

us." This was the grand object of all the sacrifices and sacrificial rites under the law ; and he only used them aright, and according to their intention, who looked through them to the day of Christ and was glad. That they could not make the comers thereunto perfect as pertaining to the conscience, was shown by their continual repetition, and by the impossibility that "the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin." This could only be done by that better sacrifice that was to come—even by Him who presented himself to the Father to be sent into the world, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God !" And that this was now done, was incontrovertibly proved by the efficacy which it was admitted the sacrifices and rites of the first covenant possessed. Though these sacrifices and rites could not perfect as pertaining to the conscience ; though to sanctify morally, could never be their effect, as it was never the intention ; yet they had an efficacy. Applied to their person, they could remove ceremonial pollution and so sanctify to the outward service of God. The ashes of a "red heifer without spot, upon which was no blemish, and upon which had never come yoke," mixed with water, and sprinkled upon those who were unclean through the touch of a dead body, could produce a typical external sanctity by which they could be again admitted into the congregation of the Lord. But if this were so—if these sacrifices and rites which in themselves were so powerless and so mean, and which, instead of putting away sin, only reminded the worshippers of it, were yet by the appointment of God, efficacious to remove from them ceremonial pollution, and to give them access to the prescribed exercises of divine worship under the first tabernacle, surely far more efficacious to remove away from us the guilt and pollution of sin and to give us access with boldness and delight to serve the living God, must be that sacrifice which Christ offered when, having assumed our nature and taken our place, he presented his blood pure to God on our behalf. As we look to the comparative value of the types and the antitypes, and to their comparative fitness to answer their end, and learn that the types did avail to redeem from temporal death, and to give free approach to the worldly sanctuary, can we hesitate as to whether the antitype has obtained for us eternal redemption—has secured our admission into the Holiest. "For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, to serve the living

God? "Looking for the teaching of that Spirit of truth whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them unto us, let us here contemplate these three things ; first, the defilement of conscience which, till removed, shuts us out from from approaching the living God to serve him ; secondly, what Christ did to purge our conscience from this defilement ; and lastly, how what he did does purge our conscience from this defilement to serve the living God.

1. Let us contemplate, first, the defilement of conscience which, till removed, shuts us out from approaching the living God.

This defilement is here called "dead works." By this expression we are to understand sins. This we learn on referring to strictly parallel passages in this Epistle where we are told that Christ "by himself purged our sins," "that he put away sin by the sacrifice of himself," and that persons "once purged" from an evil conscience, "would have no more conscience of sins." Sins may well be called "dead works," or as some render the expression, "deadly works ;" since bring death upon the sinner, expose him to the sentence of death, and bring him into a state of spiritual death or alienation from the life of God. There seems to be in this phrase, however, an allusion to those uncleannesses which an Israelite might contract from the touch of dead bodies and other sources, that disqualified him from all access to the ordinances of divine worship, and without being cleansed from which, according to the appointed rites of purification, he was liable, if he presumed to approach God in the services of the tabernacle, to be cut off from among his people—to die the death as a profane and presumptuous offender. Even thus are we defiled by our sins. Through them we are altogether as an unclean thing, offensive in the sight of a holy God, shut out from all approach to him, seeing that no evil can dwell with him, nor sinners stand in his sight, but that he is a consuming fire to all the workers of iniquity. This we at once learn on turning to the word of God. There we behold "the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men." There we find indelibly inscribed the dread sentence, "Cursed is every one, that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."—There we hear the unalterable judgment, "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished." And when the conscience which is just the guilty heart disturbed in its slumbers by the Spirit of God, rises up in its might, it confirms all these disclosures of the word of revelation ; it passes sen-