness of others, and to prove the sincerity of your love.*

2. When it
is spiritual.

2. It is then true, when it is spiritual love, when it is for God's sake, and for Christ's sake, because they belong to him: This is true and sincere love, when we love for his sake: *Mark* 9. 41. *For whosoever shall give*

give you a cup of water to drink, because ye belong to Christ; verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward. The Lord takes well any the least token of love shewed to any, because they belong to him, because it is a token of their love to him, in any who shew kindness for his sake; *Mat. 10. 42.* As the greatest shew of love, if it be not for his sake, is not accounted of with him; so the least act of love for his sake shall be rewarded, because that where little acts of love are for his sake, greater acts will be, if opportunity and ability concur.

3. It is then right and true, when it manifests it self in action, when it is as ready to do as to speak; yet it is but word and tongue-love. I say, true love to the Brethren is a doing love, for soul, for body, for both, as occasion and need requireth, according to ability: *1 Job. 3. 17.* But who so hath this Worlds good, and seeth his Brother hath need, and shutteth up the bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? Those that are streight-hearted, and streight-handed towards the people of God in their necessities, have ground to suspect themselves, that they love neither God nor his people. And sutable to the abilities that God gives in the World, does he expect that men do in this matter: where he gives much, he expects much; *1 Tit. 6. 17, 18, 19.* And that it be done willingly, and not grudgingly, for that is not thank-worthy,

3. It is a
doing-love.

worthy, nor is it any true discovery of love; *The Lord loveth a chearful giver, 2 Cor. 9. 7. & 8. 12. Rom. 12. 8.* I fear few doth manifest truth of love in this matter; who though they give, do it slackly, and grudgingly, thinking every little too much, and would gladly be without the occasions and opportunities of doing what they do: see *Isa. 32. 5--8.* And read it at leasure, and meditate well upon it, and the Lord give you right understanding therein.

4. When it will cover offences.

4. It is then true when it will cover offences, and is ready to forgive: *Prov. 10. 2. Love covereth all sins; 1 Pet. 4. 8. Love covereth the multitude of sins.* 1. There are many sins that love may, and should cover, without reproof. As personal infirmities that attend Saints in this mortal, sinful state, wherein Christians cannot speak, nor act, but a quick eye may discern something amiss, which must be covered, else the life of Christians would be uncomfortable with each other, and their time must be spent in reproofing each other. *Jam. 3. 2. In many things we offend all: Ps. 19. 12. Who can understand his errors, &c.* Christians may see so much of imperfection in each other, that needs love to cover, rather than to multiply reproofs for common failings: who so knows themselves, can do it, and yet true love reproves sin; that is, such things as are sinful and dishonourable, and cannot stand with the safety of the soul, that comes not under
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the common infirmities of nature, unavoidably attending gracious souls.

2. Love covereth sin from others; where is cause of reproof, and gives a private reproof; according to, *Mat. 18. 15. If thy Brother trespass against thee, tell him his fault between him and thee alone, &c.* Love is no whisperer, nor back-biter; those who are so ready to publish the failings of their brethren, that others shall know it before them, that wait advantages to publish the failings of their brethren, without observing the right rule, they are, in so doing, rather backbiters than lovers of their brethren

2. It covereth sin from others.

3. Upon repentance, it covereth all sin, it forgiveth all sin; *Lu. 17. 3. If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; if he repent, forgive him: covereth all sin.*

4. Love is no implacable person, but easie to be reconciled; it is like God, and Christ, ready to forgive, *Col. 3. 12, 13.*

When persons are so much bound up in their spirits, that they with so much difficulty forgive their brethren on their repentance, it's a sign they live not in the sense of the need they have of forgiveness from God themselves; and may justly doubt whether they are made partakers of the forgiveness of the Gospel, *Mat. 6. 12, 14, 15.* The sense of Gospel-forgiveness, works those rightly apprehending it, into like pittiful, merciful, and forgiving frame, *Col. 3. 12, 13.*

4. True love to brethren is not easily provoked, but suffereth long; *1 Cor. 13. 4, 5. It is not easily provoked.*

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4, 5. It starteth not aside for small occasions; it is not drops of water that can quench true love; Cant. 8. 7. *Many waters cannot quench love, nor floods drown it.* That love that is easily provoked, that will not bear nor suffer any thing, that is easily quenched; is not love of the right stamp.

5. It's full of hope.

5. True love to the brethren is full of Hope, and full of Faith; 1 Cor. 13. 7. *It be- peth all things, it believeth all things;* that is, all things that there is ground to hope and believe; it taketh hold of every thing that may minister occasion to hope the best, to hope that there is truth of Grace, to hope that their Faith and Repentance is true: but that love that will not believe, and hope any thing, if it come not up fully to the mind of the party, it may be a faith- less love, and an hopeless love, as to our brethren; so may it be in respect of God; for be sure we come infinitely more short in respect of God, than any of our bre- thren (where is any ground of hope) do or can in respect to us.

6. When accompanied with love and obedience to God.

6. It is then true love, when it is accom- panied with love to God; and obedience to his Will: for any to talk of love to the people of God, and yet hath no respect to the Commandments of God, no conscience of living to God according to his revealed Will, they deceive themselves: for, *As he that loveth God, must love his Brother also;* so he that loveth the people of God, must love God,

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God, and keep his Commandments: 1 Joh. 5. 2. By this we know we love the people of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments. Lest any should deceive themselves, the Apostle states it both waies; 1. If any love God, they love his people: He that loveth him that begat, Loveth him that is begotten of him. But lest any should mistake, and say I love him that is begotten, therefore I love him that begat; he states it the other way, to prevent all mistakes, that so our love may be true and right indeed: By this we know we love the people of God, when we love God, and keep his Commandments. That is, by this we know that our love to the people of God is right, when it is accompanied with love and obedience to God; For this is the love of God, that we keep his Commandments. Our love to God is not right, if we love not his people; & our love to his people is not right, if we love not God, nor keep his Commandments.

7. True love to the Saints is then right when it is universal, to all Saints, as well to one as to another, as well to the poor as to the rich, and as well to the rich as to the poor; to a poor Lazarus, as to a rich and royal David; to an afflicted Joseph, as to an admired Solomon: if love be right, it is no respecter of persons; For he that respecteth persons, will transgress for a piece of bread: that is, upon any occasion will wrest judgment. But this love is rare to be found, which professors will love them that are rich,

7. It must be universal, to all Saints.

and undervalue the poor, make them their foot-stool; and too often the poor undervalue the rich, because they are rich, have an evil eye upon the riches of their brethren, because themselves are poor: but the love of the Lords people is (or should be) one to another for the Lord's sake, because they are his, and so should be to the weak as to the strong, to the poor as to the rich; partial love is no true love. *Jam. 2. 1, 2.* It is the commendation the Apostle gives the *Ephesians*, that their love was to all the Saints; *Eph. 1. 15. Col. 1. 4.* It's a choice discovery of Divine love, when it hath no respect of persons, but fixes on the object purely for spiritual causes, for Holiness, for the image and Grace of Christ: the poorest Saints are as high to God, as rich in Grace and Glory as the richest: *Jam. 2. 5. Hearken my beloved Brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this World, rich in Faith, and heirs of that Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him.*

8. It is suitable to the causes of love.

8. Yet, if it be divine and true, it runs out suitable to the causes of love; for though true love be universal, and impartial, yet it is not blind, but fixes most where it apprehends most of God, most of Holiness, Humility, Love, and constancy in the way and work of the Lord: for this is certain, that if we love for Godliness sake, where we see most of Godliness, and the image of Christ, there we love most; and this

this need not be stated as a duty, for it is the property of true Grace and Love so to do: we have Christ our Lord for example in this matter, who had his beloved Disciple above the rest; *Job.* 13. 23. & 20. 2. & 21. 20, 24. Not but that he loved all, and so must we love all the Lord's people with the same love, although there may, and will be degrees therein: *Psal.* 16. 2, 3. *My goodness extendeth not unto thee, but to the Saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.* So did Paul prize and prefer *Timothy* above all the rest of the Ministers with him, for the excellency of spirit that was in him; *Phil.* 2. 29. 20, 21, 22. And on this account a poor Saint may have more spiritual cause of love in him than a rich one; he that is poor in the World, may be rich in Grace; and a rich Saint in the World may be rich in Grace, and have more cause of spiritual love than some that are poor: not but that all that are truly gracious, are spiritually rich in Grace; yet God giveth differing as he pleaseth; and there are differing capacities and improvings of what is given: but this is certain, that faithful improvement shall have addition and increase.

9. And lastly, True love to the Saints is ^{9. They love} constant love, not by fits and good moods, ^{constantly.} sometimes love, and sometimes hate; like the Religion of some, who under convictions, or afflictions, will be very religious, and

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and make promises, but when the fit is over, their Religion is ended; but true love both to God and his people *never faileth*; 1 Cor. 13. 8. It is constant in adversity as in prosperity, under weakness, frailties, and miscarriages, as under highest demonstrations of purity. It's true, Saints under sin must be reprov'd, and so it may be, that some strangeness may be requisite, yet love must still continue: Gal. 6. 1, 2. Heb. 13. 1. *Let brotherly love continue, to strangers as well as acquaintance, ver. 2. Prov. 17. 17. A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity:* Love in adversity continueth faithful in adversity; if it reprove for sin and miscarriage, it doth it love and faithfulness: Prov. 27. 6. *Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful:* hence the Prophet saith, Psal. 141. 5. *Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; let him reprove me, and it shall be an excellent oile, which shall not break my head, &c.* Where truth of love is, it's constant while the cause thereof continueth; and in any miscarriage, it doth all its works in love.

3. They love
all.

3. They that love God do love all men, as men; they love Christians as such, and they love men as men, and enemies as enemies, persecuters as persecuters; they love them with the love of pitty and compassion; and this is their duty, and disposition in some measure, if made partakers of the Grace of God in truth: Mat. 5. 44.

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to 47. *If ye love them that love you, (that is, only them) what do ye more than others? Nothing more eminently discovers a Gospel-spirit than this; for this is clear above nature, nature never teacheth this lesson, but the contrary; Nature teacheth to hate, and seek revenge on enemies; but Grace teacheth to pitty them, and pray for them; and what Christ taught his Disciples, he practised himself, both in doing, and praying for enemies, Luke 22. 50, 51. & 23. 34. And this lesson Stephen had learned, Acts 7. 60. And to this we are exhorted by the Apostle, Rom. 12. 19, 20. and Gal. 6. 10. As much as in us lieth to do good to all, though especially to the household of Faith. This is the command of the Lord, and then we love God when we keep his Commandments, and his Commandments are not (or should not be) grievous to us.*

Quest. How shall I know that I love mine enemies? *Quest.*

Ans. 1. When you can pitty them in their misery, spiritual or bodily, and pray for them, and truly desire their good; Ps. 35. 13, 14. *But as for me, when they were sick, my cloathing was sackcloath; I humbled my self with Fasting, and my Prayer returned into mine own bosome: I behaved my self as though he had been my friend; I bowed down heavily, as one that mourneth for his Mother.* This is a suitable frame of spirit for Christians towards enemies, Mat. 5. 44.

2. When you are as ready to do them good,

good, (as to desire their good) when occasion and opportunity is offered; *Gal. 6. 10.* As you have therefore opportunity, do good to all men: but on the contrary, Nature without Grace, waiteth opportunity to revenge, but Grace teacheth otherwise: Grace bears no hatred nor malice, but gladly forgives, so far as God forgives: yea, it begs forgiveness of God for them, *Luke 23. 34.* And is ready to do any service of love for soul or body, as occasion, opportunity, and capacity affords.

Use I. Of
Information
in three
things.

I. Of the
Excellency
of Love.

I. It's prefer'd
above
all.

This Divine Virtue of Love being so choice a Virtue, and so useful, I shall for further profit, endeavor to make some application of this truth; and that, I. Of information, and that in three things.

I. To inform us in the truth of the excellency of this Grace of Love to God, to Man, to Saints, to Sinners; it's an excellent Virtue, and much to be prized and pressed after by all Saints: it's the choicest Gift, the choicest Virtue: its choiceness and excellency appears;

I. In that (as hath been before mentioned) it's prefer'd in Scripture above all, and before all other Virtues, before Faith, Tongues, Prophecy, Knowledge, understanding all Mysteries, *1 Cor. 13. 1, 2. & 8. 1, 2, 3.* In all which its Divine Excellency is wonderfully discovered; it's that which puts worth and value in all other Virtues and Duties; for all without it is nothing.

2. It's

2. It's that which doth the greatest work, and beareth the greatest burthens; *2. It doth the greatest work.* I Cor. 13. 4, 5, 6. *It beareth all things, &c. It suffereth, endureth, beareth, never faileth.* Christians have great work to do for God in the World, in matter of service and suffering, in doing good, and eschewing evil, in mortifying sin, great burdens to bear for the sake of Christ: and it is only love flowing from Faith, that will make all easie, and help us through every duty, and every difficulty; for *Faith worketh by love, Gal. 5. 6. Faith getteth victory over the World;* but it is by love; for Faith can do nothing without love, as it ought to be done, for it is nothing; but Faith and love working together, makes the soul bold and valiant for God, and strong, able to do, suffer, and bear for Christ, what-ever he calls us too: It is the *never-failing* Virtue, it will never fail us here, as it shall not fail us hereafter: it's the *bond of perfection*, or the perfect bond, that ties us perfectly to God in all difficulties, and perfectly one to another in every duty; holiness in life is the great concernment for every Christian to be pressing after, to be holy in heart, and holy in life, *to be holy in all manner of conversation and godliness, 1 Pet. 1. 15.* But this we must attain in the power of the love of God in the Gospel, if ever we attain it, *Eph. 3. 17, 18, 19. 1 Thes. 3. 12, 13.* Love

3. It is the
fulfilling of
the Law.

3. Love is the fulfilling of the Law, and of the Gospel too, Mat. 22. 37, 39, 40. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thy self: on these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets; it all hangs upon love: Rom. 13. 8. 9. He that loveth another, hath fulfilled the Law: so that Love to God, and love to Man, is the fulfilling of the Law: not that any should suppose that merely love without any thing else, is intended; but that, where truth of love is to God, and to man for God's sake, it will carry on such souls cheerfully to every duty, both to God and Man, that the Law requireth; that is, the Law of the new Covenant: for the Law, as it is holy, just, and good, is still to be observed, as administered by Christ in the new Covenant, and is the rule of the Believers sanctification; and he that loveth truly, fulfilleth it rightly: and the true cause why Believers live so little to the Law of Christ, is because they love so little.*

4. It is an
evidence of
being born
of God.

4. Where this Grace of Love is in truth, it's an evidence that such souls are born of God, and in a state of life; it's an Heaven-born Virtue, and they are Heaven-born Christians in whom it is; and the contrary discovers a state of death, 1 Joh. 3. 14, 15. And this of love, in this Scripture, is not intended (as some imagine) only a sign to others, that such persons are born of God, but to the persons themselves in whom it

is;

is; see ver. 19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him. It's an high evidence to a gracious soul, that he is born of God, and is of the truth, and that he is passed from death to life. And thus much as to the excellency of this Virtue of Love.

2. It may inform us of the great coming short, and wonderful failing of Christians in this matter; every one may best find out this in his own heart, as among all the choice Virtues of the new Covenant, this excelleth: so it is to be feared, that among all, Christians fail most in this, of love to God, to Man, to the Word, to the Precepts, yea, to the promises of the Gospel; the Lord help souls to lay it to heart in time; for nothing demonstrates us (to our selves, to others) to be Christians indeed, as this of love doth.

3. It inform us of the true cause of all miscarriages among Christians, to God, to Man, both Saints and Sinners; it is want of love; love would make us willing to every duty, it would set the soul upon the wheels, to run the way of Gods Commandments, and to make them the joy and delight of our souls. We should then make God's Statutes our songs in the house of our pilgrimage; we should then be free and universal in our obedience; love would end very much, and many of the differences among Christians, and cause them to bear with, and forbear one

another. In a word, if ever there be a reformation of things amiss among Christians, it must begin here,

2. Use of Exhortation.

2. Use of exhortation to this great duty of Love, the Excellency, the Beauty, the Glory thereof, should quicken the hearts of Christians to a greater desire and endeavor after so holy, so lovely, and desirable a Virtue: if it be so excellent, let us approve it: *Phil. 1. 9, 10. And this I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more, in all knowledg, and in all judgment, that you may approve things that are excellent, that ye may be sincere, and without offence, till the day of Christ.* Let us approve it in our hearts, in our lives; *Let us walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and given himself for us.* To provoke your hearts to be more reaching after this Heavenly Virtue, consider, not only what hath been already said, which is enough to quicken any living, believing soul, with an earnest desire of increase herein; but further consider;

1. Duty to God calls for it.

1. That duty to God calls for it: see the many commands in Holy Scripture to this great duty of love to God, to one another, and to all men: *Mat. 22. 37. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, &c. Ps. 31. 23. O love the Lord ye his Saints;* and whoever sincerely performs this duty, is under the Blessing of Grace in order to Glory; *Eph. 6. 24. Grace be with all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, Amen.* But on the contrary,

if

if any be without this Divine disposition, and so perform not this duty; see I Cor. 16. 22. *If any man love not the Lord Jesus, let him be accursed, Anathema Maranatha,* accursed till the Lord come: and for the duty of Saints love one to another, see John 13. 34. *A new Commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another, &c.* I Joh. 4. 21. *This Commandment we have from him, that he who loveth God, should love his Brother also.*

2. The Saints relation to God, and one to another, calls for it; they are the children of God, *the Sons and Daughters of God Almighty*; this is their relation to God, and their priviledg; *They are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus*; they are all the children of one Father, espoused to one Husband, members of one Body: I Cor. 12. 27. *Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular*: and this calls aloud for love in the highest degree, both towards God, our Father, and towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and one towards another.

3. The blood of Christ calls for it, it being one special end for which it was shed, to make up the blessed relation of Peace, Unity, and Love, of Father, Son, and Saints: Christ had never died such a cursed death, had it not been to reconcile us to God, to make up the breach between God and us, to bring us in again to God, that we might love God, and live to him, and to reconcile us one to another, that we might love one

2. Relation calls for it.

3. The blood of Christ calls for it.

one another as brethren: see both these, *Eph. 2. 13, to 16.* Where our reconciling to God, and one to another, is both by the Cross and sufferings of Christ.

4. The prayer of Christ calls for it.

4. The Prayer and Intercession of our Lord Jesus, calls for it; he hath suffered for it, and hath prayed for it, *John 17. 21, 23. That they may all be one, as thou O Father art in me, and I in thee; that they also may be one in us, &c.*

Beloved friends

shall our dear Lord command it, sweat, and suffer for it, and pray for it, and shall we set light by it, and be negligent in so weighty a matter as this is, that so much concerns the Name and Glory of Christ in the World, that so much concerns our duty, and our spiritual and eternal welfare.

5. The souls of sinners call for it.

Should not
afflict to
right all

5. The souls of poor sinners call for it, the littleness of love to God appearing in the muchness of self-love, and love to the World; and littleness of love to Saints appearing by the divisions amongst them, hardens sinners against the truth, to their destruction: when they see such divisions, and breaches, and so little love, they speak evil of the way of truth, and are hardened in the way of sin, to their destruction. Love among Christians, and a lovely carriage towards all, is the way to convince sinners, that God is with his people, and that they are in the truth, *Joh. 17. 23.* Where Christ prayeth his Father that his people might

might be made perfect in one, that the World may believe that thou hast sent me. Love and Unity among the people of God, would be a blessed means to convince the World of the truth of Christianity, and to make them in love with Jesus Christ.

6. Your own souls abundantly need it, and if sensible thereof, would groan, and cry out in the sense of the want thereof, and be endeavouring an increase therein; without it you can have no solid ground of Peace in your own souls: 1 Joh. 4. 18. *There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment; he that feareth, is not made perfect in love:* If ever you would be rightly rid of tormenting fear, and have joy and peace in your souls, it must come in in this way of love, living much in the love of God, in Christ Jesus, will perfect your love to him, and to his holy ones for his sake; which will prove so high an evidence to your souls, of the truth of Grace, that it will cast out all fears, and establish your hearts in believing your interest in, and relation to the Lord Jesus: so Faith working by love, will be to you sound and solid peace: no wonder, that persons that have but little love, have so little peace in their souls; without it you can have no true fellowship with God, nor one with another.

7. The present time, and state of the Church, and dispensations of Gods, calls for

6. Your own souls call for it.

7. The present time and state calls for it.

for it; for it is a time and state of division and breaches among the people of God in general, one bends one way, and another bends another way, casting contempt and reproach upon each other, as if they were enemies; by reason of which, the way of truth is evil spoken of, and poor sinners are hardened, and God and Christ is dishonoured, and many gracious souls grieved, and discouraged. O that all who have any bowels of love in them at all, would lay these things to heart, and learn to love more, then they would bear with, and forbear each other in love; then they would be content to let each other walk according to what they have received, and not be offended at their diligent and humble enquiring after further light, without bitterness, and wrath, and evil speakings.

O the general coldness, and luke-warmness that hath befallen the Church at this day, and all for want of love; the earthly, worldly mindedness, and covetousness, the straight-heartedness, and straight-handedness, the love of back and belly in pride and voluptuousness, and other abominations, that do more than manifestly declare the great coming short in love, truth of love would cure all; and the present dispensations of God, his frowns and corrections by his rod, and the things he seems to be calling his people to bear and suffer for his name and sake; which can never be
rightly

rightly born and suffered, but in the spirit and power of Evangelical love; all which calls aloud to all gracious souls, to learn to love more.

8. Consider the sweetness and loveliness of the life of Love, 1. To God; if you live up much with God in truth of love, it will not only sweeten your souls to God, and he will delight in you, but your thoughts will be precious of him, and his service will be sweet and precious to you; *His yoke will be easie, and his burden will be light.*

8. It's a sweet and lovely life.

Otherwise his service will be burdensome, and his work tiresome to the soul: but truth of love to God, sets the heart at liberty, and carrieth the soul through the most difficult services with delight: and this is the soul that God will meet with in the way, and manifest himself unto, *John 14. 21.*

And, 2. This is the true, sweet, and lovely life of Christians one with another; *Pf. 133. 1, 2. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for Brethren to dwell together in Unity;* it is next to the Divine anointings of our Lord Jesus, and indeed an effect thereof; *It's like the precious ointment upon the head, that run down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard, that went down to the skirts of his garments.* Aaron was a type of Christ, his anointings of Christ, the running down of the ointment upon his beard, and the skirts of his garment; the coming down of the spirit

of Christ upon his members, which unites them to him in the same spirit and love, and one to another by the same spirit; so that the unity of Saints is next to our unity with Christ, *John 14. 20. and 17. 23.*

9. It makes us most like God.

9. It's that Virtue which makes us most like God and Christ, it is the most God-like and Christ-like Virtue: would you be more like your Father, and more like your Head and Lord? O then grow more in this Grace, love God and Christ more, love one another more, and love all men more; when our Lord Christ sets his Disciples in the high-way of being like their Father, it is in this of love; *Mat. 5. 44. and 1 Joh. 4. 7. Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and every one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God; ver. 8. For he that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love.* Love is an heavenly and God-like Virtue; and the more you live in it, the more are you like God; and the more persons live without love, the more do they live without God; and look how much they live in malice and enmity, so much are they like the Devil.

10. And finally, live much in the love of Christ.

10. And finally, that your souls may grow in this Grace, (which will prove to be the growth in all Grace, and of every Virtue) live much in the meditation of the preciousness of Jesus Christ, of his Person, of his Virtues, of his Love, and the design of good to your souls in all that he hath done

done and suffered for you; 1 Pet. 2.7. *Unto you therefore which believe, he is precious, his Person, his Blood, his Virtues, his Love is precious; He is altogether lovely; 1 Job. 4. 19. We love him, because he first loved us.* The thoughts of this first and free love, this great and marvellous love is precious: 1 Job. 3. 1. *Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.* I say, if souls did live more in the consideration of this marvellous love, how would it transform them into the likeness of Christ; 2 Cor. 3. 18. *O therefore, if you would grow in this Grace, dwell deep here, live much in the meditation of the mystery of the love of Christ to your souls in the new Covenant; Eph. 3. 17, 18, 19. You must be rooted and grounded in the love of Christ, and endeavor to comprehend more of this unsearchable mystery; and this is the way to be filled with all the fulness of God, the fulness of understanding and knowledge, Col. 2. 2. The fulness of conformity to him in Love, and in every Divine Virtue.*

The fulness of the new Covenant
 and necessary to be written in
 hearts of all true Believers. And this will
 be the way to the new Cover
 CHAP.
 and I will give them the
 Spirit

C H A P. XX.

Of the Gospel-fear of God.

THE fear of God is one (and not the least) of the Divine and saving Virtues of the new Covenant, and planted in every gracious heart; it is a part of the new Covenant Law written in the heart, absolutely necessary to Salvation, as other new Covenant Virtues are, and is included in that Faith to which the promise is made.

The fear of God is of that worth and weight, that it is impossible for a truly gracious soul to be without it; it is a special character of a graceless person that is without it; *Rom. 3. 18. There is no fear of God before their eyes.* In speaking to this, I shall mind three things; 1. That it is a Virtue of the new Covenant, and necessary to be in the hearts of all Believers. 2. What it is. 3. The usefulness and profitableness thereof.

1. It is a
Virtue of
the new
Covenant.

1. That it is a Virtue of the new Covenant, and necessary to be written in the hearts of all true Believers. And this will appear, if we consider,

1. That it is a promise of the new Covenant; *Jer. 32. 39. And I will give them one heart,*

heart, and one way, that they may fear me; ver. 40. I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Which is a promise of the new and everlasting Covenant, the same as is express, Chap. 31. 31, to 34, And is applied to the Gospel by the Apostle, Heb. 8. 8. Where God promiseth to write his Law in the heart, that is, to season the heart with a disposition to believe, love, fear, and obey the Lord.

2. It is that Virtue with which Christ our Lord was eminently filled, and therefore certainly it is necessary for his members to be seasoned therewith: *Isa. II. 2. And the Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the Spirit of Wisdom and Understanding, the Spirit of Counsel and Might, the Spirit of Knowledge, and the fear of the Lord*; which was exceeding proper to the holy Son of God: and if Christ the Lord must have this spirit of the fear of God, then surely it must needs be necessary for all his to be partakers of the same Spirit and Virtue; for *from his fulness we all receive.*

3. It is the praise-worthy Virtue of the Saints, commended throughout all Generations: *1 Kings 18. 3* It's said, that *Obadiah feared the Lord greatly*: the effects thereof follows, *ver. 4. Neb. 7. 2.* It's said, that *Hanani feared God above many*; for which *Nehemiah gave him the charge over Jerusalem.* *Job* is described to have this Virtue, *Job. 1. 8. To be an upright man, and one that feared*

God; and ver. 1. *One that feared God, and eschewed evil.* Mal. 2. 4, 5. *God made his Covenant with Levy, of Life and Peace; for the fear wherewith he feared me, and he was afraid before my Name.* It is the commendation of the Churches, in a time of liberty, that they walked in the fear of the Lord; Acts 9. 31.

4. This is that the Lords people are frequently exhorted to, both in the old and new Testament; by which it appears, that it is a duty as well as a Virtue; Lev. 19. 14. *But shalt fear thy God, I am the Lrd;* and 25. 17. *But thou shalt fear thy God, for I am the Lord thy God.* Deut. 13. 4. *Ye shall walk after the Lord your God, and fear him.* Eccl. 12. 13. *Fear God, and keep his Commandments; for this is the whole duty of man.* Deut. 6. 13. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and serve him, and swear by his Name.* Luke 12. 4, 5. *And I say unto you, my friend, be not afraid of them that kill the body, &c. For I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him, that after he hath killed, hath power to cast into Hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him,* 2 Cor. 7. 1. The Apostle exhorteth the Saints to be perfecting holiness in the fear of God. By all which it abundantly appears, that to fear God is the special duty of every true Christian; 1 Pet. 2. 17. Rev. 14. 7. Heb. 12. 28. *Let us have Grace, that we may serve God with Reverence and Godly fear.*

5. It's that Virtue which includes part, yea, a great part of the Gospel; because where the fear of the Lord is, there is Faith, Love, Humility, and Obedience; even the whole terms of Gospel-interest; *Rev. 14. 6. 7.* When the Angel preached the everlasting Gospel to them that dwell on earth; the substance or great part thereof was, *Fear God, and give Glory to him, &c.* and *Chap. 15. 3, 4.* This shall be the song of Saints, *Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy Name, for thou only art holy.*

6. It's that Virtue unto which happiness and blessedness is promised, and that must needs be a Virtue absolutely necessary to Salvation, and is included in true Faith; *Prov. 28. 14.* *Happy is the man that feareth alwaies.* This happy fear must be alwaies, never off the heart; *Chap. 23. 17.* *Be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day,* that is, alwaies, every day; let not the fear of God be out of thine heart at any time; *Pf. 112. 1.* *Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord, &c.* and *128. 1, 4.* By all which it appears, that persons who fear God in truth, are under the promises of Blessedness; and therefore it is a choice Virtue.

2. I shall endeavour to shew what the fear of the Lord is, or what it is to fear God: It is to have an holy, honourable, and reverend esteem of God, to have the awe and dread of God upon our hearts, because *Holy and Reverend is his Name; Ps. 33. 8.*

2. What it is to fear God.

Let all the Earth fear the Lord, let all the Inhabitants of the World stand in awe of him: Isa. 8. 13. Sanctifie the Lord of Hosts Himself, and let Him be your fear, and let him be your dread. It becometh the people of the Lord of Hosts to have humble, holy, reverend, and trembling thoughts of God alwaies; Ps. 2. 11. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoyce with trembling: serve him with reverence and godly fear. It is to be feared that Christians have too low and common thoughts of God, which exceedingly unbecometh them, and is a great disadvantage on the spiritual account, as well as dishonourable unto God. This holy, reverend fear, is a love-like fear, not a slavish fear; a spouse-like fear, flowing from, or mixed with love: Let the Wife see that she reverence her Husband, (or fear her Husband:) The Wives reverence of, or fear toward her Husband, is not, or should not be slavish, but in love, and conscience of God's Ordinance: so it behoves every true Christian to reverence, honour, and fear the Lord; and that with this filial spouse-like fear, to love God, and fear before him.

Meditations to help us to fear God.

1. His Greatness.

To help on this work in the heart, I shall propound some serious meditations of God, that may tend to beget and increase this holy, reverend awe, and fear of God in the heart.

I. Live much in the meditation of his Greatness. *O, God is a great God, and a great King*

King above all Gods, and above all men. *Psal.* 89. 6, 7. *For who in the Heavens can be compared to the Lord? Who among the sons of the Mighty can be likened unto the Lord? God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the Saints, and to be had in reverence of all that are round about him.* Note, that this great fear of God in the Saints, does arise from the consideration of the Greatness of God; *Who can be compared to the Lord, who may be likened to our God, in Heaven or Earth? Therefore is he greatly to be feared in the assembly of the Saints, &c.* *Pf.* 147. 5. *Great is our Lord, and of great Power, his understanding is infinite;* and 95. 3. *For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods.* And, as an effect of this, or a resultancy drawn from this meditation of his Greatness, above all, *ver.* 6. *O come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker: that is, seeing he is such a great one above all, even our Maker; let us worship and bow down, and kneel before him, i. e. Let us worship him in all humility, and holy reverence; Let us have Grace to serve our God with reverence and godly fear.* *Exod.* 15. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the Gods? who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.* And this result the Prophet draws from this meditation; *Jer.* 10. 6, 7. *Forasmuch as there is none like unto thee, O Lord, and thy Name is great in might, who would not fear thee, O King of Nations; for to thee doth it appertain.*

pertain. That is, to be great above all, and to be feared above all: this is the first consideration that will tend to season our souls with this blessed Virtue, the greatness, the gloriousness of God to live upon our hearts.

2. His Holiness and Purity.

2. The holiness and purity of God; *He is Glorious in Holiness, Holy and Reverend is his Name.* Serious thoughts of Gods Holiness will beget and increase in us this holy, reverend fear; *Psal. 99. 9. Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at his foot-stool, for the Lord our God is holy.* The sight and apprehension of the Holiness of God will help us to worship him reverently, and awfully. This was it made *Isaiab, Chap. 6. 3. 5.* (When the Seraphims cried out, as overcome with the holiness of God, *Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts;*) to cry, *Who is me, I am undone, I am a man of polluted lips, &c.* Thus you see, (and I hope all true Christians can experience) that serious thoughts of the Holiness of God will fill them with humble, honourable, and awful thoughts of him.

3. His Goodness.

3. The great Goodness and Mercy of God, especially on the new Covenant account, will tend wonderfully to season the soul with this Virtue; and this mixed with the rest, makes it to be Evangelical fear; that son-like, spouse-like fear, that so much concerneth, and becometh the Saints: this is the promise of the Lord to his people, *Hos. 3. 5. Afterwards shall the children of Israel*

return

return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their King, (that is Christ Jesus) and shall fear the Lord and his Goodness in the latter daies. It's the latter day work (especially under the Gospel) for Saints to fear the Lord and his Goodness: Ps. 130. 4. *With thee is forgiveness, that thou maist be feared: the Goodness, Forgiveness and Mercy that is with God, will make his people to fear him, and fear to sin against him, fear to displease him: he that will sin without fear, because God is good and gracious, may justly fear that he is without all Grace: gracious souls fear to sin against so good and gracious a God. Shall all the Nations fear and tremble at all the great goodness that God will do for (and shew unto) his people, Jer, 33. 9. And shall not the great goodness of God cause the hearts of those interested in it, to fear and tremble before him. Surely it's impossible for a gracious soul to take a view of the Greatness, the Glory, the Purity, and the goodness and Mercy of God, and of his own badness, but with astonishment, holy reverence and fear: and thus they shall fear the Lord and his Goodness, (the Lord for his Goodness) in the latter daies.*

4. Meditation on the Justice and Judgment of God against sin and sinners, will tend to beget, maintain, and increase this holy fear of God, and fear to sin against him: Psal. 119. 120. *My flesh trembleth because of thee, and I am afraid of thy Judgments.* 4. His Justice against sin and sinners.
Matt.

Matt. 10. 28. Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him that is able to destroy both body and soul in Hell.

Objection. *Obj.* This is a slavish fear, and not the soul-like fear of the Gospel.

Answer. 1. It is that which becometh, and concerneth gracious souls, to fear God in all his Names, his Justice as well as his Mercy; and it is a token of a graceless heart, that hath not the awe of God in his Justice, that being one great part of his Name, of his Glory, wherein he hath, and will make himself famous. God to illustrate this part of his Name and Glory, unites Justice and Mercy in the proclaiming of his Name, to the end that his people may love him, and fear before him, *Exod. 34. 5, 6, 7* There you have the name of the Lord proclaimed in these two Attributes, of Mercy and Justice: And who-so thinks this wonderful, gracious, and terrible Name of the Lord (to fear and tremble at his Goodness, and his Justice, his Righteous and Terrible Name) to be beneath his new Covenant calling, lives greatly below the calling of a Christian.

2. Christians are flesh as well as spirit, and liable to temptation and miscarriage, woful experience teacheth us this; and God, as a Father, does not only keep his children in awe with the knowledg of their relation, that so love may prevail; but like-

wife

with the rod, and threats, and danger too, of dispossessing of the inheritance and provision on that account; and counts it well, if all tend to effect the work: thus dealeth the Lord with his people, else what meaneth those various sayings in his Word? Ps. 89. 30, 31, 32. *If his children forsake my Law, and walk not in my Judgments; if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes, &c.* See Heb. 12. 7, to 11. And those Judgments executed formerly on the people of God for sin, left on Record for our learning, to the end we might fear to sin against him, lest we meet with like Judgments: 1 Cor. 10. 1. to 11. and Chap. 11. 30. *For this cause many are weak and sick among you, and many sleep, &c.* All which clearly proveth that God doth afflict his people for sin; and he hath recorded it, that his people might fear to sin against him. Yea, and further, he keeps his children in awe with threats of dispossessing them of the inheritance, Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. and 4. 1. 11. and 3. 12. 14. 2 Tit. 2. 12, 13, 14. Rev. 2 and 3 Chapters; all which confirms this truth, that God threatens for sin, and executes for sin; and warns to watchfulness, that the Crown be not lost, Rev. 3. 11. Though it's true, that fear flowing from love, is the most Evangelical and son-like fear: yet a mixture, a fear of God in his whole Name, his Greatness, Holiness, Goodness,

ness, Justice, Righteousness, &c. is the most solid, safe, preserving fear; the soul being ballanced with all the means and meditations of God prescribed to carry on this blessed Divine Virtue, is suitable and useful for the accomplishment thereof. Do not Parents account it well, if all lawful means effect the end; that is, to keep their children in awe and subjection; threats and stripes as well as love? And doth not God deal with his children accordingly? And doth not Christians that will not stand in awe of his Judgments, wonderfully dishonour him, that will fear him but in one part of his Name? A dangerous temptation, to be shamed, and avoided of all who desire to fear God, *Mal. 2. 5. and 4. 2.*

3. The Word
of God.

5. Meditation on the Word of God will tend to season souls with this holy fear, for that will help us in the four former particulars. The truth of God in all his Names, and faithfulness in all his Word, in his Precepts and Promises, and threats against sinners, will tend to work and increase this Grace; *Isa. 66. 2. But to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word.* In the Word of God, is declared the whole trembling Name of God in all the parts thereof; and the meditation thereon will cause gracious souls to fear before him. *Psal. 119. 161. My heart standeth in awe of thy Word.* The thoughts of the Authority, Purity, Divinity,

nity, and truth of the Word, will beget and increase awful and reverend thoughts of God.

3. Of the usefulness and profitableness of this Virtue: We may say of this Virtue ^{Its Usefulness.} as the Apostle speaking of Godliness, that *it's profitable to all things*: it's the summ of Godliness, and is useful to ballance the soul at all times, and in all places and companies; and to have its exercise and use in all Virtues: it's the soul-seasoning, and soul-ballancing Grace; it's the beginning, middle, and end of Wisdom. But to speak more particularly and distinctly of this Divine Virtue, in the use thereof;

1. It's a sin-destroying Virtue; where the fear of God is, there sin must out: it is impossible for the fear of God, and the love of sin, to dwell together in the soul: *Psal. 4. 4. Stand in awe, and sin not*; where the awe of God is, there will be a fear to sin against him: *Gen. 39. 9. Joseph said, How then shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God.* Fear of God occasions fear of sinning against him; this was it kept *Nehemiah* from oppressing the people like the former Governors, *Neh. 5. 15. But so did not I, because of the fear of God, Ps. 19. 9.* The fear of the Lord is clear, &c. it's a purging, cleansing Virtue; it cleanseth the soul from the love, power, and practise of sin; *Prov. 16. 6. By the fear of the Lord men depart from evil*; and *8. 13. The fear of the Lord*

Lord is to hate evil, pride and arrogancy, and the evil way, &c. Ps. 34. 11, 12, 13. Where the love and fear of God is, there the love of sin can have no place; and the true cause of reigning abominations in any is, because the fear of God is wanting there: Ps. 36. 1. *The transgression of the wicked saith within my heart, that there is no fear of God before his eyes.* O therefore consider this, you that can sin without fear; it argues you to be without the fear of God, and to be graceless persons; Rom. 3. 18. *There is no fear of God before their eyes.* And this I fear to be the case of many, not only of the World, but of those who pretend and profess to be called out of the World: *Job feared God, and eschewed evil,* Chap. 1. 1. Fear God and sin if you dare.

2. The fear of God, as it is a sin-destroying Virtue, so it is a God-obeying Virtue: where the fear of God is in truth, there is conscience and care to obey the Lord, to keep his Commandments: Eccl. 12, 13. *Fear God, and keep his Commandments;* that is, keep his Commandments as your duty: and where this fear of God is, you will keep his Commandments as your disposition, the fear of God, and obedience to him, alwaies dwells together: Ps. 5. 7. *As for me, I will come into thine house in the multitude of thy Mercies, and in thy fear will I worship toward thine Holy Temple.* Where sense of Mercy, and power of Love, and the fear

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of God meet together in one soul, there will be sincere obedience, and worshipping of God; there will be *erving God with reverence, and godly fear*: Ps. 2. 11. *Serve the Lord with fear, rejoyce with trembling.* You that have no care nor conscience of obeying the Lord, of serving and worshipping the Lord according to his appointments, and living to him according to his will, have just grounds to suspect that you are without the love and fear of God.

3. The fear of God is a soul-sanctifying Virtue; where the love and fear of God is, the desire of that soul is to be more like God, and like Christ; it doth not only out with sin, but it increaseth Virtue: it is as truly desirous of increase in Virtue, of conformity to Christ, as it is to be rid of sin: outting of sin is one part of Holiness, and inning of Virtue is the other; and it's accomplished by the fear of God: Ps. 34. 11, 12, 13. *Come ye children, hearken to me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord*; and concludes all in this, *Depart from evil, and do good, seek peace, and pursue it.* This is the way to perfect Holiness, 2 Cor. 7. 1. *Let us cleanse our selves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting Holiness in the fear of God.* The fear of God is a soul-sanctifying Virtue: would you grow in Holiness and conformity to Jesus Christ (which I dare say is the desire of all gracious souls) both in the inward and outward man, then see that you grow in this Virtue. Z 4. The

4. The fear of God is a soul-consolating Virtue; it affords very much ground of consolation to the soul where it is; for where this is in truth, there are all the Divine Virtues of the Gospel to which the promises are made, as Faith, Love, Humility, Meekness, Patience, Self-denial, &c. The Divine saving Virtues of the new Covenant goes not alone, they are much besides the truth of the Gospel, that tell souls, that one Grace or Virtue of Christ in them, is enough to demonstrate them to be in a saved condition; whereas the Gospel-saving Graces or Virtues to which Salvation is promised, goes not alone: he that supposeth he hath one alone, must suppose impossibilities; either he hath more, or none at all; *For from his fulness we all receive, and Grace for Grace*; that is, of every Divine Virtue of Christ, the Believer hath something thereof within him; and where the fear of the Lord is, there is the truth of all Divine Grace; it's laid at bottom of all, as that from whence it flows: *Acts 10. 34, 35. In every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteousness, shall be accepted.* Fear God, and the work will be done, matter of comfort to souls possessed with this Virtue: *Prov. 14. 26, 27. The fear of the Lord is strong confidence, &c.* That is, it is a ground of confidence, of interest in God, which affords strong consolation; *Prov. 19. 23. The fear of the Lord tendeth to life, and he*

that

that hath it, shall abide satisfied, he shall not be visited with evil. It's such a Virtue, so much tending to life, that affords satisfaction to the soul that hath it, that he is in the way of life. Hence the Lord saith, (speaking of such a person,) *Isa. 33. 6. The fear of the Lord is his treasure*; a treasure of Grace is in it here, and a treasure of Glory shall attend it hereafter; thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the Lord.

5. The fear of God is a soul-preserving Grace, a soul-seasoning and preserving Virtue; it tends to preserve those in whom it is, to the Kingdom of Glory promised: it not only preserves and keeps the soul from sin, and keeps it close to duty; but it preserves the soul from defilements in evil times, and daies of temptation: *Mal. 3. 15, 16. When they called the proud, happy; and they that tempted God were delivered; and they that wrought wickedness were set up: then they that feared God, spake often one to another, and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, &c.* That is, he approved it, and owned them, and remembered them in mercy in the day of need. The fear of the Lord will preserve souls pure to God in profane and sinning times, and in persecuting times, and in times of temptation: in a word, it will preserve those in whom it is, through all difficulties and temptations; it will preserve from the sinful fear of man: *Prov. 29. 25. The fear of man bringeth a snare*; *Isa. 51. 7, 12,*

7, 12, 13. But the fear of God delivereth from this snare, it keepeth from a wicked departing from God; Jer. 32. 40. I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. O therefore all ye that fear God, seek, that ye may increase therein more and more; it will tend to the increase of every Virtue, and decrease of sin; and preserving you in Faith, Love and Holiness unto the day of Redemption. I conclude this with, Psal. 34, 9. O fear the Lord ye his Saints, for there is no want to them that fear him.

CHAP.