

The New and Living Way into the Holiest

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"Having, therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh. And having an high priest over the house of God; 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." Hebrews 10:19, 20, 21, 22

In the tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness, and subsequently in the temple built by Solomon on mount Moriah, at Jerusalem, there was a veil of "blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen," which ran right across the internal structure, dividing it into two distinct portions, of which the first, viz., that before the veil, was called "the sanctuary," or "the holy place." Into this sanctuary, or, as it is called by the Apostle, "the first tabernacle," (Heb. 9:6,) "the priests," that is, those of ordinary rank, daily entered, "accomplishing the service of God;" for as it contained the altar of incense, the golden candlestick, and the table of shewbread; and as they burnt incense upon the altar night and morning, trimmed the candlestick daily, and weekly changed the loaves of shew-bread, it was necessary for them to enter it to perform these services. But behind the veil there was a portion so peculiarly sacred, so eminently holy, that it was called "the most holy place," or "the holy of holies." This contained "the ark of the covenant, overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant, and over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercy seat." (Heb. 9:4, 5.) Into this "holy of holies" no one was

allowed to enter except the high priest, and he only once a year, on the great day of atonement, as the Apostle speaks—"But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people." By these types and figures spiritual instruction was intended to be conveyed; and the veil of which we have spoken was especially meant to set this great truth before the eyes of ancient Israel—that sin had separated man from God; that the Lord dwelt "in the high and holy place" which no man can approach unto; and that "the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." (Heb. 9:8.) Nor was the instruction intended only for them. It communicates similar lessons of instruction to us. Thus we are instructed thereby that by nature and practice we are separated from God; that there is a veil between him and us; he dwelling in the glory of his own eternal perfections, in his own unapproachable holiness, and we naturally grovelling in sin, carnality, and death. We are also instructed thereby that Jesus Christ, as the great high priest over the house of God, "not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood," which he shed upon the cross, "entered in once into the holy place," that is, the immediate presence of God, "having obtained eternal redemption for us." For in him are all these types and figures accomplished. His human nature is, "a greater and more perfect tabernacle" than that of Moses, for it was "not made with hands." The figurative mercy-seat on and before which the blood on the great day of atonement was sprinkled, is become a throne of grace on which he sits, and where he rules and reigns until he hath put all enemies under his feet. The high priest, under the law, had to leave the holy of holies and to return to his own place; but Jesus having once ascended up into the heavenly glory, there continues at the right hand of God, until he comes a second time, "without sin unto salvation," when all his saints shall

see him as he is and be changed into his image.

In endeavouring to open up the words of the text, I shall—

I—*First*, show what it is to have "*boldness to enter into the holiest.*"

II.—*Secondly*, what are the grounds of this boldness, which we shall find to be three:—1, "*the blood of Jesus;*" 2, the "*new and living way* which he hath consecrated for us;" and 3, because he himself is "*a high priest* over the house of God."

III.—*Thirdly*, I shall open up the encouraging exhortation which the apostle founds upon this threefold firm and blessed basis. "*Let us draw near,*" to do which aright needs these four spiritual qualifications, all of which are the fruit of grace and of grace alone:—1, with *a true heart*; 2, in *full assurance of faith*; 3, having *our hearts sprinkled* from an evil conscience; and 4, our bodies *washed with pure water*.

And may the Lord enable me so to speak that he may grant his blessing to what may fall from my lips this morning!

I.—The "holiest" does not mean here "the holy of holies" of the tabernacle or temple, or any place on earth, but the immediate presence of God in the courts of his heavenly glory. It is called "the holiest," not only in allusion to the holy of holies, but because there a holy God dwells, in the light of his own sacred perfections, in his own eternal majesty, purity, power, greatness, and glory. Now how can any one, born, as we are, in sin, by nature and practice corrupt to the very core—as the prophet describes us, "with the whole head sick, and the whole heart faint," full of wounds and bruises and putrifying sores,—how can we, being what we are as

sinner, and having any sight or feeling of our lost, ruined condition, venture into the holiest, where angels veil their faces, much less how can we enter therein with *boldness*? How can boldness become a sinful creature? When Abraham stood up before God pleading for Sodom, he had to take the language of the lowest abasement into his lips, and call himself "dust and ashes;" he had almost to wonder at his presumption in addressing the Majesty of heaven and offering up petitions for that wicked city:—"behold, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord;" as though it were so great a thing to presume even to draw near to the divine Majesty and address a word to his sacred clemency. Men generally have no idea of this shrinking with awe and dread from the great God of heaven and earth; and the reason is because they never have had any discovery to their soul of the majesty of God. His holiness has never been revealed to their conscience; his purity, justice, and righteousness have never been seen in the light of his tremendous displeasure and fearful indignation against sin and sinners. They therefore think that any one and every one may draw near unto God without any fear or dread; they think that anybody may come into his presence without any view of the blood of Christ, without any feeling even of their need of that blood; without any faith in the Mediator between God and man. They rush into God's presence as though they rather did him a favour than received one, and as if he were necessarily pleased with the words of their mouth, because they are so themselves. How little they think that instead of pleasing God by the works of their own hands and their babbling words, they only offend him; that they only add sin to sin; that they not only live a life altogether displeasing unto him, but that their very worship, so called, is displeasing in his eyes, and that, he says to such worshippers—"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand to

tread my courts? When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear." If there be no faith in the worshipper, God will not accept the worship, for "without faith" it is impossible to please him," and "whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Now the Lord has to teach us lessons which shall cure us of this presumptuous intrusion into his presence, and before he gives us any spiritual and holy boldness, to convince us in the depth of our conscience of his great and terrible majesty, that we may draw near unto him with reverence and godly fear. He therefore convinces us by his Spirit and grace that in his righteous law he is a "consuming fire;" that he is infinitely just and holy; that we cannot see his face and live; that the first gleam of his tremendous justice would banish into eternal perdition any who came nigh to his throne in the confidence of their own righteousness. Thus, by imparting light to see and life to feel who and what he is; by applying his holy law in its spirituality and curse, and by giving us to know something inwardly and experimentally of the sin that dwelleth in us, the Lord effectually cuts up and breaks utterly to pieces that presumptuous vain confidence, that false, self-righteous 'religion' in which we by nature are so cradled up. By his own divine and special teaching he gives us to see and feel that we have not only no natural and inherent right to draw near to the throne of his majesty, but that if we do so in presumptuous ignorance or self-righteous confidence, we only incur his displeasure. "I will be sanctified, saith the Lord, in them that come nigh me." He still is what he was at Mount Sinai, when he said, "Let not the priests and the people break through to come up unto the Lord, lest he break forth upon them."

And yet the apostle in the text speaks of "having boldness to enter into the holiest." How is this to be reconciled with what

I have been just saying? Thus. All boldness that rests upon any goodness of ours—upon any wisdom, strength, or righteousness of the creature, is stamped with presumption, and is the offspring of ignorance and pride. But a boldness that springs out of a living faith in the blood of the Lamb, and from the work and witness of the Holy Spirit in the heart, is not a vain confidence which God abhors, but a fruit of the Spirit which he approves of and loves. And this leads us to our second point, which was—

II.—To show the *grounds* on which we may draw near with holy boldness; and these, as laid down by the apostle, are three.

1. The first is the *blood of Jesus*. The sacrifices under the law, such as that of a lamb without blemish, which was offered morning and evening, and especially the sin offering of which the blood was sprinkled on and before the mercy seat on the great day of atonement, represented the atoning blood of the Son of God. This blood of his pure, spotless humanity was shed for sinners; and, as being the blood of him who is God's co-equal and co-eternal Son, is of infinite value, for all the merit of Godhead is in it. Its meritorious efficacy can never, therefore, be adequately conceived or expressed, for upon it are stamped all the validity, virtue, and infinite merit of God. When the dear Redeemer was crowned with thorns by the Roman soldiers; when he sweat drops of blood in the garden; when he was scourged before being crucified; and more especially when his hands and feet were torn upon the cross,—he shed his precious blood. That blood came from his pure human body; but Godhead, so to speak, was in every drop. And who can describe, as who can measure, the infinite value of Godhead? To do this, you must be able first to measure God, to fathom infinity, to weigh as in a balance, him who fills all time and all space. When you

can accomplish this, then you may find what is the value of the blood of Christ. I wish to dwell specially upon this point, because it is so little seen by the eye of faith that the Godhead of Christ stamped such infinite worth, merit, and validity upon the blood of the manhood. It is this that causes it to be "precious blood," and makes it avail for the cancelling, the blotting out, and the complete putting away of all sin. Until we can see this by the eye of faith, and feel its cleansing power, we can neither see nor feel pardon and salvation through the blood of the Lamb as reaching us: it is to us but common blood, which can neither save nor sanctify. But if you see by the eye of faith Godhead stamped upon the blood of Jesus' pure and spotless humanity, then you see what that blood is as viewed by the eyes of the great and glorious God himself. But let none mistake my meaning: we cannot say it was literally and truly the blood of God, because God has no blood to shed. God has neither parts nor passions, neither sufferings nor sorrows, neither death nor resurrection. But the Son of God has taken into union with his own divine person a nature that could shed blood; that could be sorrowful; that could hunger and thirst; that could suffer and die; and Godhead being united in close and intimate union with that human nature, stamped its own infinite value upon it. This is the reason why his blood gives a poor, needy, naked, guilty sinner such boldness to enter into the holiest. He looks to the blood, and not to himself. It is with him in a sense as with the angel that passed by in Egypt: he looked to the blood and to nothing else; he saw it sprinkled upon the lintel and door posts; and seeing it sprinkled there, he passed by. There was nothing, so to speak, in the blood itself: it was merely the blood of a lamb. But because God had appointed that there should be value in that blood so sprinkled, the angel passed over that house without executing his commission of death. Had the people sprinkled their own blood on the lintel, the angel would not

have passed it by; but being the blood of the Pascal lamb—a lamb of God's providing—and that blood being sprinkled according to God's own appointment, the angel looked upon it, and passed away from the house without smiting the first-born. As the angel, then, viewed the blood sprinkled upon the lintel, and owning God's appointment, recognised the sign; so we, if we have eyes of faith to look to the atoning blood, as the appointed way of access unto God, may have holy boldness to come into the holiest.

Nor will anything satisfy a living soul but coming "into the holiest." He wants to have communion with God, the holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts. He is not dealing with a God distant and afar off—an idol—a God in whom he has neither faith, nor hope, nor love; who can neither see, nor hear, nor save; a God of his own conception or of some indistinct traditional opinion; but he feels in his very conscience that he is carrying on a sacred and holy intercourse with the God of heaven and earth—the God who has made himself in some measure known to his soul as the God and Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. With him he has to do; to him he must come; and with him he must hold holy communion. Before his heart-searching eyes he feels he stands; into his ever-open ears he pours his petitions; to his mercy and pity he appeals; his compassion he craves; his love he seeks; his salvation he longs for; and his presence above all things he earnestly desires. So he must come into the holiest, for there God dwells; and to come unto God is to come there. The man who thus feels and acts is an Israelite indeed in whom there is no guile; one of the true circumcision who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Jesus Christ, and have no confidence in the flesh. Others are satisfied with the courts of the house, or with admiring the external building, the painted windows, carved pews, and long-drawn aisles—with the mere worship of God as so much lip service. But the living soul goes

beyond all that into the very heart of the sanctuary itself. As the high priest on the day of atonement did not tarry amongst the people in the court, nor with the priests in the holy place, but pressed on, ever pressed on through the thick veil until he got into the holy of holies: so with the saint of God—he does not tarry in the outer court with the profane, nor, in the sanctuary with the professor, so as to be satisfied with seeing God with a veil between. But he must come into that immediate presence of God, where he may see something of his grace, behold something of his glory, feel something of his mercy, and taste something of his power. And this makes him press forward into the holiest.

But he is a sinner. How can he venture nigh? Can God accept a sinner like him? Can he bless him with his presence? shed his love abroad in his heart? manifest his compassion and mercy to his soul? Yes, he can through the blood that has been shed to bring him nigh; blood to wash away his sins, blood to reconcile him to God. For blood having been shed which has eternal validity and infinite value, it ever avails. It has availed for thousands of saints in times past; it avails for thousands of saints now; it will avail for every saint who has yet to come into existence. As the blood of Abel cried from the ground, and ever cried until justice had found against Cain what that blood demanded,—vengeance; so the blood of Christ keeps ever crying for mercy, mercy, mercy upon the family of God. When, then, they get a view of this atoning blood, they find such holy boldness communicated, that they can, upon the strength of that, venture nigh. Though they cannot approach in themselves, they can approach under the cover of the atoning blood of Christ. As a man must not go by himself into the presence of the Queen uninvited, unintroduced, but may go when properly ushered in, after the expression of her willingness to receive him; so the soul cannot come nigh to God of itself, but through the Mediator

and through atoning blood it may find boldness to come. This is the first ground of our entrance with boldness into the holiest.

2. The second ground is, that Jesus has consecrated "*a new and living way through the veil*—that is to say, his flesh." The veil of the temple represented the flesh of Jesus Christ: it was "of cunning work," which represents how the human nature of Christ was "curiously wrought"—that is, begotten by Divine power in the Virgin's womb; not as we are generated by natural conception, but generated by supernatural conception, by the immediate influence and spiritual operation of the Holy Ghost upon the flesh of the Virgin Mary. Thus it was "curiously wrought," as the Psalmist speaks, "in the lowest parts of the earth." And as the veil consisted of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen with cherubims worked into its substance, which made it beautiful and glorious; so the flesh of Jesus has beauty and glory in it, because it is pure flesh—not like ours, tainted with sin, mortality, and disease. Daring men have impiously speculated whether Christ could sin. They might as well ask whether God could sin. The body of Christ knew no sin;—it was impossible that it could sin, from its very constitution, and its union with Godhead. And it was equally impossible that it could suffer sickness. There was no disease in the human body of Christ. He was weary, but never sick. Neither was it mortal: that is, there were no seeds of death inherent in it. It was made able to die; but dying only by the voluntary act of the Lord himself, whose own words are—"I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." When the Lord Jesus Christ died upon the cross, the veil was rent in twain, which showed two things: first the rending of the human nature of the Son of God—that as the veil was rent in the temple, so by his sufferings the human nature of the Lord Jesus Christ was torn and rent, and his soul by death severed

from his body. Secondly, that heaven was now open; that the holiest was now laid bare for poor sinners to draw near; that God was no longer separated from man; that the holy beams of his gracious countenance were no longer intercepted; but that power and privilege were given to those who believed to enter into the most holy place. The apostle therefore tells us that Jesus has made and consecrated "*a new and living way* through the veil, that is to say, his flesh." It is a new way; the other was the old way—the way of the old covenant, which had endured for nearly fifteen hundred years, and was now vanishing away. The new way is the way of the new covenant—a way of God's own eternal devising, but then newly revealed—a way suitable to the new creature—a way ever new in opening grace, and ever new in budding glory; ever new in encouraging poor sinners to come; ever new morning after morning and evening after evening. Thus Jesus, having opened a new way to heaven, and giving us new eyes to see it, new ears to hear of it, and new feet to walk in it, is day by day again and again opening a new way that we may enter through his own rent flesh into the immediate presence of God. You may feel very often cold, stupid, and lifeless. Were you then to make your own state the ground of drawing near, you must ever keep away from the mercy-seat. But Christ having opened the way, it is still ever open; and being ever new, it is adapted to all our ever-recurring wants. Because I am cold, stupid, unfeeling, this does not close the road. My inability does not make the veil close again that has once been rent asunder; nor do my doubtings block up the way. It is ever new and it is ever open. Therefore the apostle adds a "*living way*;" the other was but a dead way. The priest took the blood of a dead animal; he himself was a dying mortal; the blood was sprinkled upon and before a mercy-seat made by dying hands, where it chilled as it fell and soon dried up into dust. There was therefore no life in it; and it could not

communicate what it had not. So it proved with the sons of Eli, Hophni and Phineas: the blood they took in their hands and sprinkled upon the mercy-seat could not save their souls; because it was dead blood. The way in which they went was a dead way, because there was no spiritual life in it, nor any spiritual faith, hope, or love in their souls. Nor was life demanded of the high priests. All that was required was that they should slay the animal, take the blood, and sprinkle it as they were bid. No spiritual service was required. They were indeed types and figures of spiritual things; but as long as the sacrifices were properly offered according to the Mosaic ritual, the law was satisfied. But we have now a living way—not only a way ever new and ever opening up with new beauty and new grace, new mercy and new suitability, but a way both living in itself and communicating life. Being a living way, it is adapted to a living soul. But it requires a living faith to tread it; it inspires a living hope as it is trodden; it communicates a living love to him who first opened it, and to all who walk in his footsteps. Nor is there a living grace of the Spirit which is not engaged, as this new and living way is walked in. We may say, therefore, that as faith embraces it, hope enjoys it, and love delights in it, so godly fear reveres it; patience endures the trials that are found in it; prayer and watchfulness are kept alive in it; every internal and external fruit of godliness are found in it; and last and best, the end of it is the salvation of the soul.

3. But the apostle gives us also a third ground of holy boldness: *"having a high priest over the house of God."* The high priest under the law had two chief offices to perform: 1, he had first to offer sacrifice; and 2, to intercede for the people. We see this last in the case of Aaron, who, when wrath had gone out from the Lord against the children of Israel, took a censer and put on incense and thus stood between the dead and the living. Both these parts of the

priestly office Jesus fulfils. He offered sacrifice when he offered himself—his holy body, and soul, and blood—as an offering for sin. But he ascended up to the most holy place, and took his seat on the right hand of the Majesty on high. Heaven welcomed his presence; the gates lifted up their heads, and the everlasting doors were lifted up, and the King of glory entered in with a shout of jubilee. There he sits, and there not only reigns and rules as King in Zion, but, as the high priest over the house of God, is ever presenting, not vocal powers, but the merits of his sacrifice and death. As the high priest under the law, on the great day of atonement, entered into the holiest, with both his hands full of sweet incense, which he put on the fire in a censer until the cloud of the smoke covered the ark and the mercy seat; so Jesus, the high priest over the house of God, is filling heaven itself, the courts of eternal bliss, with the merits of his sacrifice and death, which is in fact his intercession. He shed his blood upon earth, but the virtue of that blood he took into heaven. He cried, and groaned, and sweat blood here below; but he took the merit of that crying and groaning and bloody sweat into the immediate presence of God; and there he sits as our great representative. He has taken into the immediate presence of God the very body he wore below, the same human bones, the same human flesh; glorified indeed beyond all conception, but still the same identical substance which he took in the womb of the Virgin, and which hung upon the cross in agony. This is proved beyond all doubt by his words to Thomas after his resurrection:—"Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands: and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into my side." This is a fundamental article of our most holy faith—that the man Christ Jesus is now at God's right hand, a very man—not a shadowy, aerial substance. "There is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." God looks at him as such with eyes of intense delight, with ever new approbation and

love; and views him as the representative of all that are interested in him: he being the head, the church the members; he the bridegroom, the church the bride; he the great high priest, and the church the house of God. As living for her at the right hand of the Father, he is ever presenting on her behalf the validity of his intercession. The fact, the reality that he is there, is the church's joy, as it is all her hope and all her boast. "Because I live, ye shall live also." To him, then, do we direct our prayers; on his glorious person we fix our believing eyes; upon his blood we hang our hope; under his righteousness we ever desire to shelter; to feel his presence, taste his grace, experience his love, and know his power, is what our soul, under divine teaching, is ever longing for. See, then, the grounds of holy boldness for a poor sinner to enter into the holiest. Blood has been shed, which blood has the validity of Godhead stamped upon it. A new and living way has been consecrated, in which a living soul may walk. A great high priest is set over the house of God, who is ever presenting the merits of his intercession. Thus, those who feel their need of him, who cannot live and dare not die without him, whose eyes are upon him and hearts towards him, are encouraged to enter with all holy boldness into the holiest, that they may have communion with Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

III.—And now comes, in our third and last place, the divine exhortation which is grounded upon these blessed realities:—*"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."*

1. "Let us draw near:" as though he should say—"Let us not keep away. What holds thee back? Is it guilt, fear, bondage, darkness, and death? Why should these things keep thee back? Art thou looking to thine own righteousness to bring

thee near?—to thine own goodness, holiness, strength, and power?" What do you believe to be the ground of any poor sinner entering into the holiest? Is self in any shape or form the ground that God has revealed, or faith embraces? Certainly not; for were it so, how could any draw near? And yet all are influenced more or less by these feelings. We cannot indeed well get rid of them. They are part and parcel of ourselves. When we are in darkness, under distress of conscience, or when guilt lies hard and heavy upon the soul, these things do, and must until removed, keep us back. But are we ever to give heed to these enemies of our soul's peace? Are we never to press through the crowd? How was it with the man who was paralyzed for so many years? He might for ever have lain helpless upon his bed, had he not been brought into the presence of Jesus. How with the woman with the issue of blood? She might for ever have tarried on the skirts of the crowd, a poor, polluted, self-condemned wretch. But she pressed through the crowd, and got to touch the hem of Jesus' garment. So with us. Shall we ever dwell in the outskirts—in the outer court of the temple? Shall we merely walk round Zion's bulwarks and tarry at her doors, or shall we venture into the holiest itself? Shall we, driven out by fear, act like Cain and go out from the presence of the Lord? Or shall we, with all our sins and discouragements, still draw near? The apostle encourages us to come with holy boldness to the throne of grace, and to venture into the presence of the King of kings. Esther would have ruined herself and all her nation had she given way to the weakness of the flesh; but she said—"I will go in to the king, and if I perish I perish." She went in with that resolution. The king held forth the sceptre; Esther touched it, and she and the people were saved. So in grace. Shall we ever keep away through guilt, and sin, and shame? Now the Holy Ghost not only in the word of truth encourages, but he himself from time to time enables us to draw near. And when

we draw near under his divine operations, we feel the blessedness of so doing. Liberty is given, access, holy freedom, a spirit of prayer, power to take hold of God, to wrestle for the blessing, and sometimes to agonize with earnest sighs and groans and the energy of one of old:—"I will not let thee go except thou bless me." This is "drawing near."

But the apostle speaks of four things, which are either necessary qualifications, or blessed accompaniments.

1. The first is, I may say, indispensable: "*a true heart.*" If a man has not a true heart, he has not a new heart. If he is not sincere, he is nothing. To be a hypocrite in religion is indeed a fearful thing. Better make no profession than one which does not spring out of some divine operation on the heart, some measure of godly fear in the soul. It is of no use your drawing near to God except with a true heart. He neither accepts you nor your offering. He searches every secret recess of the soul; no hidden corner escapes his omniscient eye. No idle excuses avail with him, and no hypocritical pretence can deceive him, however it may deceive you. All real religion begins with a true heart, with sincerity and uprightness of spirit before God. A true heart will always bring a sinner before God, with confession of his sinfulness; will always show a man the inward deceitfulness of his fallen nature, and make him long more and more for sincerity and godly simplicity as a gift from God. There are those in the living family who cannot speak of a great and marked experience—who have not many depths to tell of in which they have sunk, or many glorious heights to which they have been raised, who yet have "a true heart," and sometimes show more sincerity and uprightness before God and man than those of deeper experience—It is not always those who have been most favoured who show most sincerity

either in heart or conduct, either in lip or life. Not but that a good experience is very desirable; not but that it is sweet to enjoy the gracious manifestations of the love and mercy of God to the soul. But there are saints of God whom he keeps very low as to any sensible enjoyment of his presence and love, whose conscience he makes and keeps very tender; in whose hearts he works much sincerity; and whose lives he blessedly adorns with the fruits of righteousness. There are those in the professing church who adorn the doctrine and those who disgrace it; those who will live upon a crust sooner than get into debt, and those who will try to make a show amongst men at any risk or cost; there are those who live and walk in the fear of God, and those whom you would not think to be Christians at all unless they told you in so many words they were so.

2. The second necessary qualification, or at least sweet accompaniment, of drawing near is, the "*full assurance of faith*"—not necessarily as to personal interest, though that is sweet and blessed. The apostle is not speaking here so much of the full assurance of faith as regards personal interest, as of the full assurance of faith upon these divine realities. Faith and assurance are the same thing; only assurance is faith blessedly strengthened. We may compare faith to a sapling—an oak, say, taken out of the nursery ground and planted in the park. Assurance we may compare to the same oak grown and strengthened, and has stood many a storm, and enjoyed many a sun, endured a hundred summers and winters. But the assurance of faith spoken of here is rather the strength of faith in and upon these blessed realities—a strong faith in the blood, in the new and living way, and in the great high priest over the house of God; a firm confidence in the blood as able to cleanse, in the new and living way as a suitable way to walk in, and in the high priest over the house of God as in every way acceptable to the soul and adapted to all its

wants and woes. Now a man may have flying doubts and fears as to his own personal interest, and yet have a strong assurance of faith in and upon the efficacy of the blood to cleanse, the blessedness of the way to walk in, and the suitability of the Saviour to save; and he may have such a full assurance upon all these as shall encourage him to venture his soul upon that blood, to be daily walking in that new and living way, and to be looking up with a believing eye to that great high priest, and trust body, soul, life, and death into his blessed hand. Nor can I call that man weak in faith who can do this in spite of every doubt and fear.

3. The next thing—as I must not tarry longer upon this point—is to have *"our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience."* An evil conscience is a guilty conscience—a conscience that testifies evil against the soul; and a guilty conscience is one of the saddest companions a man can carry about with him. It is a companion he would gladly be rid of, but one that is not so easily dismissed. It ever testifies against the poor sinner whose steps it attends: it is ever reminding him of sin committed—of death and judgment—ever telling him that he has transgressed beyond all reach of hope; that his crimes are too great to be forgiven; that he has sinned against light, conviction, and knowledge; and that such a sinner as he is not to be found amongst the saints of God. Now, his heart is to be sprinkled from this evil conscience. And how? By the application of atoning blood. As the high priest sprinkled blood on and before the mercy-seat, so blood has to be sprinkled upon the heart. And when the blood is revealed and applied, the heart is delivered from the evil conscience; it is put to flight, and speaks evil no more. This application of atoning blood removes bondage, fear, guilt, and trouble. Nor until his heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience can a guilty sinner with any degree of confidence draw near unto God. God seems to repel him. His holiness

glistens before his eyes, and all he sees of God is a consuming fire. But if he see and feel the efficacy of atoning blood, and that be sprinkled upon his conscience, and then the evil conscience departs; it is cast out of him; and then he is enabled to draw near unto the holiest.

4. The fourth and last thing necessary is, "*the body washed with pure water.*" This does not refer to the water of baptism, but to the priests, and especially the high priest, who washed himself, on the day of atonement, with pure water before he put on the holy garments or entered the sanctuary. It, therefore, signifies being sanctified by the Spirit of God, and walking in all holiness and godliness of life. We know it is naturally unbecoming to go into the earthly courts of the Most High in dirty clothes and with unwashed body. It is not becoming the majesty of God, the reverence due to his name, or the day on which we meet, to come here with soiled clothes and unclean hands and faces. Persons may be poor, but they need not be dirty; clothes may be threadbare, but they may be clean. So in a spiritual sense: the body is to be washed with pure water, that is, the life, the conversation, the walk must be in some measure what the body is when washed and cleaned. How uncomely it is to see a professor of religion, as one may say, in all the dirt and filth of his old nature clinging to him; to see him living as the ungodly live, and disgracing his profession by acts of meanness, and those dirty actions which bring with them universal contempt. Therefore, the body is to be washed with pure water, and, as well as the soul, is to be sanctified to the honor, service, and glory of God.

These are the things that we are to know something of in our soul's happy experience. Without them, we seem very far from being what the apostle would have us to be—manifested saints of the most high God. But I must leave the

issue in the hands of the Lord. I have this morning laid these things before you: it remains with him to apply and bless them, and make them instructive and edifying, encouraging and comforting. In his hands I leave it; and may he who has the blessing in his own hands be pleased to communicate it to our hearts.