High Priest ; but here his Priesthood, not  
his High Priesthood, is more brought into  
prominence. He is *a great Priest*, because  
He is a Priest on his throne, a kingly  
Priest, and priestly King) **over the house  
of God** (the **house of God** here need not  
be more limited in meaning than in the  
similar passage ch. iii. 2. It is alleged  
that the expression here must mean the  
heaven. But Delitzsch well observes that   
the one meaning, the narrower, need not  
exclude the other, the wider. It is hardly  
probable, to begin with, that our Writer  
should in two places describe Christ as set  
*over the house of God*, in meanings entirely different from each other, clearly,  
the heavenly sanctuary is regarded by him  
as also including the earthly, the church  
above as the home of the church below :  
see ch. xii. 22 ff.);

**22.] let us approach** (*draw near to God*. So that the  
clauses which follow are best regarded as  
both belonging to this *approach*, since they  
also describe requisite preparations for worship: see this further treated below, on  
ver. 23) **with a true heart** (*without hypocrisy*, Chrysostom. So Hezekiah pleads,  
Isa. xxxviii. 3, “I have walked before thee  
in truth with a perfect (Septuagint, ‘true’)  
heart”) **in fall assurance** (ch. vi. 11: see  
note there) **of faith** (with no doubt as  
to the certainty of our access to God by  
the blood of Jesus), **having our hearts  
sprinkled from** (meaning, “sprinkled, and  
by that sprinkling cleansed from”) **an  
evil conscience** (a conscience polluted  
with the guilt of sin: for “if a man’s  
practice be bad, his conscience, in so far  
it is the consciousness of that practice, is *evil*”), **and having our body  
washed with pure water** (both these  
clauses refer to the legal purifications of  
the Levitical priests, which took place by  
means of blood and water. At their first  
dedication, Aaron and his sons were  
sprinkled with blood, their bodies and  
their clothes, Exod. xxxi. 21; Lev. viii.  
30). And so are we to be as God’s priests,  
having access to Him, sprinkled with  
blood, not outwardly with that of the ram  
of consecration, but inwardly with that  
of the Lamb of God: the first could only  
produce *purity of the flesh* [ch. ix. 13],  
but the second, pureness of heart and  
conscience in God’s sight. The washing  
with water also [Exod. xxix. 4] was to be  
part of the cleansing of Aaron and his sons:  
nor only so, but as often as they entered  
the holy place or approached the altar,  
they were to wash their hands and feet in  
the brazen laver, Exod. xxx. 20; xl. 30–32: and the High Priest, on the day of  
atonement, *was to wash his whole body  
with water*, Lev. xvi. 4. There can be no  
reasonable doubt that this clause refers  
directly to Christian baptism. The *“font  
of the water”* of Eph. v. 26, and the  
*“font of regeneration,”* Tit. iii. 5, are  
analogous expressions: and the express  
mention of **body** here, as distinguished  
from *“heart”* before, stamps this interpretation  
with certainty. This distinction  
makes it impossible, with Calvin, and  
others, to spiritualize away the meaning  
into “the Spirit and doctrine of Christ,—  
the spiritual water with which Christ  
sprinkles his own: even His blood is  
not here excluded” [Schlichting]; for the  
word **body** confines the reference to an outward act. And so the majority of Commentators. Still in maintaining the externality  
of the words, as referring, and referring  
solely, to Baptism, we must remember, that  
Baptism itself is not a mere external rite,  
but at every mention of it carries the  
thought further, viz. to that spiritual  
washing of which it is itself symbolical  
and sacramental. Notice here that the  
word is **body**, and not *“flesh,”* as ch. ix.  
13: our whole natural life, and not the  
mere outside surface: that in which our  
soul dwells and works, the seat of the  
emotions and desires: this also must be  
purified in those who would approach God  
in Christ. So that I would understand  
with Delitzsch, that the *sprinkling the  
heart from an evil conscience* is, so to speak,  
intra-sacramental, a spiritual application  
of the purifying Blood, beyond sacramental  
rites, and the *washing the body with pure  
water* is purely sacramental, the effect of  
baptism taken in its whole blessed meaning and fulfilment as regards our natural  
existence. The end of his note very  
beautiful: “As priests we are sprinkled,  
as priests we are bathed : sprinkled so that