Christ The Living Way

By A. B. Simpson (1843 – 1919)

"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. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;) and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Heb. 10:19-24).

These profound words tell us of five things: two things which we have, and three things which we are to do.

The Things We Have

1. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. We see before us a model of the ancient tabernacle – God's most perfect type of Christ and our Christian life. Entering the gate and the court, we are beside the altar of sacrifice and the laver of cleansing, which tell us of Christ's atonement for our sins, and the Holy Spirit's cleansing work in our hearts. Passing still further in through the door we come to the Holy Place; and the candlestick, the table of shew bread, and the altar of incense proclaim to us, in symbol, the illumination of the Holy Spirit in the heart where He dwells, the living bread with which Jesus nourishes those who abide in Him, the sweet communion with God which that altar and its incense set forth, and all that is meant by abiding in the secret place of the Most High and dwelling in intimate fellowship with Jesus. Still further in stands the Holy of Holies, separated only by the veil, and entered only by the high priest once a year on the Great Day of Atonement. It is the symbol of the presence and glory of God, of the heavenly world and of the access into it, which even here we may enjoy in the sweet fellowship of Jesus.

All this imagery is called up by the text. Dean Alford translates the phrase, "Holy Places," and so makes it mean all the chambers of the tabernacle, even the court, and including the Holy of Holies. Thus it would express all the fullness of our spiritual privileges in Christ – the life in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, as the apostle calls it in the epistle to the Ephesians. Especially, however, it refers to the inner chamber and expresses our complete and unobstructed access to all the fullness of God.

Had you stood in that tabernacle three thousand years ago, you would have seen the view of that inner chamber obscured by the heavy veil covered with its symbolical embroideries which hung between: this veil and its embroideries spoke of Judaism and its types, which as yet obstructed the full view of the heavenly world, and yet in a measure foreshadowed them. Had you stood in that tabernacle, however, on the Great Day of Atonement, you would have seen a solitary man, robed in priestly garments, pass through that veil, with a censer full of burning

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coals and a bunch of hyssop saturated with sacrificial blood, and for a moment stand within that holiest place and sprinkle that altar with the blood while he made intercession for the waiting congregation outside; and then you would have seen him retire with solemn awe, close the veil behind him, and enter no more until the year was ended.

All this received its literal fulfillment on that day when, outside the eastern gate of Jerusalem, the Son of God died on Calvary, and His mortal flesh was rent by the death-stroke. Suddenly, the watchers in the temple beheld that mighty veil, that hung so high that human hands could not have reached it, rent asunder from top to bottom, proclaiming that from henceforth the way to the holiest of all was opened, and that there was no barrier between the believing sinner and the holy God.

The way is opened to us to the altar of atonement for full and complete forgiveness, to the laver of cleansing for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, to the golden candlestick for the fullness of the Holy Spirit's light and teaching, to the table of shew bread for the living bread which will sustain us in our spiritual and physical being, to the altar of incense for Christ's own intercession for us and constant access ourselves for communion with God.

The ark of the covenant, guarding and keeping for us God's holy law, tells us of our access to complete sanctification in Christ, and the blood of sprinkling that keeps us ever accepted in His sight. We may come even to the very Shekinah of His presence to walk ever in the light of His countenance and dwell in the bosom of His love. Not timidly and with a sense of unworthiness are we to walk, but boldly, knowing that we are unworthy, but that Jesus Christ has purchased for us all these redemption rights, and that we may fully claim them without doubt or fear. We have boldness by the blood of Jesus. We can take as much as that is worth. We were unworthy, but all has been covered by His satisfaction. We could not have come ourselves, but He has become our living way. We could not have put that veil aside, but God rent it from top to bottom through the death of His dear Son, and our crucifixion with Him, for the veil is His flesh.

In His earthly body He represented our sinful humanity, and bore in His own person all the liabilities of lost men, and was really counted a sinner in the eye of the law of God. That flesh stood between us and God; therefore it had to die in place of the guilty race, and when Christ's flesh was crucified on Calvary, it was the same as if the guilty race had been judged and slain. The obstruction was immediately removed, and the way for access into the presence of God was opened.

There is a very deep spiritual application in all this for us. Before the Holy of Holies can be fully opened to our hearts, and we can enter into the immediate presence and communion of God, the veil upon our hearts must be rent asunder, and this comes as it came on Calvary – by the death of our flesh. It is when we yield our own natural self to God to die, and He slays us by the power of His Spirit, that the obstruction to our communion with God is removed and we enter into its deeper fullness. The greatest hindrance to our peace and victory is the flesh. Whenever the consciousness of self rises vividly before you, and you become absorbed in your own troubles, cares, rights or wrongs, you at once lose communion with God, and a cloud of darkness falls over your spirit.

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There is really nothing else that hurts or hinders us but this heavy weight of evil, this seed of Satan, this embodiment of the inmost essence of sin, this great mimic and antagonism of God, whose place it usurps, whose throne it claims, whose prerogatives it dares to monopolize. We can never rend it asunder, but the Holy Spirit can. It dies only on the cross of Jesus and on the pierced bosom of His love, under the fire of His descending Spirit. Bring it to Him, give Him the right to slay it, reckon it dead, and then the veil will be rent asunder, the Holy of Holies will open wide, the light of the Shekinah will shine through all the house of God, and the glory of heaven shall be revealed in your heart and life, and your inmost being become like that ancient tabernacle when illuminated by the golden candlestick and the Shekinah of God's visible presence.

2. We have a High Priest over the house of God. Not only have we a home to shelter us, but we have an Elder Brother to welcome and love us.

The ministry of the ancient high priest was very important. It was he that opened the way into the holiest and made reconciliation for the sins of the people. So our great High Priest has opened for us the way and keeps it ever open, *"seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for [us]"* (Heb. 7:25). It is His business to settle for us the question of our sins and to keep us cleansed from their power and saved from their effects. The time to go to Him is not when you feel strong in your victories, but when baffled, defeated, and crushed by temptation and conscious unworthiness. He that washed the disciples' feet still stands in the heavenly court girded with the towel of priestly service, and with open bosom ready to pour His precious blood over all your stains. Let us, therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace, even to obtain mercy, as well as to find grace to help in time of need.

The ancient priest also ministered to the suffering and the sick. It was his business to inspect the leper, to offer the sacrifices for his cleansing, to pronounce him clean; and so our great High Priest is also our great Physician, and heals all our diseases, comforts all our sorrows, and binds up our broken hearts. He is able to be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, for He was *"in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin"* (Heb. 4:15).

Also, he bore upon his shoulders and upon his breast in jeweled letters the names of Israel's tribes, and so Christ bears us upon the shoulders of His strength and the bosom of His love in unceasing faithfulness and unfailing strength. He presents our prayers before the throne with acceptance to His Father and ours. He keeps our relations with God always right. He remembers us in constant intercession, even when we ourselves may not know our need, nor what to pray for as we ought.

In a word, He superintends and carries on the entire business of our spiritual life, and is for us *"the author and finisher of our faith"* (Heb. 12:2). We have such a High Priest. He is there in our behalf. He has been appointed by His Father for this great trust; He has given Himself to us for this great business. We have accepted Him as such; He belongs to us. Let us make use of this glorious opportunity, and *"seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. …Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need"* (4:14, 16).

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What We Should Do

1. ***"Let us draw near."*** This is to say, let us not live a distant, cold, and timid life, but let us enter into all the fullness of our privileges, and live in the intimate friendship of our Savior. Let us come with a single purpose to please and obey Him with a true heart and an honest single aim. Let us come in full assurance of faith, not timidly dreading a reproof or a blow but sweetly knowing that we are welcome, and like a happy child pressing right up into the bosom of our Father. And even if we are conscious of unworthiness, let us come with a heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, and bodies washed with pure water. There is cleansing for us, if we have erred, in that precious blood and that renewing Spirit's grace, and not even our imperfections should keep us back from communion with God and the joy of His presence.

It is a very beautiful provision of the old time that the blemished priest might not minister at the altar, but he may eat of the priestly bread. A broken limb or a crooked joint disqualified him from standing at the altar as an officiating priest, but not from entering the Holy place and feeding upon the provisions for the priesthood. This is a beautiful token that Christ's most imperfect children are welcome to His love and grace, and may ever draw near for His help and comfort, and while this must not encourage weakness, yet let it ever keep us from discouragements, and constrain us to draw still nearer to His breast, and so to live that we shall ever please Him, and not have sin to bring Him, but grateful love and holy service.

2. ***"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for He is faithful that promised;)"*** or rather, let us hold fast the faith or hope which we have professed. This hope of ours and this faith refer to the great eternal goal of faith and hope – our complete salvation through Christ Jesus. But it also applies to every confidence which God has given to us, and every promise which He has permitted us to claim. Let us stand steadfastly in the trust which He has given us, and let us do so without a faltering movement nor a trembling fiber. Let us stand unshaken in our confidence, and let us do so because He stands firmly at the other end. The cable yonder is fastened round the throne. Let it be fastened around our hearts in inflexible and immovable security, and thus standing upon His promises and holding fast our confidence, He is not hindered on His side in fulfilling all His purposes of blessing.

3. ***"Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works."*** Such glorious privileges should make us unselfish and devoted and find expression in lives of loving service. As travelers ascending dangerous mountains tie their bodies together with strong cords, so that if one should fall the others will support him; so God has linked our hearts and lives together by innumerable cords of sympathy, suffering and mutual influence; and if one member suffers all suffer. Particularly are we, who have entered into the holiest and are walking into the inner presence of God, expected to be loving, and cheerful, and helpful to one another, and to bear the burdens of the weak and suffering. The best evidence you can give that you are a strong Christian is to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please yourself, *"for even Christ pleased not Himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached You fell on Me"* (Rom. 15:3). Therefore let us consider one another, hold up each other, bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. Let us carry one another in the sweet ministry of prayer. Let us be patient with each other. Let us be very considerate of each other's faults and failings, and let us prove that we have indeed a deeper life and a fuller blessing, by pouring it out abundantly on those who lack.

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Such, then, beloved, are our privileges and responsibilities. Let us more fully possess the former, and more faithfully shall we perform the latter. More intimately let us draw near, more constantly let us dwell in the secret of His presence, and more faithfully shall we fulfill our duties to others in every earthly relationship, and let us do this so much the more as we see the day approaching. Our Lord is coming before long, and this blessed hope, if fully realized, will make all our trials, irritations and provocations seem light and small in comparison with the one great object of winning His approval and wearing the crown which He will give to him that overcomes.

– Taken from *The Names Of Jesus* by A. B. Simpson.

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