

SERMON I.

Hebrews 9. v. 13:14. 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: 14. 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?

It is the great business of Christians to walk so, as they may be in good terms with their Conscience, that from no untenderness in their way, there may be any just ground of challenge, at least none such as may wound the Conscience, and break or marr the peacePage 322and tranquility of it, before God, or disturb, or interupt that sweet serenity, and distinct calmness of a spiritual frame of soul, that he allowes on believers in him, who are exercising themselves to have alwayes a good Conscience: But alace! its not all professors of Religion; Its not all gracious Christians that win at this; who (I mean serious Christians) partly throw the unmortified remnder of corruption still dwelling in them, and partly through their own unwatchfulness, fall often into such sins as defile the Conscience, and obstruct the clear light, and serene tranquility thereof, when in any measure attained: and therefore it is no less necessary to know how a defiled Conscience may be purged, and how we may recover losed calmness and peace, then it is to know how a good Conscience may be win at; for indeed if all our peace, and tranquility of Conscience depended on

our own holy walk only; it would be but a heartless and comfortless work to speak of a good and calm Conscience on that ground; but this is the great, the very great advantage that we have by the Gospel of Grace; which, as it shows the way how to prevent a quarrel from? and so a wound unto the Conscience; so it shows the way how a quarrel and controversie drawn on, may be removed; and this is the thing that now we would speak a little to, from these words; wherein the apostles scope is, to hold out to the Iewes the weakness of their ceremonial worship, sacrifices and washings; and the sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice to do their business; and to bring them from resting on that ceremonial worship, to rest upon Jesus Christ alone; and one of the arguments that he makes use of for this end is, That no legal or ceremonial worship, or service, could make him that did the service perfyt, as pertaining to the conscience, as he says, v. 9. None of these things could give a man peace before God, and his own Conscience; but that on the contrary the blood of Jesus Christ, is able to purge the conscience from dead works; And to bring a man that is in a state of peace and freindship with God, after hePage 323hath sinned, and thereby defiled and wounded his Conscience, back to that same peace and calmness that he had before he sinned, and make him in some respect as quiet and calm, as i he had not sinned: And therefore the blood of Christ must be infily preferable to all these ceremonial sacrifices, pugings, and washings; which probably they inclined to join with him.

In the words read, the apostle illustrates, and confirms the efficacy of Christ's blood, by comparing it with the ceremonies of the Law, obviating an Objection, which is this; The ceremonies of the Law had a good use, and why then will ye cry them down? He Answers, they had an use as they respected Christ's Sacrifice, that was in due time to be actually offered, and as they ed it; and also as to a ceremonial cleansing, or holiness; but they could not, as pertaining to the Conscience make a man perfy; And (sayeth he) if these ceremonies had an efficacy, as to the outward man, and making ceremonially and externally clean or holy; how much more shall the blood of Christ be efficacious to the cleansing of the Soul, and inner man? If the ceremonies of the Law had an efficacy toward the admitting of a man to external ordinances; how much more shall the blood of Christ have an efficacy to purge the Conscience from dead works, and to take away the sting and guilt, and the defilement also of sin, and to make it quiet, and so to capacitat the man to be adtted to real fellowship with him in his ordinances? That the comparison may be the more clear, he uses ere a threefold distinction 1. of a twofold uncleanness? one of the flesh? or outward man; another of a man's Sate, and Conscience before God; The firstrelated to the man's practice, and made him that was ceremonially unclean, to be thurst without the camp, and to continue so, until he was legally cleaned; The second marred the man's peace before God. The 2d. distinction is? of a twofold Court? wherein this uncleanness is charged upon the man, The one is a Court wherein the

man's flesh i (as it were) judged,Page 324and that is by men, according to his external prosession; the other is a Court wherein his spiritual ??? is judged, and that is his Conscience: In the first Court, if the moral Law charged him not with guilt, it was not asked, whether his Conscience was guilty or not, but he was on his outward cleansing, admitted to Church privileges; but the second Court, which is called the Court of conscience; looks not a things as they appear before men, but as they are before God; and therefore will challenge when men do not challenge. The 3d. distinction is, of a twofold Sanctification, The first is, that of the flesh, spoken of v. 13. And that is, when a man is made externally clean, or holy, whereby he is admitted to the congregagation; The other is that which is inward, which admits not only to external Church-fellowship, but to real internal-fellowship with God, and to peace and calmness of Conscience: Now for quieting the Conscience, and for giving a man peace, he tells them, that though these external ceremonies admitted him to the congregation, yet they did not purify his Conscience; but that notwithstanding of all these, the quarrel was not taken away before God; and so they could not be the ground of inward peace, nor bring it in to the man's soul and Conscience; but that its the blood of Christ which only doth that; and therefore his sacrifice is more excellent then all these ceremonial Sacrifices, sprinklings and washings; for it admits a man to peace with God and gives him quietness in his own Conscience.

To leave the comparison then; We have, in the latter part of these words (which we intend to insist on) a notable effect, and the great efficacy of Christ's blood, in purging of the Conscience, holden forth in these particulars, 1. It is implied, That the state of a man's Conscience by nature is this, viz. It is polluted and defiled by dead works. 2. That the great mean whereby the Conscience is purged and made clean; is, the blood of Christ. 3ly. The end wherefore the Consciences of men are made clean, is, that they they may serve thePage 325living God. 4. The proof and demonstration of the efficacy of this blood (in these words of the former part of the verse, The blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God;) Is taken from the excellency of the sacrifice of the preist, and of the altar, whereby the sacrifice was sanctified. We shall in passing, Observe a few things that may make way or clearing of the words, and for that which we chiefly intend to speak to from them; And, 1. Observe, That the state of men's Consciences by nature is, That they are polluted by dead works, which are such works as are to be repented of, as the apostle says of them, Hebrews 6:1. Whereby he plainly insinuats, that sins are called dea works, for three reasons, 1. Because of a dead principle they proceed from, they flow from man that is dead by nature, as to any spiritual life, dead in sins and trespasses; and even the sins of Believers themselves are such, as proceeding from them, in so far as they are not quickened and renewed. 2ly. Because of their demerit, and that which they deserve, which is eternal death; final

continuance wherein, doth at last most certainly bring on eternal death. 3ly. Because, though a natural man's performances were never so specious and splendid, yet before God, they are but dead, like a carcase that wants life: So that though the greatest heap of prayers, and of other duties, should be found with a meerly natural man, they are but like to these Apples, which (as its storied) grow at, or about the lake of Sodom, Which appear beautiful to the eye, but so soon as they are touched with the hand, they presently fall into ashes; so the very best of natural men's works, how shineing soever, are but dead works before God; Therefore (by the way) ye would know, that there is a great difference betwixt dead works and living works; And that there are manythings that present fair and are pleasant to look upon, which yet defile the Conscience; ah! How many men and women are there, even living in the bosom of the visible Church, who are in as great danger from, and by that, whichPage 326seems at first blush to be somewhat, as by that which is rely and obviously nothing; all such works are but empty shows counterfis, and very cheats, they have no Soul ??? Lfe in them, being ??? destitute of any??? principle, or end however the world of pro of Reigion do to their own ruine, place all their Religion in them.

If we consider the influencing effect of these dead works on the Conscience, We find it here to be, that they pollute and defile it, as a clear Spring is mudded and defiled by the soul feet of Beasts going thorow it, even so is this Dvine thing, the Conscience defiled by sinful ??? in it, which make it to become as it were a cage forevery

unclean and haeful Bird, or rather as a hold of every oul Spirit; these Lusts as so many oul Spirits, swarming in it, pollute and defile it, whereby it becomes quite another thing: Whence we may draw these two Observations; The 1. Whereof is, That dead works, or sins continued in, do pollue and defile a man Conscience; They make (as I just now said) a clean and ??? Conscience to become polluted and filthy, so that ye ever saw a face more full of foul spots, more deformed by them, then the Conscience is polluted by these dead works, defiling sins; Therefore is this word to purge the Conscience, used there; which is rendred to cleans; Ephes. 5 26. That he might sanctifie and cleanse his Curch; and as simpollues the man in all his powers and fculties, so proportionably it polluts him in his Conscience; which is deeply polluted before it be purged, and cleansed by the blood of Christ: For clearing of it, Consider that there is a threefold pollution that follow??? in the Conscience; 1. In respect of a man's State ?????? before God; it maks him legally unclean; as we use to say of a Murderer, or a Thief, or any ??????, when found guilty by an Assize, that such a person is filed; so a man by committing of sin is ??? guilty obnoxious to punishment, Iyable to wrath, even the eternal Wrath of God, because of it;Page 327This is a legal Pollution or defilement. 2. In respect of a man's present peace and tranquility of Conscience; for though he be in a justified and clean state, and hath (it may be) win at clearness of his interest in God, and to peace and tranquility in his Conscience, so that his peace hath run as a clear, smooth and still River, or Stream; the letting

in of sin is like to the driving of a herd of Cattel thorow a clear running Stream, whereby it is mudded and troubled; so that in stead of Peace, there come in disquieting Challenges; and in stead of clearness, much confusion; as we may see in the sad instances of several of God's Saints, as particularly in David, after his fall; who therefore Psalm 51. prayes to be washen from this filthiness, both from the guilt and from the pollution of sin; and for peace, That God would restore to him the joy of his Salvation. 3. In respect of a sinful propension and inclination to more sin, which follows upon every sin; so that by frequent falling into sin, the very nature as it were of Conscience is altered, that of a loather of sin, it becomes a lover of it, and licks it up as a Dog doth his Vomit, and with the Sow that was washen, returns to wallowing in the mire, as the apostle speaks, 2 Pet. 2. ult. When a person is seemingly washen, and returns to the same sins that he was given to before, his Conscience becomes so filthy, that it can digest the filthiest, and most loathsom sins, it can swallow them down, and glut them over, (to speak so) and never challenge nor quarrel for them; In this sense the apostle says, Tit. 1:15. To the pure all things are pure, but to these that are defiled, and unbelieving, there is nothing pure, but even their mind and conscience is defied; The man that follows a course of sin, his Mind and Conscience is defiled, not only in respect of contracted guilt, and in respect of the want of peace and comfort; But also in respect of utter indisposition for duty, and of a sinful inclination to more sin; so that it becomes hardned and cauterizd: There is

such a contagion in sin, that it defiles and pollutes the Conscience all these wayes, that whereas it wasPage 328before pure, It becomes now like a person that hath the Botch, and many Boils and putrifying Sores running in him: Only we would distinguish here betwixt this pollution of Conscience, as it is total in an unrenewed man, and as it is partial in a Believer, a Believer may be defiled in Conscience, when he is offended and stumbled, so as to be tempted by the example of others to do some thing, wherein he is not clear, as some were, 1 Corinthians 8.verse 7, and 10. His Conscience is thereby mudded, jumbled and troubled, and his peace marred, yet he hath not a total and universal defilement of Conscience; And therefore the effects of that uncleanness, pollution and defilement follow not totally and universally oh him.

I shall only say for Use of this: 1. O! that ye knew what an abominable thing sin is, and how dreadfully dangerous it is, thereby to defile and pollute the Conscience, which is the most noble thing in you; sin would sure be more abhorred and fled from: Its really a wonder that men should love dead Works so well, when there is no Botch nor Plague so infectious and contagious, so hurtful and destructive to the Bodies, as it is to the Souls of men. 2 This we may also see, that its no marvel that men who are given to sin, be hard to be wakned and reclaimed; for continuance in sin makes the Conscience full of holes as it were, that all slips and falls thorow it; or (as the apostle speaks) it makes the Conscience to become cauterized, fenseless, and

feelingless? as the flesh is, that a Chirurgion designs to consume away; so I say, continuance in sin, deadens and eats out the very life and feeling of the Conscience; though it will be found to be a Conscience still, and a Conscience that will speak, and speak aloud one day, albeit in God's righteous Judgment, it be silent now. 3. We may also see here the reason why many persons are so very filthy, that sin becomes a delight to them, so that the sin that others could not sleep with, they cannot sleep until they get it committed; because thorow a custom of, and continuancePage 329in sinning, their mind and Conscience is defiled?

2ly. Observe. That a man before he be purged by Christ's Blood, hath his Conscience wholly defiled; Not only in part (as we said of the Believer) but wholly; before he be in Christ, and be purged by his Blood, he is like that wretched Infant described, Ezekiel 16:5. which description sets forth to the life, what these people were before God entered in Covenant with them, cast out in the open field, to the loathing of their persons, unsalted, and unswadled, with their navils uncut, wallowing in their own blood, and having no eye to pity them; And thus are all men and women, without exception? before they be in Covenant with God; they are wholly in a state of irreconciliation and enmity with God; whose Law does not only condemn this and that work, or deed of theirs, but all of them as but dead works; Their very state and person is condemned; their peace, if they have any, is no solid peace, none of God's peace, for there is no peace, nor ground of peace to the wicked, says my God,

Isai. 57. Their inclination is wholly depraved and corrupted; all their Thoughts and Imaginations are evil, only evil, and continually evil, as it is Genesis 6:5. and as that often cited emphatick word is, Tit. 1? 15. To him that is defiled and unbelieving there is nothing pure: Every practice of his, and the use of every thing is to him impure, and his very mind and conscience is totally defiled. And this will be yet more clear, if we consider; 1. The case that the man is in, who is not in Christ; he is without God, without hope, under his curse, and the condemnatory sentence of his Law; and can a man possibly have a clear Conscience that is under God's curse, and hath the Sentence of his Law, standing over his head unrepealed? Therefore he is said Iohn 3. to be condemned already, and to have the wrath of God abiding on him. 2. If we consider that a man in this condition is under the dominion of sin, he is a captive of it, and of the Devil at his will, as it is 2 Tim? 2:26, So that there is scarce any motion, or temptation to sin, but he hearkens to it, and complys with it; hisPage 330heart is open to swarms of lusts, and as a Cage to unclean and foul Spirits, Legions of Devils in a manner haunt him: Now if such a man can have a clear Conscience, ye may easily judge; and yet such is the state and condition of every man by nature; and therefore when Christ speaks of the Renovation of a man, he sometimes calls it the casting out of the Devil, importing thereby, that every man in nature is a common receptacle as it were to Devils.

The 1. Use of this serves to teach us, how we ought on the one hand to loath the state of Nature, and how on the other hand we ought to love and long after a state of faith in Christ Jesus, by whom only our natural state can be changed: Is it not a wonder, that so many rational men and women can live and ly still in their Natural state without minding or looking after a change? Considering that this stands recorded of, and against them, That their very mind and conscience is defiled, and that with dead works; and that all who are not in Christ are so defiled, vile and abominable, that the most stinking dunghill is not so loathsom, as the Consciences of such persons are; O! What heaps and dunghils of Lusts, what pudles and myres, what kennels and sinks of pollution, and noisome, and poisonable filthiness are there? What noisom and poisonable sins are drunk down with pleasure as so much sweet Wine? all which are kept in retentis by the Conscience, never one of them is forgotten, though for the time, the Conscience by its silence, is supposed to have forgotten them; yet it will set them all in order, marshal them all (as it were) in rank and file against the persons who shall be found out of Christ, in a most formidable manner; it will not suffer one sin, nor so much as one aggravating circumstance of any sin to be forgot. It will bring forth all, and charge them home furiously and irresistably; This in God's holy Justice will be the use of Conscience to all such persons; Its not like a Conduit or Pipe, that takes in at the one end, and lets out at the other, but like a standing sink, thatPage 331still retains all that comes into it; O! then what a foul and

filthy bag (to speak o) is the Conscience of many a man and woman? So that no Botch. Bowl, or Impostume, hath such vile? filthy and abominable matter in it, as it hath? O! what a noisom and viely stinking smell will that putrid matter send forth, when God pricks it? This should make you all to loath living in your natural state, and to long without linging to be out of it: Its like that many take it ill o have such things said or thought of them, but I assure you all that are out of Christ, whether ye have a more full or empty purse about you, you have this filthy bag full of sin within you; and while ye securely heap sins upon sins, ye are treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath, and of the righteous judgement of God.

The 2 Use serves to let us see, what a poor and sory ground the most part have for their peace of Conscience; we may in truth wonder how it comes to pass, that many of you can have any peace, having such a puddle of filthiness within you; If it be true that your mind and Conscience is defiled (which are the best things ye have); and one day will clearly and convincingly make discovery of the truth of it; O! how much hypocrisie and presumption will be found to be among you, in stead of true and solid peace? with which ye have nothing to do, so long as these Whoredoms and Witch-crafts (to say so) of filthy sins, are with you unpurged away by the blood of Christ.

The 3. Use serves to demonstrat, and clearly to hold forth the absolute necessity of Jesus Christ, and the transcendent worth and matchless excellency that is in

him, that even when a man is thus defiled and polluted by sins these dead works? there is access by his blood, to get the Conscience purged; and this is the thing that we would mainly point at from these words (and which we intend, God willing, afterward more largely to insist in) not only the necessity of coming to Christ; but of knowing certainly that ye are got out of black Nature into him,Page 332and have gotten your Consciences purged by his Blood: Think ye it a small or little concerning matter; to be lying in a pest house, where thousands dy at your right and left hand, and not to know if ye be cleansed? To have the Plague in your bosom, and not to know whether ye be cured of it or no? and yet such is the state and condition of all of you, while ye are in corrupt Nature: And if ye would (as ye are mightily concerned) have some Evidences whereby ye may be helped to know if ye be as yet purged from this total pollution; there are some things that may be gathered from this Verse to that purpose: And 1. Did ye ever know and acknowledge your Conscience to be defiled? It can hardly be expected that a man having such a Botch, and Plague running on him, can think seriously of, let be? seriously seek after washing, before he know that he is thus defiled, and thereby in such a deplorable state: I speak not now of what gracious change may be wrought in some persons more early, and in their younger years, nor how secretly and little discernibly the work of Conversion may be wrought in some that are come to age; But I speak of God's more ordinary way of dealing, and reclaiming and converting of sinners? When Paul

speaks of himself, Romans 7. He tells us that He was alive once without the law, he was a clean man as he thought, and in his own eyes; before the Lord discovered Sin, and wakened a Challenge for it in his Conscience; But when the Commandment came (sayeth he) sin revived and I died: Now can we think with any shadow of reason, that after God called him effectually by his Grace, that he had more of a ??? nature in him than he had before? sure no; but the body of death, the corruption of his nature, was now clearly discovered to him, and became loathsom, Challenges came to be quick and sharply piercing, and his Conscience began to be touched with the lively sense of its own Defilement; he was before alive, or rather seemed to himself to be so; but now he became a dead man in his own esteem, as he was most really before the graciousPage 333change? was wrought; and sin to his sense revived, and he as to any account of his own righteousness, ???: O! sis, do ye understand this Doctrine? We are afraid that many of you do not understand it, at least in your own experience; and for as abominable as corrupt nature and sin is, that yet ye are leeping securely in it, and are often returning with the Dog to lick up that ile vmit: Its a very shrewd and evil token of a defiled and unclean Conscience, where there was never any Challenge for, nor any the lest kindly sense of its defilement and pollution. 2. Was the Conscience ever wahren with the Blood of Christ? for alwise until that be, it is defiled and polluted; Did ye ever find your Conscience ??? polluted, that ye could not get lived with it, ??? ye was made to run to the fountain

opened up in the house of David for sin and uncleanness? spoke of Zch. 13:1. suppose several of you have had now and then your? own Challenges for sin, but what course ??? ye to ????? did ye strive to close and stop the mouth of your Conscience by betaking yourselves to passe?ime, and to good company (as ye use to call it) looking on such exercise (as too many do) as a fit of Melancholy? or did ??? go ther to betake yourselves, for silencing your Conscience to Prayer and Reading (good in themselves) only? without going to the Blood of Christ? That will not e an evidence of a clean and purged Conscience, but there must be a bringing of i to the Fountain, to Jesus Christ to be cleansed and calmed; Thus it was with Paul Romans 7. who when he saw his pollution, even in but a small remander of it, and was challenged for it, Romans 7. Cyes O wretched man that I am ? who shall deliven ?????? the body of this death? and subjoins, I thank God ??? Jesus Christ our Lord; He can quiet himself no where? ??? nothing but in Christ; It is a good token when persons can admit the thought of no other way of cleansing and ing their Consciences, but by bringing them to Christ and his Blood, especially when the sense of ???, and the aith of the efficacy of his Blood hath brought? ????????Page 334bring them to him as the Fountain. 3. We would ask you if the effect of a clean Conscience has followed your betaking of yourselves to Christ? and that is a clean Life and honest Walk and Conversation; for a purged Conscience will have a purged and honest Walk following on it; and if men have once gotten a cleansed and purged Conscience, they will

be very cheary of it, and loath to pollute it again; and their great work will be to live so as they may not pollute it: But h! how few, how lamentably few have attained to this effect? There are many purgings of Conscience, which are like the sweepings and garnishings of that house, (spoken of in the Gospel) that made it ready for the Devil to re-enter into with seven spirits worse than himself; many after Light and transient touches of Challenges, become more hardned and presumptuous, more secure and carnal than they were before; and their Conscience digests (as it were) greater sins, better and more easily than it had wont to do; and it fares with them according to that Proverb, 2 Pet. 2. It. (often cited) The Dog is returned to his vomit, and the Sow that was washed? to wallowing in the mire; Their corrupt and filthy Nature being still to the ore; they fall a licking up that which formerly they seemed to have vomited out, and return to their former louse carriage. 4. What discord and war is there with any remainder (??? it be yet come to a remainder) of corruption and pollution that is bhind? What resenting and loathing is there of it? If the Conscience be purged, and endeavoured to be kepted pure, new defilements will be very unwelcome? Guests, and exceedingly troublesome to your peace; The bond womans Son (to say so) must not abide with the free-womans in the house, but must be cast out, and will be endeavoured to be cast out: While a man is in black Nature? sin is at home, and any motion to sin is entertained, and even in a manner invited and wowed; but when a man comes to be renewed in his stae, and

Grace gets the dominion, his great care and work is, to get the remainder of corruptionPage 335cast out; and if anything of it come back, or stay still within, that he cannot get cast out, he loaths it, and cannot bear with it, nor dwell satisfiedly in the house beside it: We will not say, but many filthy things may be in a pure Conscience, but it does not comport wel with them, nor digest them; They are as lukewarmwater to a man's Stomach, that he cannot keep, but must needs vomit up again, and he is sick until he do so. 5. Its a good token of a pure Conscience, when the man cannot endure to be at a distance from Christ, but hath many errands to him; would fain be near him; yea, would fain abide constantly with him, as well as in him by Faith, when he would ly beside him as beside the Fountain, to be bleached there (so to speak) because he kws that no sooner wil he go from him, but his Conscience will be defiled; and he loves so well to be clean, and loves Christ so well that makes him clean, that he likes well to be always near him: This is a good token of a person that hath a pure Conscience; Because as it betokens a great loathing of filthiness, so it betokens a great respect to Christ on this account, as to the maker and keeper of the Conscience clean; and on the contrary, its a very evil token when persons will pretend to a pure Conscience, when yet they will not go to the Fountain for a very long time, if at all; and when they go (if we may speak so) they scarce give their Conscience a dip, or a little sprinkling or syning (as we use to speak) but they are away and gone again; But a serious, tender and purged Soul, will no sooner

perceive a foul stain or spot, but it repairs quickly to the Fountain of Christ's Blood to get it washed out; And O! but its precious to him, and he never thinks himself to be right and well, but when he is there and near to him; Its true he cannot alwayes be in Prayer, or in other Duties of Worship; yet he endeavours to be in the habitual exercise of Faith, corresponding with him for attaining and keeping a clean and undefiled Conscience.

SERMON II.

HEB. 9. v. 14. and 10 v. 22. 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?

Chap. 10. v. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

IF we knew what sort of Consciences we naturally have, and were suitably sensible of the evil state of them, it would be to us as good News from a far Countrey, to hear how they may be gotten purged and made good; and how little soever men think of this now, and how ever easie they fancy it to be to get their Consciences solidly quieted and calmed, there is a day coming, when sleeping and secure Consciences will be awakned, and when it will be found more easie to endure the greatest toil, and the most exquisit torment on earth, then to wrestle with, and to be closely pursued, and constantly haunted by the terrours of an evil and awakned Conscience, which willPage 337roar against men, as a lyon, and tear as it were the very caul of their heart; Then, O! then they who would never be persuaded before, to believe what an evil and defiled Conscience is, nor what the benefit and advantage of peace with God, and in the

Conscience is, shall be made to their eternal prejudice to know the truth of both.

In both these places now read in your hearing, the apostles scope is, to commend the transcendent worth, and matchless excellency of Jesus Christ, and the incomparable efficacy of his most precious blood, from this noble, notable, and non-such effect of it, viz. That when nothing else can lay, or allay the storm, and tempest of an evil Conscience, nor purge it, from these defiling dead works, this blood can do it to purpose, and effectually, when applyed by Faith; when no legal Sacrifice, nor washings, that sanctified only to the purifying of the flesh, could reach, perfyting the comer thereto, as pertaining to the conscience, (as its said, Chap. 9. v. 9.) Neither could deliver him from an evil Conscience, and give him confidence, and boldness in drawing neer to God over the belly of many quarrels, and grounds of challenge, the blood of Christ can; as it is, Chap. 10. v. 22.

We left the other day at speaking somewhat to that natural pollution, that throughly affects the hearts and Consciences of all men, before they be by the blood of Christ purged; and the apostles taking such pains to hold out this, shows plainly, that it is a matter of greatest concernment to Christians, to know the way how to get their Consciences purged from that deep defilement of sin wherewith they are polluted; for is it not his manner to insist in anything that is not of concernment to the people of God, who will readily from the sad and doleful

experience of their own pollution, be induced to think that this truth is such, and ought to be esteemed so by them.

2ly. Observe, That there is nothing that Christians should more aim at, and endeavour more to be in thePage 338practice of, then to be following that way whereby they may get their Consciences purged, and more particularly these who have had their Consciences again defiled, after that they were once purged; no main infected with the Borch or plague hath more need of cleansing from it, then the man whose Conscience is infected, and defiled with the dead works of sin, needs to have it purged from them by the blood of Christ.

We shall but very briefly (to make way for that which we would mainly be at) hint at two or three Observations from both these verses now read, put together; first then? Observe, from Chap. 10. v. 22. That a Conscience not purged by the blood of Christ, is a very evil thing: which we will find to be a very sad truth, if we consider the unpurged Conscience, either as its awakned or as its not awakned, but asleep, which is ill both ways; Its ill, if it be awakned, and the terrours of God be fresh upon it; who can express, or adequatly conceive the terribleness of such a case? The spirit of a man may sustain his infirmity, and wrestle through many crosses, but a wounded, a wrath-wounded spirit, or an ill Conscience, roused by the terrours of the Almighty God, who can bear? This hath made some, with Iudas the trai tour, rather to choise death? a violent death inflicted by their

own wretched hands on themselves, then life; whereby they have desperately run themselves under the wrath of God to the full, O? poor silly miserable shift, and evasion, to flee from some smaller fore-parties (as it were) of the wrath of God on earth, into the very strength, and main battel of it eternally in hell, this is infinitely worse then to leap out of the water into the fire; Nay some of the most eminent Saints, by the falling but of some hot scalding drops of God's fatherly wrath and displeasure have been brought neer the length of wishing rather for strangling (though mercifully kept from it, and made to abhorre it) then life; As it was with non such holy Job, who looked on death, a violent death as an easie matter, be what it was to bePage 339under the sense of wrath, and to be set up as the mark for God's arrows to be shot at, the venome whereof, to his apprehension, drunk up his Spirits; though all the while he was kept up in the faith of his interest in God, and of his love to him? To his purpose, Human heavily complains, Psalm 88. I am afflicted, and ready to die from my youth up, while I suffer thy terrours, I am distracted; If it be sometimes done thus in the green trees, even the greenest, what shall be done in the dry? Now the Conscience is in a special manner the receptacle of all the terrors of God; it must therefore certainly be a very ill thing to have an awakned ill Conscience: If an ill and unpurged Conscience be silent and a sleep, its in some respect worse, for it hath this black and dreadful awakning abiding it; and the longer it sleep and keep silence, the the wakning will be the more terrible, and its

cries the louder; Its all the while of its silence and sleeping, treasuring up more wrath, whereby the poor wretch will be payed home with multiplyed increase of terrour, and horrou, O! that ye knew how evil a thing, how very evil a thing it is to have a Conscience not purged from dead works, a Conscience not sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ: as no stranger can intermiddle with the joy of a man's Spirit, who hath a good Conscience, a Conscience sprinkled and purged by the blood of Christ; so no man can to the full represent to you the exceeding terribleness of the terrour of an evil Conscience, when awakned by the wrath of God pleading and pursuing a quarrel with the Soul, which quarrel he is infinitely powerful to avenge; It would be very suitable to be often enquiring at ourselves, what is become of the quarrel? and what solid ground of peace and confidence towards God is there? We will all most certainly, and inavoidably be put on this great tryal, O! suffer not yourselves to be so far deluded, as to think that a silent and stupid Conscience, is a good Conscience, and hath no danger with it, which is as great folly as to think that a feeless and benumbed member of the body is thereby inPage 340o danger, nay the danger is so much the greater.

2ly. Observe, That though all men naturally be under thi evil of an unpurged Conscience, yet in the covenant of Grace, God hath laid down a way how sinners may get their Consciences purged; This is the apostles scope in both these scriptures, even to lay a solid ground for the consolation of Believers, and for a high commendation

of God's grace, viz. That by application made to the blood of Jesus, there is as a real purging of the Conscience from sin win at, as there was access made to persons ceremonially unclean, by these sacrifices and washings under the Law, to external Church-privileges, being ceremonially cleansed thereby: which is not so to be understood, as if the sin committed had never really and actually been, so as the purged Believer should neither remember it, nor repent of it; that is not at all the meaning of the Doctrine, but it is to be understood legally, that as to the removing of the guilt of sin, and as to his having peace with God, and in his own Conscience, it is purged so, as sin cannot stand in the way of his expecting God's favour, nor simply in the way of his delighting himself therein, more then if it had never been; though the man be the debtor, yet there is a way laid down in the Gospel covenant to declare him free; even as a man that has plaid the dyvour or bankrupt, though he cannot simply, and in all respects be made as if he had never been so, yet by anothers paying of the debt, he is before the Judge acquitted, and is reckoned free of the debt, as if it had never been contracted, or owing, and as to any effect that might in law follow on it, to his prejudice; just so is it here with the sinner, that flees to the blood of sprinkling, and the word purging, sufficiently holds it out, especially when it is joined with coming with boldness, and confidence to the throne of God; for if it should be said to such a sinner, how canst thou, how darst thou come to God with such confidence, that hast an ill Conscience through so

much sin? He answers, Let us draw near, or come, having our heartsPage 341sprinkled from an evil conscience; So that as to a confident approaching to God, and application of Christ's righteousness? persons who have made application of the blood of sprinkling, may come to God with as much holy and humble boldness, as if the Conscience had never been defiled and polluted; and the experience of the Saints, who in this way have found peace and confidence, is a great evidence, and confirmation of the truth of it.

3ly. (To come a little nearer) We may Observe in the negative, That there is no way for a man, that has once had his Conscience defiled, and polluted with sin, to be cleansed and purged from it, but by the blood of Christ: If we look through this 9th Chapter from the beginning, and the following 10th Chapter, We will find that the apostles scope is to prove, that it is not the blood of Bulls, or of Calves, nor any one, or all of these ceremonial Sacrifices, washings, or purgations that can do the business; as he more particularly cleareth, v 9. of the 9. Chap. Where the apostle insinuates, That though God appointed many means and mides of purgation, yet if there had been no more but these, they could never have effected the perfyting of a man, as pertaining to the Conscience; Its only the blood of Jesus, that hath this effect: And this one reason will confirm it, viz. That there is no other thing, but the blood of Christ, that can satisfie God's justice, and remove the qurrel, that is betwixt him and the guilty sinner; its he only, in whom God is well pleased; he is our peace; and there is no name under

heaven given, whereby a sinner can be saved, but the name of Jesus; And until God be satisfied, the Conscience cannot be quiet; seeing then that nothing can satisfie God's Justice bu his blood, there can nothing purge and satisfie the Conscience but it; Therefore David prayes, Psalm 51. Purge me with hysop, and I shall be clean? Where he allds, and looks to the blood of Christ, that was ypyfied by the sprinkling of Blood, with a buns of hysop under the law, as the apostle doth here.

Page 342As the Use of this Doctrine, We would have the aith of this great truth well fixed and riveted, that every man's Conscience, whether awakned or not, is still deiled and polluted until it be cleansed and purged by the blood of Jesus Christ; as bodily, or outward exercises profit not as to this; So the mouth of the Conscience will not be stopped, until it get of this blood; So that if it should be said, Who will lay ny thing to the charge of ods elect? As it is, Romans 8. The Conscience will answer, I have manythings to lay to their charge; until that sweetest word that is ubjoined, be spoken to it, for stopping its mouth; its Christ who died, (shedding his blood) or rather is risen again; then, and never until then will it be quiet.

In further prosecution of the Use of this Doctrine, We wold have you to know, that there are four wayes that men are ready to take, for cleansing and purging of the Conscience, some one, and some another of them; which are all (if there be no more) ineffectual for reaching the real purgig? and solid satisfaction of the Conscience, which ye would therefore be aware of; As 1. Some

endeavour to divert their Conscience, and to seek a Suspension of its purging the quarrel against them, pretending some other uptaking business; as Felix did, Acts 24. Who finding himself beginning to tremble at the apostles searching and powerful discourse, and unable to stand before his own awakning Conscience, he seeks as it were a Suspension from it for a time, saying to the apostle (and to ??? Conscience on the matter) Go thy way for this time, and I will call for thee when I have a convenient season? Hence, when some persons are in heaviness, or in some it of exercise of Conscience, they will ??? to some ??? and cund friend, or to some game ??????????way, o possibly to a four hours to drink it down, and the devil is as busy to ??? on the diversion if there be such a friend to make a visit, he helps them to ??? it over, and to bnish that melancholous ???, and so to bring the person to bear down this troublePage 343of his Conscience, as a silly despicable fancy, and as if it were for their good to do so: I beseech you beware of binding up your Conscience thus, else it may grow worse on your hand, its even as ??? a man that hath a sore and aiking hand, should cut it off, or as if a part of his flesh were pained, and he should clap a hot burning iron on it; and yet this is a way that is very frequently taken by men, who cannot indure to converse with their disquieted Conscience, and therefore they labour to quash, and quench any begun exercise in it, whether under sickness or any other cross dispensation, or at a Preaching or Communion: It may be that many of you have had some such thing, and it hath been driven, or it hath worn away,

and ye cannot tell how. 2ly. Another way is also too ryff and ordinary, and that is by seeking to stop the mouth of Conscience, by some other thing, then by the blood of Christ; hence some under terrible convictions will promise and vow, i they drank excessively before, that they will do so no more; That they will not go to such a Tavern? nor to such a company for this and that long time; some will, it may be, after the committing of such or such a gros sin, vow no to ea flesh on such a day of the week, throughout their whole life; they will, it may be, vow to be more religious? but so soon as the conviction, or trouble is over, they remain still the same, and their Conscience lets them alone, they take their own sinful latituds, and are found to have been all along, and still the same old carnal men; because they aimed nor singly at peace with God through Christ's blood, but for the ime to stop the mouth of their Conscience. 3ly. Some sek to compensate the Conscience, or to compensate sin to the Conscience, and not to purge it; they will, it may be, take some pennance on themselves; and this is it that leads not only Papists to their pennances, whippings, pilgrimages, and so forth. but many ignorant Protestants to make peace with their Conscience, by a covenant of works; They will pray, and seek after tears in prayer, they will invite, in a manner themselvesPage 344to mourn, they will give some thing by ordinary to the poor, and set themselves to amend some things for the time to come; and yet the defilement and pollution of Conscience yes on still unremoved, because they never be-took themelves to the right fountain to wash at, to the blood

of Christ to be purged; Hence, the Jews ordinarily betook themselves to their sacrifices, and legal washings and purifyings; when they sinned, if they brought a bullock, calf, lamb or a goat, they thought they had done enough; and therein had a sort of peace, such as I was; but says the apostle, it was not that which made them clean, as pertaining to the Conscience, none of these, nor all of these could purge, or truly pacify it; because they could not take away the quarrel betwixt God and them; and thus many professors of the Gospel betake themselves to external ordinances, or outward performances of duties? and rest on these; I do not condemn, nor dissuade from these duties, which are good in themselves, because commanded by God, but your resting on them; and would have you to put a difference betwixt founding your peace on them, and the founding of it on the blood of Christ applyed to the Conscience by faith; O! seek not thus to bribe the conscience, for as it will not be boasted, so neither will it be bribed. 4ly. There is another way (that being rightly made use of, hath its own commendableness in it) which is, when persons are under some trouble, or disquiet of Conscience, they betake themselves to Conference, it may be with some exercised Christians, holding out their case to them for some ease and quietnesse; which (as I said) is good and commendable in itself, and may through God's blessing do good, if the end be to be helped thereby, to go to the fountain of Christ's blood and wash there, but it is our fault, when in the use of this mean of conference, we seek to have our Consciences quieted by arguments, while in

the mean time, the blood of Christ is not by faith had recourse to, for cleansig and calming of it; I suppose the ablest of men,Page 345whether privat Christians, or Ministers of the Gospel, were speaking to us never so convincingly and comfortably, and were holding out evidences? to us, sound in themselves of a good stare, if (as I just now said) there be not believng application made to the blood of Christ, for taking away the ground of the quarrel betwixt God and us, there is no reasoning, nor evidence whatsoever, that will or can give a well grounded peace to the Conscience; considering that the best and most discening men may be mistaken, in their application of these evidences to us: neither is it the end of Conference, to be a ground of peace, when in the mean time, there is no solid course taken how to get our debt paye, and the justice of God satisfied: our main, yea, our first work would be, to be take ourselves to the Cautioner, and to the blood of sprinkling, under the conviction and sense of sin and guilt; and then we may profitably reason ourselves, and admit of the reasoning of others for help to quiet our Conscience; and unless there be actual fleeing to Christ, and to his blood preceeding and going before words of comfort or direction spoken, whether in private or in public; This word of God declares them to be null and vod, as to any advantage to us.

4ly. Observe, That when nothing can pacify an evl and defiled Conscience, nor purge it from dead works, the application of the blood of Christ by faith, can and will purge that Conscience, and give peace and quietness to

it, with holy and humble confidence, and boldness in coming, and drawing near to God, as if in some respect it had never been defiled by these dead works of sin. Its the apostles great scope and design here, to press these two, which are the two branches of the Doctrine. 1. The sufficiency of Christ's blood, as the price that atisfies divine Justice, and quiets the Conscience; for when the Conscience gets this blood applyed to it by faith, it has no ground to crave any further satisfaction, to the justice of God, whose deputy it is, as if something were owing; that blood, as a full and condigPage 346price satisfies for all the debt; How much more (sayeth the apostle here) shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works? The 2d, Branch is that which followeth upon his? as a native use of it, That a Belleer who hath fled to Jesus Christ after the committing of sin, and hath actually applyed his blood to the Conscience, may have quietness in it, and go with boldness and confidence to God, and may on this ground maintain his peace, in some respect, as if he had never sinned: So uos the apostles scope, if we look to the 19. v. of Chap. 10. and forward? Having therefore brethren (sayeth he) boldness to enter into the holiest by a new and living way, y the blood of Jesus, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of saith, having our hearts sprinked from an evil conscience; though it hath been polluted before: This is one of the rarest pearls, and richest Jewels of the Gospel, one of the excellentest privileges of a Belever? and one of the noblest, and notablest exprssions and evidences of the grace of God, and withall the great proo of the reality

and efficacy of the satisfaction of our blessed Lord Jesus, viz. That when the Conscience of the poor Believer is confounded, and in a manner put on the wrack with many challenges for sin, he may mke application of Christ's blood, and on that ground have sweet peace and tranquility of Soul.

For further clearing of this, We shall 1. lay down some grouds for its confirmation. And then, 2ly. make some se of it; As for the first of them, to wit, some grounds to confirm it? Take these few shortly, 1. If by the application of Christ's blood, there be solid peace made up betwixt God and the sinner, it will necessarily follow, that the application of the blood of Christ will urge the Conscience, and ought to be ground of peace and quietness to it, For (sayeth Iohn, Epistle 1. Chap. 3. v. 20.) God is greater then the heart, or Conscience; and sayeth Paul, 1 Corinthians 4:4. Though we know nothing by ourselves, yet are we not hereby justified, but e that judgeth usPage 347is the Lord; This is sound reasoning, God hath nothing to say, therefore the Conscience ought to be satisfied: But it is clear, that by the application of Christ's blood, solid peace is made up betwixt God and a sinner, As Romans5:1. Being justified by saith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ; There is no standing controversie, nor quarrel onger then by faith, the blood of Christ is led unto and applyed; Iohn 5:24. He that heareth my word, and believeth on im that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; He shall come to judgement to be absolved, but not to be condemned; for (as it is Iohn

3:18.) He that believeth on him shall not be condemned; And Romans 8:1. There is therefore now no condemnation to them who are in Christ; And 1 Iohn 5:12. He that hath the Son hath life, and so forth. This being the over?word of the Gospel, it will follow, that the Conscience of a poor sinner, that is fled to Christ for refuge, hath good ground of peace, and that there is no ground to the Conscience ormentingly, or anxiously to challenge: And this is indeed no small matter, and yet no presumption after a sinner hath fled to Christ, to quiet himself, and to be at peace on this ground. A 2d ground of confirmation is, the experience of all the Sains recorded in the Scripture, after their falings and fallings into sin; what hath quieted them, may also quiet us; for there is but one way of making peace with God, and the taking of that way workes, as to the main, alike to all: Now its this way, that hath quieted them, its the same faith in all, and alike precious ??? in all, as to the kind; because it hath the like precious substantial effects in all; It is this therefore that must give quetness and boldness to us: That which quieted them was a look, an often renewed look, as guilt was of new contracted, through all these types and shadows, to Christ; all of them had their original and actual pollutions, whereby their Conscience was some wy defiled and disquieted; yet through application of Christ's blood they wan to peace; Purge me,Page 348says David, Psalm 51. with ysop, and I shall be clean, and so forth. Even when the Conscience was writeing his lybel, and he was under challenges for his guilt, he had the faith of his interest, and attained peace,

through application of the blood of Christ, that was to come, signified by purging with hysop: For that ground stands sure, which is laid down, Act? 13:38, 39. Be it known unto you therefore men and brethren, that through this man, is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are ??? from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law o Moses: There is indeed (as if he had said) a large and long ???, and Inditement, that Sin, and te Law, and the Conscience have against you, but be it known unto you, that through Jesus Christ, remission of sins is preached to you, and that through saith in him ye are justified, and fred from the challenges of the Law, and from the terrours of justice, and of the Conscience, even rom all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses: outward means, and misaken law, Christ being miskend and past by, cannot give freedom; but by Christ Jesus ye may have freedom.

A? 3d. Ground of conirmation, is taken from the consideration of the excellency of Christ Jesus, and the efficacy of his blood; from the consideration of the excellency of the Person, who steps in, and ??? his blood for a ransom, which being applyed, the Conscience ought to be quiet, and should not (to speak so) have a face to lay anything to the Believers charge: And this is prest in these two Scriptures on these grounds; How much more shall the blood of Jesus Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge the conscience? In which words, we have three things to hold out the excellency of this sacrifice. 1. The

excellency of the sacrifice itself; its a Sacrifice without spot; all these Sacrifices under the Law were but types of this Sacrifice, and there was alwayes something to be said of them, which argued their imperfection; but no such thing canPage 349be said of his, He was never polluted; by his wonderful conception, by the Holy Ghost, he was kept free from the least tincture, or touch of that pollution that all Adams Sons and Daughters (the Mother of the Lord not excepted) descending from him by ordinary generation are defiled with, and so was a sacrifice, against which severe justice, had nothing to object, being most exactly conform to the Law of God, to the Covenant of Redemption transacted betwixt Jehovah and the Mediator, on which this is mainly founded; but he was compleatly satisfied therewith, as we may see, Psalm 40:6, 7 Where he is brought in saying, Sacrifice and offering, thou didst not desire; all these things were rejected, as having no equivalent value, or worth in them, for aoneing and satisfying provoked divine justice, as is clear from the beginning of the following 10. Chap. and down-ward; Where the apostle cites, improves and applyes the words of the 40. Psalm; Then I said, lo, I come in the volumn of thy book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O! my God; And sayeth he, v. 10. By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus; The good will of God willing such a thing, and accepting thereof, makes that we are thus purged, and made clean.

But 2ly. Beside the excellency of the Sacrifice, we have the excellency of the Preist that offered it; O! what

pertinent and powerful reasoning doth the apostle use, Hebrews 7. To prove the excellency and pre-??? of Jesus Christ our great high Priest, above and beyond all the Levitical Preists; These Priests were temporal, he is eternal; They were but servants, he is the Son? They were consecrated without an oath, he with an oath, according to the order of Melchisedeck; They offered many Sacrifices and often, He offered but one Sacrifice? and buonce, as it is, v. 27. of that 7th Chapter, and chap. 9. v. 28. and chap. 10. v. 12. and 14. Whereby he hath forever peryted them that are sanctified; And (sayeth he) such a high-Priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled separa from sinners, and made higher then the heavens. 3ly. TherePage 350is the excellency of the Altar on which the Sacrifice was offered up; and the Altar is, (as the Lord says) that which sanctifies the sacrifice; This was the God-head of our blesed Lord Jesus, He through the eternal spirit offered up imself: Though, as man he had a beginning, yet as God he had no beginning; and through the God-head, he offered up his humane nature, which had its worth and efficacy from the divine nature, to which it was united in his blessed person; in these three, the worth, value, and transcendent excellency of this Sacrifice is held out; The Sacrifice itself, is Christ as man offered up both in his body and Soul; The Altar on which it is offered, which makes the Scrifice savour so very sweetly to God, to be of such value and worth, and to be so highly acceptable, is the eternal spirit, the God head of the second person of the glorious, dreadful and adorable Trinity; Therefore,

Acts 20:28. God is said to purchase or redeem the Church with his own blood; not with silver or gold, or any corruptible thing, as Peter says; and the Priest is, Christ God and man in one person; He is the Sacrifice, in respect of his humane nature; The Altar, in respect of his divine nature, giving value and virtue to the humane nature; For though his humane nature was in itself unspotted, yet being as such a finite creature, the divine nature to which it was united in his person, did add thereto such a value, as made it in this respect to be of infinite worth and value; and he was the Priest, in respect of both natures, as God man and Mediator for sinners: Now these three being put together, what imaginably can be more desired for quieting the Conscience, then may be had? and is here? Especially if we add, the nature of Christ's offices and his continuance in them: Having such a High priest over the house of God; a Priest living forever to make intercession for all that come to God by him; let us draw near with full assurance of faith; For he who clothed himself with the vail of our flesh, hath torn the vail, and taken down the partition wall that was betwixt God and us; and by his sufferings hath made a new and living way to us through it? into the holy of holies; and from this that sweet word follows, which we have, 1 John 2:1. If any man in, we have an advocat with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; A high-Priest, that hath offered himself in a Sacrifice, to satisfy divine justice; and a high Priest that lives forever, to intercede for the application thereof; hence also most comfortably follows, that he is able to save to the

uttermost? these that come to God through him; able to save them from sin, from wrath due for in, from challenges for in, from unbelief and disquietness of Conscience, and to give solid and perfyt peace. The 4th and last ground of confirmation which we shall name, is drawn from the consideration of the nature of the covenant of redemption, in the reality, legality, efficacy, and extent thereof in reference to sinners; if there be such a Covenant, and paction betwixt God and the Mediator transacted (to speak so) n the eternal counsel of the God-head, wherein it is agreed that Christ shall come into the world, and take on the sins of the Elect, who shall all in time, in due time flee unto him for refuge; And that they, upon their fleeing to him, shall have their sins pardoned; and that his satisfaction shall be accepted for them, as really as if they had payed their own debt, andatisfied justice in their own persons, (had that been possible;) and if on his bargan and transaction all his sufferings are bult; then sure there is in Christ's death a most solid and sufficient ground of peace and quietnesse to the Conscience of a finner, that hath fled to him, and closed with his atisfaction; even as solid and sufficient, as if he had payed the debt himself: For it were blaspheme to imagine such a covenant, so laid down, and for such an end, and not to be most real and effectual for reaching the end; This covenant being most sure, and this being the end of it, as it is Corinthians 5. ult. viz. To make him sin for us who knw no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him: by the same covenant and good will of God, Father, SonPage 352and Spirit,

concurring to lay down this way of Salvation, Christ was made sin for us, not against his will, but with his will, (for he was most willing to undergo the work: as is clear from, Psalm 40. compared with Hebrews 10. And this was the reason, or rather end, for which he was made sin for us; even That we might be made the righteousness of God in him; That he being found the sinner, and dealt with as the sinner, we might be declared righteous; not as if we had never sinned, but that by imputation of his righteousness, and God's gracious accepting of it for us, we are reckoned free, as if we had payed the debt ourselves, in our own persons: and if the covenant betwixt God and the Mediator, had a real effect on Christ Jesus the Cautioner; if he really took on our nature, and in that nature suffered, and payed our debt; if our iniquities in the punishment of them did meet on him, As it is? Isa. 53. The Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all; If he drank the bitter cup that we should have drunken, and satisfied justice for us; then sure the covenant must have a real effect on the other side? as to us; and we have good and sufficient warrand to believe, that God will accept of that satisfaction for believing sinners, that lay hold thereon for making their peace; and that he will as really keep that part of the bargane, viz. To mke the application of Christ's satisfaction forthcoming to them, as he did the other, in exacting that satisfaction from him: as many as are now before the Throne, are joyful witnesses, and glorious Monuments of the reality of this part of the covenant; and indeed there is no more legality (to speak so) in the impuing of

our sin to Christ, then there is legality in imputing his righteousness to us, in giving us absolution, and declaring us righteous through him: for there was no ground for justice to have any claime against Christ, but the will of God, and the covenant of Redemption, wherein Christ undertakes the debt; and there is no other ground for making his purchase forth-coming to the sinner, that by aith layes hold on him; Its the same blessedPage 353design that carries on both parts of the bargan: And now putting all these together, may we not most confidently say, that there is notably good ground for quieting of the Conscience of a sinner, that by faith betakes himself to the blood of Christ; and that such a sinner may with well-grounded Confidence hope for, and certainly expect pardon and absolution, as if in some respect he had never sinned.

We cannot now insist to speak to the Uses of this Doctrine; only from this we may clearly see, 1. How much sinners are oblided to God, and to the Mediator Jesus Christ; and how poor, sorry and miserable a life, and how comfortless and cursed a death we should have had, if he had not laid down a way for purging the Conscience from dead works; even this excellent and wonderful way by his own most precious blood: And therefore defiled and guilty sinners would endeavour to make this Doctrine very dearly welcome, as Paul doth, is 1 Timothy 1. v. 15. When in a transport of holy admiration, he cries, This is a faithful saying, worthy of all acceptance, thatChrist came into the world to save sinners; O! Believers in Christ prize his grace highly, and

bleſs him heartily, even with all that is within you, that ever the thoughts of this way of relief, for loſt ſinners were in his bleſſed heart. 2ly. Since it is moſt certain, that naturally we all have evil Conſciences, through the debt of ſin, and defilement of dead works; and that through the blood of Chriſt, if we flee to it by faith, and take hold of his ſatisfaction, we may get our Conſciences purged, and our debt as certainly payed as any man's debt is, who hath in his Charter-chiſt, the diſcharge of a Sum he was once owing. Then let me beſeech you for the Lord's ſake, to make this your great work, to get the application of this blood made to your Conſciences, and to have it on good grounds made ſure, that ye have, by faith made application of it? that ye may not live and die in a conjectural and gueſſing uncertainty about it; O! How mightily momentuous and concerning to you, Page 354 through all eternity is it, to have your defiled Conſciences ſprinkled with that blood; if it be of concernment to you, to have access to lift up your heads with joy, and your faces with boldneſs in that day, when the hearts of many ſhall fall them, for fear of thoſe things coming on them, and their knees ſhall ſmite one againſt another, when their faces ſhall gather paleneſs, and they ſhall weep and houl deſperatly without all hope; Then doubtleſs it is of your concernment, of your incomparably greateſt concernment to get your Conſciences ſprinkled with this blood; otherwayes be aſſured, live as ye will, and die as ye may, this defiled ill Conſcience will cleave to you, as a girdle doth to the loins of a man, and it will yell and roar on you, with

unconceivable terror and torment: It will then be known, and acknowledged by many, to their everlasting shame, and loss, and to their endless terror and torment, that there was a greatly concerning truth in this Doctrine, viz. That the only way how to get a defiled Conscience purged from dead works of sin, is by the blood of Jesus Christ.

A SERMON

on Hebrews 10. v. 22. Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

THE confident approaching of sinners to God, is the great design of the manifestation of his Grace in the Gospel; and that they may boldly, though humbly, draw near unto, and have communion with him, is the great fruit of Christ's purchase; the apostle discoursing here to these Hebrews, of the excellent advantages which they had in and by Jesus Christ (whereof he gives a short summary and abridgement, v. 19:20, 21.) draws thence a pathetick exhortation by way of conclusion, that Believers would make use of, and improve these advantages and privileges, in a confident approaching to God, Let us draw near (saith he v. 22.) in full assurance of faith: But because there are two things that readily stand in the way of Believers their coming to God, he casts in two requisit qualifications of their coming, for removing these obstructions, and to let us see, that though he allow of the well grounded confidence of faith, yet he doth not allow of carnal presumption in approaching to God. The 1. thing that stands in their way is carnalness and deceit of heart; and the qualification which he requires for removing of it, is in these words, Let us draw near with a true heart; Which is not to be understood of a simply silly heart; but of a sincere,

honest and upright heart, a clean heart, loathing and working out the remainder of pollution and impurity; for its opposed to an unclean, deceitful and hypocritical heart, otherways the next words of sprinkling, and washing would not be added: But because, 2ly. Believers win not in this life to that perfection in purity and sincerity, but still they are conscious to themselves of a remainder of deceit, impurity and hypocrisie to be, and abide in them; so that if they have no more but the testimony of their own purity, and sincerity to look to? it will be but as one leg to walk upon, in their drawing near to God; They might therefore object, alace! We have but little if anything of a pure and sincere heart; he answers this, by adding the second qualification, Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water; Which is (as he had said) wherein soever ye be unclean and defiled, and whatever be your impurity, deceit or hypocrisie; come to the blood of Christ, that ye may be sprinkled and washethereby, and then come forward, and draw near to GoPage 356in full assurance of faith; In a word he would have them coming, and coming in sincerity; and whatever lamented over, and loathed deceit and hypocrisie, or uncleanness, they find in themselves; he would not have that keeping them back; because there is an efficacy in the blood of Christ, to purge away both the guilt and filth of sin, and to procure welcome to such as are sincere and single in purifying their heart and way, though they be not perfittly pure, but many degrees removed from it, and because thereof, are under many quarrels from God, and

challenges from their own Consciences; he would have such making use of that blood for removing all quarrels, and so to come forward.

This Phrase of having the conscience sprinkled, is an allusion to that which we have, Exod. 12. v. 7. and 13. Where the Lord being to smite all the first-born of Egypt, to prevent the falling of the stroak and plague on the Israelites, he appoints them to kill a Lamb, and to sprinkle the Lintel and Door? posts of their Houses with the blood thereof, that when the destroying Angel passed thorow to smite the first-born of the Egyptians, he might pass over their houses, that were so sprinkled: and the force of the allusion is this, Mans Conscience in a natural estate, is like that destroying Angel, and as Israel be-sprinkled the door posts of their houses with the blood of the Paschal Lamb? so he would have them to be-sprinkle their hearts with the blood of Christ, as Chap. 9:14. and 12. v. 24. And then their Conscience will not smite them to their hurt, but they shall be past over as the Israelitswere passed over by the destroying Angel.

In the words then these two are clear? 1. That the Conscience of a person un-reconciled to God, is a mighty fearce, and terrible pursuer, ready to seize on him, as the avenger of blood did on the Man-slayer, or as the destroying Angel did on the Egyptians; And, O! but it be a dreadful thing to be obnoxious to God's wrath, and to the challenges, accusations, throws and pangs of a Conscience, that hath just ground of a quarrel against a man;Page 357who hath nothing wherewith to answer its

challenges, and accusations. 2ly. That the efficacy of Christ's blood is such, that it is able to purge the Conscience of such a man that fleeth to it, and to fence and guard him against the wrath of God, and the challenges and accusations of his own Conscience? so that as it hath no just ground to pursue, so it being God's Deputy, it cannot, neither will pursue him as God's enemy, it having no warrant from him as its Sovereign to do so; but as the sprinkling of the houses of the Israelits with the blood of the passe-over Lamb preserved them from being plagued or hurt by the destroying Angel; so there is an efficacy in the Blood of Jesus Christ, to purge and pacify the Conscience of the person, that in good earnest hath believing recourse to it, to preserve him from the stroak of God's justice and wrath, and from the pursuit and accusations of his own Conscience, I say when it is had recourse to, actually applied, and made use of, by Faith.

We cleared and confirmed these two Doctrines, or two Branches of the same Doctrine the other day, and now we come to the Use of them, which is Fourfold, 1. For Information and Direction. 2ly. For the commendation of the bargan of free Grace. 3ly. For the consolation of Believers in Christ. And 4ly. For advertisement and warning to others.

For the First Use, Ye may see here a main lesson of the Gospel, and from this ye may hear glad and joyful tydings to a tossed and troubled Sinner, whose Conscience is pursuing him like an armed man, nay the

Conscience is more terrible, when awakned, then any the greatest army of men: But behold here, there is a way to win to peace, under these tossings and troubles, and to a calme in the midst of that terrible tempest and storm; to an escape and deliverance from the hot pursuer and avenger of blood (as it were) a city of refuge to flee unto, even the blood of Jesus Christ that speaks better things then the blood of Abel, even that blood of sprinkling that speaks peace when it is applied by Faith.

Page 358 In prosecution of this Use, we shall a little clear thse three, 1. What a sinner lying under the lashes of his Conscience, coming to this blood, may expect. 2ly. How he may attain that which he may warrantably expect. 3ly? when he may and ought in a more especial manner to make use of it.

As to the First, viz. What a Conscience-tossed and troubled sinner may expect, by fleeing to the blood of Christ? God's rich and liberal allowance on him is, drawing ear to him with full assurance of faith, coming to him with confidence and boldness, as a Father in all his worship-addresses and applications: The meaning is not, That the sinner under a quarrel fleeing to this blood, hath no ground of humiliation, and repentance for sin, nor of challenges on that account; these may, and should be, where the blood of Christ is made use of, and applied by faith to the persons Conscience; They will not marr this confidence, and boldness, nor full assurance of faith that we speak of (but rather further it) as is clear from the drawing near of the Saints to God recorded in the

Scripture; As for instance, in that woman spoken of Luke 7:38. who weeps, and weeps so abundantly, that she washes the Lord's feet with her tears, yet she draws near to him with confidence; nay this drawing near with full assurance of faith doth not remove all fear, looking on fear as it carries along with it, the consideration of the infinit distance and dis-proportion that is betwixt the majesty of the great God, and a finit seckless and sinful creatures, nor that holy awe and fillal reverence that is due to him, and well consistent with this full assurance of faith, nay inseparable from the lively, and kindly exercise of it: But it supposeth these Four, 1. That the Believer fled to the blood of sprinkling, may boldly go to God in prayer, as if his friendship with him in Adam had never been broken; as the apostle insinuat, v. 19. while he says, Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the hollest, and so forth. There is a liberty and boldness (as I just now said) allowed him to call God Father, as ifPage 359the former covenant had never been broken, by a Son turning a Rebel and Traitor; The covenant of grace under the bond of which he is brought, as God's confederat, making the relation to him as neer, strait, kindly, firm and sure as it was in that other, with considerable superadded advantages.

2ly. That he may meddle with, and make use of the promises, of pardon of sin, of sanctification, of throwbearing in affliction, of quickening, of peace, of comfort, and so forth. according as he stands in need with confidence; and may draw near with full assurance of the faith of God's faithfulness, as to the performance of

them, in his own measure, manner and time; so that if the Believer could as fully and strongly exercise his faith on the promise, as he hath warrant to do; he might with as much confidence, and fulness of assurance cast himself on them, s Adam in innocency, did on the promise of life in the first covenant; because the blood of Christ applied by faith, giveth as real, just and legal a right to the promises of the covenant of grace, as Adam had to the promise of life by the covenant of works; the condition of that covenant, viz. perfect holiness and obedience, is fulfilled by Christ, in our name and room.

3ly. That the sprinkling of the Conscience by the blood of Christ, giveth the Believer a well grounded hope of heaven, of eternal life, and of glory, even of all things that are contained in the promises; Therefore? Hebrews 6:11. The apostle exhorts Christians thus, show forth the same diligence to the full assurance of hope to the end, and be followers of them, who through faith and patience have inherited the promises: The lively application of faith to Christ's blood, reaches to the full assurance of the hope of all that is contained in the promise; and if the promise be a solid and firm ground, and if faith lean really and strongly to it, hope may well expect the great things in it.

4ly. The Believer who hath his Conscience sprinkled with this blood expect full and through publicationPage 360of absolution and justification in the court, and before the tribunal of God, at the day of judgement, as the divine historian gives ground of hope, Acts 3. v. 19.

And in the court of the word and of his own Conscience here in this life; He hath ground with the apostle, Romans 8. to say? nay triumphantly to boast, and bid an eternal defiance to all that would offer at it, Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies, who is he that condemneth? He may say that indeed, he was owing, and a debter once, but they cannot crave payment of, and satisfaction for the debt from him now, because by the blood of Christ he is acquit; For it is Christ who hath died, yea rather is risen again, who is at the right-hand of God making intercession for us: The believing elect making the right use of this blood, of this most precious blood of Jesus Christ, may humbly, and confidently expect all these things, from and by it? O! great and glorious expectation.

As for the 2d. thing, how or after what manner, or by what means this unspeakably excellent privilege of drawing ??? with full assurance o faith, with holy boldness and confidence to obtain all these great things, may be attained and win at? It is answered in the words going a little before, Having therefore boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, let us draw near, and so forth. Its supposed? ??? That there be a fleeing to Christ for satisfying of divine justice. 2ly. That application be made to him? for ging, pacifying and satisfying the Conscience? ??? it is with the Conscience in this case? as it is with the Sea after a great storm, which after the ceasing of the storm, will, fro some time have its waves much tossed, and ??? in great agitation; so after divine justice is pacified and almed (o speak so)

by the Souls fleeing to Christ for satisfying thereof, there may remain still for a while (shorter or longer, as he shall think fit) some raging as it were, some trouble, tossing, and agitation in the Conscience of the Believer; as we may see in that instance of David, who, after the prophet NathPage 361 had made intimation of pardon to him, yet is still in considerable disquiet, and agitation of his Conscience, as the 51. Psalm gives us an account: Now, as for the attainin of calmness, tranquility and peace to the Conscience, we would say, that whatever is necessary, and requisit ing the application of Christ's righteousness, for making of our peace with God, the same is needful to calme, and give peace to the Conscience: What is that? will ye say, SeeRomans 4:5. To him that worketh not? but believeth on him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness; which being joined, with the words in the text, says, that the way to this peace and calmness, is first, not for persons to staift, or refuse their debt, but to take with it. 2ly. To renounce and disclaim all possibility to satisfie divine justice themselves. 3ly. To flee to Jesus Christ, and through virtue of his satisfaction and blood, and the covenant of his grace, to rest on him for pardon; To believe on him, (tho someway ungodly) who justifieth the ungodly; For it is not enough to take with our debt, and to quite and renounce the covenant of works, except we actually rest on Christ, by virtue of the covenant of grace; This is it which the apostle holdeth furth, Philip. 3:9. Where he says? That I may be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the

law, but that which is through the faith of Christ; He supposeth justice to be pursuing him, and that nothing he can do for himself, will divert justice its pursuit, nor secure him against it; That he is a lost and gone man in himself; he rests not on the discovery of his lost estate, but seeks to be found in him, not having his own righteousness, which is by the Law, but the righteousness which is by faith in him: This is the ground that gives peace with God, and should quiet the Conscience: but when the sinner hath taken this way, if the Conscience be not yet quieted and calmed, there is something further necessary, as first, the actual renewing of that application to Christ, to get not so much a new pardon, as a new extract of that pardon; which he received inPage 362his first fleeing to Christ, that by this renewed application of faith to the blood of sprinkling, he may also quiet the Conscience, so that when the man is fled to Christ, and at peace with God, if he have not peace in his Conscience, he is to cast a renewed look to the promise, and to act faith of new on Christ's blood, to hold it forth as it were unto, and to lay it before his Conscience, taking with his sin, yet holding still by it, that he is fled to Christ, and on that ground, making use of the promise, for the renewed pardon of sin through his blood; in this respect, faith is called, (Eph. 6:16.) A shield; Take unto you (sayeth the apostle) the shield of faith, whereby ye may quench all the fiery darts of the devil; when the challenge is cast in on the Conscience, it (as it were) burns the Believer, even as a fiery, or poisoned dart thrown into a man's body, burns and inflames it; But faith

goes to the fountain of Christ's blood? to the covenant and promises, and draws out of these wells of salvation bucketfulls (as it were) to quench it; or when a challenge comes in backed with temptation, it makes use of the promise, and blood of Christ to answer it; and so faith is as a shield or targe to kepp the dart, and beat it back; it makes the Believer say, I cannot satisfie for this sin; but here is a promise of pardon to the man that is fled to Christ, and to the blood of sprinkling, as I am, and makes use of Christ in the promise, for renewed intimation of pardon, or for renewed pardon, as new guilt is contracted, And thus he is kept quiet, that the challenge wins not in so sar, nor goeth so deep, as to sting him in his vital parts (to speak so) the heart of his peace and quietness is kept still alive, tugh he be in quick and sharp exercise under the challenge. 2ly. Because challenges will not soon nor easily be got removed, nor the Conscience quickly, and without difficulty calmed, as we see in that fore-mentioned instance of David, Psalm 51. There is need therefore of continuing in the fight, and of drawing conclusions from solid and undenyable premises and grounds, to quiet the Conscience,Page 363and ward off challenges, so as they may not wound and quite marr peace; as Paul doth, Romans 8:1, 2. It might have been said to him, Thou hast been complaining of a body of death, and that with thy flesh thou servest the law of sin, and is not that a grievous challenge against thee? It is true (as if he said) But there is no condemnation to them that are in Christ, That is the making use aright of the targe or sheild of faith; But to

put the matter out of doubt, he goes on, and subsumes, and draws the conclusion; (for the words are applicative to himself; and spoken with a considerable regard to his own particular exercise, set down, Chap. 7.) I, by faith, am fled to Christ for resuce, and so am in Christ, and therefore there is no condemnation to me: and indeed, when ever challenges come in from sense, and Conscience put through other, or mingled together (as it were) blown upon by temptation, which will pursue the Believer hardly; Its needful to reason from the grounds of faith, to ward off the blow, and to quit the Conscience: And this, though it be a reflex act of faith, which does not justifie, yet it serves to reason the Conscience into peace and calmness; and there is need of faith acting thus reflexly, though not (as I said) to justifie, yet to bring home the peace and comfort of Justification, and renewed extracts, and intimations of pardon.^{3ly}. Its necessary that Believers quiet themselves positively, by comforting and confirming themselves In the faith of what the promise speaks, and in the hope of what they have to expect: The difference betwixt the former and this is, that in the former we draw home answers from the grounds of faith to ward off the dint, and bitterness of challenges; but that is not enough throwly to calme and settle the soul, therefore the latter is also needful, that the soul positively draw in peace and consolation to itself by believing; Which (as it is, Philip. 4.) is able to guard the heart and mind through Christ Jesus: and we conceive this to be Davids exercise, Psalm 51. Where, by exercising his faith on thePage

364promises, and on the blood of the Messiah to be shed, and by wrestling for the intimation of pardon, and peace, he labours not only to get his Conscience calmed, but even filled with consolation; and because the promises are often somewhat wersh and tasteless (to say so) if not seasoned and quickened by God's voice going along with them, and putting favour and life in them; This is the voice of joy and gladness, which he would so fain, hear:Therefore the Believer insists with God thus, to besprinkle his Conscience; and as he looks to the righteousness, and blood of Christ for Justification, so he looks to it for calming of the Conscience; and this is in effect to be beholden to free grace, as for pardon of fin, so for peace and calmness of Conscience; without which any other thing will not do the turn.

As for the 3d. thing proposed to be spoken of? viz. The times or seasons, or the cases wherein the Believer may and ought, in a special manner to make use of his liberty and boldness, in drawing near with full assurance of faith:There is no question, but a Believer who hath made use of Christ for pardon of sin, and Justification, may also, and should make use of him and his blood for the sprinkling his Conscience, that he may come to God with boldness and confidence, and there is no case wherein a Believer may not aim at this; but more especially he should, in these cases; As first, when he is fallen into more gross guilt, as David was, psal. 51:2ly. When that gross guilt, and grievous sinning is waited with great aggravations; as in that Ps. Davids sin is aggravated mightily by him and yet he makes application to Christ

over all that guilt, and all these aggravations of his guilt. 3ly. When the Believer hath through his folly relapsed in sin; which is not spoken to give a liberty to sin, God forbid, wo to them that make so cursed an use of such blessed doctrine; but to the commendation of God's free grace, and of the worth and efficacy of Christ's blood, and for the incouragement of lost sinners, that would fain be at Christ for pardon and peace: for as longPage 365as the blood of Christ hath efficacy and worth, and as far as the promise extends itself, as long and as far may the Believer reach his faith for coming up to boldness and confidence; although for his humiliation, and keeping humble, he may possibly never win at, not recover his former confidence and boldness; yet looking to the grounds of faith and hope, he may, and ought to study to stretch his faith to the attaining of it; 4ly. He may, and should thus endeavour confidently to draw near to God, when challenges are quick and very sharp; yea, when the challenges of Conscience are sharpest and most peircing; though challenges were as so many troupes of horses rushing in on him, and the Conscience were like a Lyon rampant, standing with his claws ready to to tear, he may and should (humbly taking with guilt) step to confidently, and make application of the blood of sprinkling; and indeed this is the very time when in a special manner he should do it; as it was in the case of the man-slayer, when he was most hotly pursued by the avenger of blood, that was the very time when he was called to flee, and with greatest speed, to the city of refuge; and the allusion is made to this purpose, Hebrews

6:18. That by two immutable things (says the apostle) Wherein it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation who are fled for refuge, to lay hold on the hope set before us; When may they have consolation and strong consolation? even when they are fleeing with the greatest haste to the clay of refuge, its then that the gates of the city are cast widest open to them; when was it that David made his most earnest and humbly-confident addresse to God for the joy of his salvation? even when blood-guiltiness was staring him in the face, and when his very bones were in a manner broken, and when to his own sense, his grace was very much, if not altogether gone, and when he had (as is were) forefaulted his right to consolation; yet even then he comes foreward, draws near to God, humbly maintains his interest in him, and pleads for former manifestations upon thePage 366grounds of grace5ly. The Believer may and ought, thus to make humbly-confident application to God throw Christ, when he finds, to the great grief of his soul, an exceeding in-disposition to duty; when his praying, repenting, hearing, and so forth. gonot with him, as he would fain have them; if there be a real fleeing for refuge, to the hope set before him, he may and should, even in that case step forward, and draw near with humble boldness; hence, David, Psalm 51. Prayes not only for consolation, but for the lively exercise of grace, while he says to God, Creat in me a clean heart, renew a right spirit within me, and uphold me with thy free spirit: The sense of sin, and exercise of repentance being real and serious, the exercise of faith is then surely native;

and will readily, looking to Jesus, go over all that comes in the way of it: In a word, its then when the humble Believer may draw near with full assurance of faith; even when he hath the real sense of his sin, and danger, and flees unto Jesus Christ for refuge, he is then warranted to run to the city of refuge, and may confidently go on in his errand, viz. To get pardon of sin renewed, consolation restored, and his spiritual frame righted: Its no doubt a foolish conceit, and a prejudicial mistake, for troubled sinners, first, to seek after peace, and then to make application to Christ, or to think that first they must have all the requisits of a good spiritual frame and grace, in the liveliest exercise before they adventure to draw near to God with confidence; I grant these are very desirable, and the souls desire after them very commendable; yet if the Believer resolve never to draw thus near, until he be as he would be, when shall he do it? What if David had stood and stuck at that, Psalm 51? He might have been kept a-back, and so been unwashen all his days; but knowing the way of God's Grace, and the nature of his gracious covenant made with his people, he steps humbly, yet confidently forward in the exercise of faith out over the sense of guiltiness, and all the aggravations of it, over relapsing in sin, over in disposition,Page 367and over many sharp challenges, (all taken with, and lamented over) and makes all these together as so many earands to God.

The 2d. Use serves to commend the bargain of free grace, and to hold out the excellency of this blood of sprinkling, which may also mightily encourage the Believer to step

forward: In prosecuting whereof, I shall 1. speak a word to the efficacy of this blood of sprinkling. And then, 2ly. a word to the necessity of it, as to us.

For the first, To wit, the excellency and efficacy of it, it may be seen in these four, 1. In the noble and notable effects that it produceth, or that come by it, even all the great things contained in the promises touched on before; such as pardon of sin, grace to subdue it, friendship, and peace with God, fellowship with him, conformity to him, the hope of heaven and glory, the sweet serenity, tranquility and peace of the Conscience; its as a hiding place from the wind and rain, and a covert from the florm, yea, even as the shadow of a great rock in the midst of a weary land; when the soul sorely beaten with the storm of challenges, and of the apprehensions of wrath comes under the shadow and shelter of this, it presently finds ease and repose; what shall I say? what can I say? words here may be swallowed up, from this proceed all the glorious privileges of the people of God possessed and expected, in hand and in hope.

2ly. Its excellency and efficacy appears in this; That it hath procured these things, to sinners, to them that had an unclean and polluted Conscience; for who is it, I pray, that may thus draw near to God with full assurance of faith? It is not such as never had an evil Conscience, but such as having an evil Conscience, flee unto this blood, and get it sprinkled therewith; its these who had their Consciences defiled with dead works; and came to it, and got them purged from these dead works. 3ly. The

excellency and efficacy of it shines furth in the tenderness of the Person, that applyes the remedy to such a loathsome sickness, and otherwayes insuitable desease, or by any other hand but Christ's; HavingPage 366?1 page duplicate?Page 367?1 page duplicate?Page 368(sayeth the apostle) such an high Priest over the house of God, et us draw near; The Physician is Jesus Christ himself, his blood is the cure; and he also is the applyer of the cure; and O! how very tender, dexterous and simpathizing is he: he even excells in such cures to admiration; He is a high Priest that is holy, harmless, undefiled, separat from sinners, and higher then the heavens; (He is holy and harmless himself, he loves these qualities, and is able and willing to work them in these that come to him) and such an high Priest became us, He is one that hath compassion on the ignorant, and such as are out of the way; who was in all points tempted as we, yet without sin; That he may from his own experience the more kindly and strongly simpatize with his People, and succour them in all their temptations; an high Priest, that is touched with the feeling of their infirmities; The aking of the least finger, or toe in his mystical body, stounds, up as it were, to the very heart of him who is the head thereof, And Chap. 2. It behoved him to be made like to his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high Priest, and so forth. 4ly. The excellency and efficacy of it appears in this, even in the exceeding great freeness of his applying this cure; There is no more required, but to come and receive it; to come, however unclean, and be sprinkled with his blood; to confess the

debt of guilt, and draw out an extract of the discharge, by virtue of his payment thereof; And if there be any pollution in the Conscience, any challenge, or sore, whatever it be, he furnisheth the remedy and cure freely and frankly.

Now a Word to the 2d thing, viz. The necessity of this blood of sprinkling, If it be so, as we have said, if it be so virtuous and efficacious, is there not here an encouragement for the guilty, to flee to this blood? and is there not a necessity to make use of it, a very pressing, and vehemently urging necessity? for as it was not possible for the man slayer to stand with safety before the avenger of blood out of the city of refuge; so no morePage 369can the guilty sinner stand before his own Conscience? and far less before the Tribunal of God, Who is greater then the conscience, until this blood be fled unto, and until he get his Conscience sprinkled with it: And therefore, seeing ye have Consciences, and guilty Consciences, many sins on your score, and though the Conscience now sleep, it will most certainly once awake, and turn a hot and hard pursuer far beyond what ever any avenger of blood was, and the longer that it sleep, it will pursue the harder; and seing Christ Jesus is as a city of refuge, to whom ye may now flee and be sase; Consider O! consider these words of the apostle of the Gentiles, Acts 13:38, 39. Which we, in the name of the Lord, say over again to you, Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you forgiveness of sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be

justified by the law of Moses; And it is the great end and design of the Gospel, o proclaim the mercat of grace, and to make this offer unto you sinners freely; seing I say, all this is, O! takewith and be humbled under the sense of your guilt, from which ye cannot be pessiibly delivered any other way, and come forward and make use of it: And be-think yourselves seriously, I beseech you, if this day of salvation be sitten, and if this offer of grace be despised; your Conscience may and will certainly waken upon you, yea warr upon you most terribly, and ye will never get it quieted; but if ye will now in time imbrace, and make use of the offr; We dare confidently say, to the commendation of God's grace, and of the efficacy of this precious blood of Jesus Christ, that the sinner can never lay before Christ that sin, with what ever aggravations of it, nor the disease, how filthy and loathsome soever it be, but the blood of Christ applyed by faith can abundantly satisfie God's Justifie for it, and pacify and purge the Conscience from the guilt and defilement of it; And if God be pacified, the Conscience (beingPage 370his deputy) dar no more challenge and pursue to death no more then the avenger of blood could the Manslayer, when once got within the city of refuge; or the destroying angel, who smote all the first-born of Egypt could, or did destroy the Israelits, whose houses were be-sprinkled with the blood of the passe-over Lamb.

The 3d Use is, For strong consolation to Believers in Christ, And it is threefold, 1. Under the rise of a challenge, when the Conscience pursues; because there is here a city of refuge to run unto, A Mediator for

sinners, A shield, or targe to keep off such a Da, and to quench or ward off the deadly wound of it: Let us make the supposition (and blest eternaly be God, through Jesus Christ, its but a supposition) What if this had not been? How dreadful would the very apprehension of a challenge, let be of the vindictive wrath of God have been? 2dly. To the sinner that flees to this city, there is strong consolation in this respect, that he shall be made welcome; and therefore the Believer needs not skar to make use of Christ, nor to come to this blood of sprinkling; for he waits for imployment, and its the more to the praise of his exquisit skill, the moe be cleansed and cured by him through the virtue thereof; ye may therefore come, and not only so, but, come with full assurance of faith of attaining whatever ye want, and would have. Come therefore Believers boldly to the throne of grace, that e may find mercy, and obtain grace to help in time of need, as on this ground the apostle exhorts, Hebrews 4:3ly. These that have fled to this City of refuge, may quiet themselves; they are at peace with God, and with their own Conscience, their peace is as sure as God's Covenant that cannot be annulled, nor altered, is, And as Christ's purchase is of worth and efficacy; if the covenant of grace be firm and sure, and if this blood of sprinkling be of value and efficacy, they have certainly solid grounds of peace and consolation: and therefore we exhort Believers in Christ on all occasions to flee to this city, to renew your applications by faith to Jesus Christ, andPage 371after every defilement to be-sprinkle your Consciences with this

blood; and then comfort yourselves in it, and bless God, who allows such large and strong consolation on you, and the Mediator, who hath purchased it for you, by this his own most precious blood.

But some tender, and exercised Soul will, belike here, Object, and say; Is it not presumption for me, to comfort my self under challenges for sin? I answer, no, Thou taking with the challenge, and being humbled for the sin that is the ground of it, and betaking thy self to this blood of sprinkling, for pardon and purging; because the apostle commands thee to comfort thy self, and sure he commands none to presume; To whom, I pray is it that he speaks here? Is it not to them that have an evil conscience, at least in part? and what says he to them? Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, and on what ground, Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience: When the Conscience through guilt challengeth? we are called to flee to this blood, and having sprinkled it there with, we have warrant, to draw near, and it is not presumption to do so; nay resting on Christ, and comforting ourselves in him, under challenges taken with, argues strong faith, wherein he hath great complacency, and whereby he is much glorified; for presumption will never stand before an evil Conscience, nor credit Christ, when Conscience sharply challengeth: So that if ye come by this new and living way, it is not presumption to lean to Christ; but that is presumption to lean to any other thing; nay the more humble boldness and confidence there be under challenges, it argues (as I just now said) the more and the

stronger faith; because its the more sickerly founded on the covenant of God, and on the blood of Christ; and it gives God most glory, when the difficulty is greatest: It is no great practique to calm the Conscience, when there is no storm, but then indeed it is so, when there are many waves and billows of challenges and discouragements, rising and swelling high in the way, toPage 372go over all these, and to grip hard to this rope cast out by him, and confidently, though humbly, and in fear to make use of this remedy, which he hath graciously proposed: It will never be accounted presumption by him, for serious souls to take to themselves God's allowance on them, which is strong consolation to them who are hotly pursued, and flie to this city of refuge; but it may very readily be accounted presumption to cast at his allowance; he knows well (who hath the tongue of the learned) when to give a word of consolation, and to whom; and we are not to be wier then he.

The 4th Use is for advertisement, and warning to others, who are not Believers, but ly still in unbelief, and slight our blessed Lord Jesus; O! what a dreadful disadvantage, and premunire (to speak so) will ye fall under? your condition is fearful beyond what words can express, or thoughts fully comprehend; Though your Conscience sleep now, It will up upon you, and the longer it sleep, it will (to speak so) waken the hungrier, and gaw the sore: This, O! this, is your great prejudice, ye make yourselves obnoxious to the fearce wrath of the Almighty God, and to the biteing challenges and tormenting accusatsons of your own evil Conscience; which will be more terrible to

you then if hills and mountains did fall on you, the one will be called and cryed for as a favour in comparison of the other; it will in that day appear, that an evil Conscience was, and is a dreadfully evil thing; and ye will have this aggravation of your guilt, even the dispising of the Redeemer, and of the dear price of his precious blood paved for the Ransome of Sinners; of the Physician that offered perfectly at his own cost to cure you; and of the Cautioner that offered freely and frankly to pay your debt; and this will wait upon you, to make the prickings, and peircings the woundings and stoundings, the galings and gnawins of the Conscience moe deep and intolerable: Therefore let e in the name of the Lord, (who is in earnest with you, and we desire accordingPage 373to our measure to be in earnest with you) warn you to flee from the wrath to come; O! know that ye have Consciences, and that they (as I said before) will once awake; and when they shall begin to be roused, O! but they will challenge, and accuse in a dreadful manner; lay your account to meet with such un answerable challenges, and confounding accusations; and if there be no other ground whereon ye can with safety bottom the eternal salvation of your immortal Souls, but the righteousness of Christ; If nothing can possibly purge? and pacify, cleanse and calme the Conscience, but coming to, and washing at this fountain of the blood of Christ; O! come in time; if ye cannot wash yourselves, put him to it, as David doth, Psalm 51. when he cryes, wash me, cleanse me, purge me, wash me throughly from mine iniquities. It will be no excuse, I assure you, it will

be no plea, nor apologie for you in the great day, to alleadge, that ye could not do it; since he offered himself as a fountain to wash at, and to wash you all in particular that hear me this day, and is doing so very seriously just now, if you will imploy, and put him to it: Consider that sad word, Ier. 13:27. Wo unthee, O Ierusalem wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be? it is not, canst thou not make thy self clean? but wilt thou not be made clean? To wit, by me, who am able to do it, and offer to do it freely, if thou beest but honestly willing; This will be the loud and terrible voice wherewith God and the Conscience will in that day cry to many a man and woman that lived under the Gospel, and had this offer, Wo to thee, thou wouldest not be made clean; Thou wouldest not make use of the blood of Christ of this blood of sprinkling, when it was in thine offer; Thou wouldest not come to him that thou mightest have life; Thou wouldst not take him for a Physician to hea thee, but chose rather to ly still wallowing in thy filthiess, and to rot away and die in thy sores and wounds, then to come to him to be cleansed, and cured by him, though he offered to do both very freely: amongst allPage 374the wes that will be denounced then, and executed against sinners, those against professing Christians, who lived under this Gospel, and refused to come to Jesus Christ for Life, and neglected so great a Salvation, will be the loudest and most terrible; the woes of Chorain, and Bethsaida, and of Capernaum will be more inollerable in the day of judgement, then those of Tyre and Sidon; yea, the those of Sodom and Gommorrah; How yet more

terrible and intollerable, suppose ye will be the wo and judgement of them that live now under the clear and bright Sun-shine of Gospel-light? Let me therefore once more earnestly beseech and obtest you in the Name of the Lord, by the love you profess to bear to your own immortal Souls, to take with your sin, and to flee, and speedily to flee to this city of refuge, set open before you; least the avenger of blood, the great avenger of this despised and trampled on blood of the covenant, this blood of sprinkling, over-take you; if you seek not to draw near to God, by this new and living way; but live and die under your defilement, and at distance from him; Wo upon wo, wo upon wo, will eternally take hold of you.

FINIS.