

Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit.

THE SINE QUA NON.

A Sermon

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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

"Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."—John xiii. 8.

IN matchless condescension our Lord had girt himself as a servant, and was washing the feet of the disciples. Peter, struck with such a spectacle, would not allow his Lord to act as a menial, and flatly refused to have his feet washed by his Master; but he changed his mind at once when he was told that a refusal to receive this act of kindness from his Lord would be a virtual rejection of all part in him, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." I do not think our Lord here was thinking so much of the literal washing, as of that which the outward ablution was meant to represent. This is clear when we remember that our Lord replied to Peter concerning this washing, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." Now as to the literal washing, Peter knew all about it, and there was nothing to be explained hereafter, except its inner meaning, and spiritual teaching. This it was that Peter did not then know, and was afterwards to learn. Our Lord therefore evidently referred not so much to the actual foot-washing, as to the spiritual washing, which is absolutely essential to all his people. Remember too, that the mere cleansing of the feet did not involve union to Christ, for the feet of Judas were washed, and our Lord did not at all mean that Judas should imagine that he had any part with the Lord whom he was resolved to betray. The traitor was numbered amongst the disciples, and therefore he partook of the outward ordinance, but it did not convey to him any spiritual interest in Christ Jesus. Therefore we conclude that the foot-washing was only secondarily important. Yet we deny not that our Lord did mean so much about this mere outward washing, that had Peter obstinately refused to yield to it, he would have proved himself to have had no true loyalty of heart, and consequently no part in Christ. Any act of direct and intentional rebellion against Christ's authority, obstinately and knowingly continued in, would be a sure token that the person guilty of it was no true partaker with Christ. How shall I be his servant if I wilfully reject any one of his commands? How can I consider myself to be truly a Christian while my will is unsubdued, and refuses to submit to the express orders

of my Lord? Let us consider this as professors, and practise instant obedience. Never let us obstinately refuse obedience to a command because it seems to us to be nonessential or trivial. We are not to be judges but servants. No motive can excuse disobedience. Let us ask for grace that as soon as ever we see a sin to be sin we may shun it, and as soon as we perceive a duty to be a duty we may at once practise it, and never be guilty of any wilful rebellion, since that might prove us to be without Christ. However, I still believe that Christ's main teaching in my text referred not to the washing with water, but to the cleansing of our spiritual nature by his precious blood and by his Eternal Spirit. In this sense read again the words, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

I. First suffer me to occupy your thoughts a few minutes with THE GREAT OBJECT OF OUR DESIRE.

Our great object is to have *a part in Jesus Christ*. I am addressing myself, for the most part, to those who regularly hear the word, and who have a respect for the name of Jesus, and a longing to be saved with his salvation. I hope there is not one among us who would consider it a barren honour to have part with Christ, nor one who would think it to be a small calamity to be deprived of his part with Jesus the Son of God. Brethren, you and I desire to have part in the merit of his righteousness. We have no righteousness of our own, but we desire that he should be the Lord our Righteousness, that in his righteousness arrayed we should not be found naked in the day of the great wedding feast, but with the wedding garment on may sit down to the marriage supper. We desire to have a part in his death. Jesus died that he might make atonement for guilt, and we desire a part in his atoning sacrifice. We are guilty; our heart yearns to be washed in the blood, to be cleansed by that expiation, and to stand before the Lord accepted in the Beloved. We hope that the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world will give us a part in his sin-removing power. We believe in his resurrection, and our prayer is that we may have part in it, so that because he rose we also may rise, and may for ever, both in body and in soul, enjoy eternal blessedness. Our faith has seen the crucified One ascending to the skies, and we desire a part in his ascension, to share in the blessings which he received for rebellious men when he led captivity captive; yea, and ere long to tread that selfsame starry way, and enter into the rest where he is, and behold the glory which God hath given to him. We aspire to share in his intercession. Before the Father's throne he presents his ever accepted supplication, and we trust that he pleads for us that blessings numberless may descend upon us unworthy ones. We were wretched indeed, if we had not a persuasion that we share a part in the pleadings of our great High Priest. We trust our name is engraven on one of the precious stones of his breastplate, and is so borne before God. Moreover, we know that Christ sitteth at the right hand of God as King, all things being delivered into his hands, and we desire to have a part with him in his kingdom, to be partakers of the peace which his sceptre brings; yea, and to be ourselves made kings to reign with him. Moreover, we expect his second advent. In the same manner as he went up to heaven, in that selfsame manner will he descend, with the trump of the archangel and

the voice of God, in his own proper person actually and really, not in myth and phantom, but in very deed. As he is gone from us so shall he come again, and then will he take to himself all power, and reign from the river even unto the ends of the earth. We hope to participate in the glory of his appearing and kingdom. Whatever the Millennium may be, whatever the splendour of the latter day, our aspiration is that we may have a part with Christ in all these things. We would not shun his cross, for we desire his crown. We would not desert him in his humiliation, for we hope to attend him in his triumph. We would cheerfully go forth without the camp, and bear the reproach for his sake, for we hope to stand amongst the camp of the faithful ones when the crowns of immortality shall be distributed. Our soul's deepest desire is that we may have a part with Christ.

My dear brethren, I hope most of us here present know what it is to have a part in Christ, for we were elect in him from before the foundation of the world; we have been made partakers of his Spirit, and have been brought into union with him; we have submitted ourselves to his government; we are looking to him for our salvation; we have a part with him as members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones—a part with him as branches in the vine, as stones in the temple; we are serving under his banner in the same holy war, and labourers in the same sacred service; we have a part with him as his friends and as his chosen whom he has admitted into the most familiar intercourse with himself; we are much deceived if this be not the case. But if it indeed be so, we feel that the blessed fact is altogether due to grace, and it could never have been so if we had not first been washed. If we have not as yet participated in the blessings which come to us through Christ, we know, this morning, for the text tells it to us, that we must be washed ere we can have part with him. Brethren, we desire to be sons as he is a son, we wish to be heirs as he is an heir, we pant to be accepted as he is accepted, we aspire to be ere long glorified as he is glorified. This is a blessing worthy of the utmost intensity of desire, and it is a blessing which we must obtain or we shall sink miserably down to everlasting destruction, since to be without Christ is to be without hope.

II. After these few words upon what it is to have a part with Jesus, I come to notice, in the second place, THE ESSENTIAL QUALIFICATION FOR OBTAINING AND ENJOYING A PART WITH CHRIST.

It is essential that he should wash us. Observe then, that the qualification is not one of merit on our part, it is one of mercy on his part. If he had said, "Except ye obtain a superior degree of holiness, ye have no part in me," we might have become dispirited, desponding, and even despairing; but the very chief of sinners may find comfort in such a word as this. Here is nought of merit but all of mercy. Whatever be thy sin, O sinner, Christ can wash thee. The only qualification for having a part in all covenant blessings is that thou as a sinner be washed by Jesus. There is no specification of something to be given on our part, it is something to be received. It is not demanded that we act as servants to Christ and wash his feet, but that he in tender condescension should be servant to us and wash our feet. If there were a matter of giving mentioned, O ye poor and needy, ye who are

spiritually bankrupt, there might be reason for you to mourn, but since the essential, the great *sine qua non* is one of mercy alone, ye may be comforted. You have but to come in all your filth and all your unworthiness, and be washed, and this one thing shall give you part and lot in Christ.

But what is meant by this washing, which is the essential qualification for a man to have part with Christ? I understand it to mean one thing, namely, purification through the Lord Jesus; which one thing, however, will be best understood if we describe it as four things.

First, *no man has any part in Christ who does not receive the first all-essential washing in the precious blood, by which all sin is once and for ever put away.* The moment a sinner believes in Jesus Christ, his iniquities are seen as laid on Christ the Substitute, and the believer himself is free from sin. Though he may have been heretofore black as an Ethiopian, yet is he washed in the fountain filled from the Redeemer's veins, and he stands before God without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. There is such a blessed fact as the instantaneous reception of a perfect pardon through faith in Jesus Christ, and this happens the moment a sinner truly looks to the great atoning sacrifice. If thou reliest on the Substitute, and the matchless expiation which he made for human guilt, thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven thee. If he wash thee not, thou hast no part in him; but if his blood atones for thee, he is thine. If thou receive not his perfect, unrivalled, Godlike blood-washing, thou art no Christian. Whatever be thy profession, whatever thy supposed experience, whatever thy reformation, whatever thou mayst have attempted or accomplished, if thou hast never come as a guilty one, and seen thy sin laid upon the bleeding Son of God, thou art in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity—thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter. Without faith in the atonement thou canst have no part in Christ.

There follows a second cleansing, which is in some respects but a branch of the first, namely, *daily pardon for sin through faith in Jesus.* As day by day we fall into sin, we are taught to pray each day, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us;" and there is provision made in Christ Jesus for this daily pardon, since besides being the Paschal Lamb, our Lord is the morning and evening Lamb for daily guilt. This is what Christ meant, especially when he washed the disciples' feet, for he told them that he did not wash their head and their hands, because they had been washed; and, therefore, as being clean, they needed not save to wash their feet. We who have once been pardoned have no need to be pardoned again in the sense in which we were at first, but we have need in another sense, and in another respect, to seek a daily forgiveness of recurring sin. To use a simile which may, perhaps, explain what I mean: the priest of God, when consecrated first, was washed from head to foot, and so baptised into the service of the sanctuary; but each time he went to offer sacrifice he washed his feet and his hands in the brazen laver. No need to give the complete immersion on each occasion, that had been given at first, and he was ceremonially purged from pollution, and made a priest unto God; but accidental defilement, incident to every-day life, had to be cleansed away, not to make the man a priest, but to keep him in proper condition

for the right discharge of his priestly office. Even so, every believer is made a priest unto God, and does not need to be made a priest again, but to be daily cleansed from everything that might prevent him from the best discharge of his sacred duties. Permit me the use of another simile: here is a blackamoor, black from head to foot; but he is washed in a miraculous bath, and so made white, white as snow. Yes, the man will never want another washing to remove his natural blackness, that is gone for ever. No, my brethren, but yet he may need frequent washings, for as a white man he will constantly need the removal of stains incident to his being in this world. A sinner does not need, again, the first washing to be repeated, for that has put him into a new position towards God; but he needs a washing as a justified man to maintain his conscience in peace, and his heart pure for service. The leper once purged under the law, was clean, and might go into the congregation of the Lord's house; yet as a clean man and as admitted into the congregation, he had the ordinary need to wash which was incidental to every Israelite. Or to put it yet in another form: I, a criminal, am forgiven; all my crimes against the great Judge of all the earth are blotted out. I need no second acquittal. The acquittal which was given me when I first believed in Christ included all my sins, past, present, and to come—as before the bar of God I am clean, and need no further washing; but now being made a child, I stand not at his bar, but at his table, and alas! I commit sins as a child, sins which will not condemn me, for I am not under the law but under grace, but sins which require me as a child to go to my Father, and say to him each day, "My Father in heaven, forgive me my daily trespasses, as I forgive them that trespass against me." This it is which you must receive every day, and if you do not receive it you have no part in Christ. If you think you do not sin at all, and have not therefore any need of washing, you have no part in Christ. If you fancy that you do not require this daily washing of the feet, take it for granted that you are too proud to understand yourself, that you have not been humbled as you ought to be, for all those who are in Christ feel that they need each day that he should come and wash their feet. Though they are clean every whit, yet still they need their feet to be washed by him.

A third thing is included in this feet-washing I believe, and that is *the continual sanctification which faith in Jesus Christ carries on within us by the power of the Holy Spirit*. If a man profess to be a Christian, and is not in his walk and conversation holier than other men, that man's profession is vain. There are some who seem to think that we are to come to Christ as sinners, and then after having believed in him are to live as we did before. But, my brethren, it is not so. Christ saves his people *from* their sins. When you hear the complaints of God's servants concerning their temptations and their indwelling sins, you are not to conclude from that sin has dominion over them, or that they have not overcome sin, or that they are not other men than they once were. Nay, my brethren, I believe the holier a man becomes the more he mourns over the unholiness which remains in him; but he is in very truth a far better man, he is a spiritual and holy man. If Jesus wash you not, so that you become godly and upright, you may depend upon it you have no part in him. If he do not wash that

tongue, and cleanse away those angry, or idle, or filthy words; if he do not wash that hand, and render it impossible for it to perform a dishonest or unchaste act; if he do not wash that foot and render it impossible it should be able to carry you to the haunts of vice and criminal amusement, you have no part in him. It is all worthless for unconverted persons to be baptised and come to his table, for if he has not sanctified you in some measure he has not justified you. If you are not a changed man, neither are you a saved man, and if you do not aspire after holiness, neither need you hope that you shall have a part in the heaven of the blessed. "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." It includes then, you see, the first pardon, the successive pardons of each day, and the sanctifying work by which he cleanses us with the washing of water by the word.

Once more, I think, in this foot-washing, our Saviour meant to set forth *the daily communion which the true Christian has with Christ*. It was a very singular thing for a disciple to be sitting there, and for the Master to be washing his feet; it was an astoudping fact, a wonder, a miracle, a grace, which Peter could hardly think possible; but every Christian's life must be a series of similar wonders. Each day he will have to obtain from his Lord some things which it really seems as if he ought not to have dared to ask; for they appear too good and too great for him to receive. I know and you know what it is, to go to the Lord Jesus Christ about little things, about household cares, about daily trials, about the troubles of our spirit, the distractions of our mind. It is a mark of a child to be able to do so. It is, in fact, a continuance of the foot-washing which our Lord gave to Peter. Washing feet is not a great or essential act. A man may live, though his feet after a journey may not be cooled by the refreshing stream from the ewer. It is a small act, a grateful and refreshing act, and just such things Jesus Christ must continue to do for you and for me, if we are his people. We shall in times of need, find Jesus in our chamber still girt with the towel and bearing the bason; ready still to wait on us and administer loving refreshments; and we shall often wonder. "What, did he really help me in such a thing as that, and did I dare to take such a case as that to him?" Unbelief will say, "I dare not do that again. Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet; I cannot; I dare not make a servant of thee for such common things as these; I will leave the great matters of salvation with thee, but I will not come to thee each day for ordinary things." But, beloved, unless we do so, unless we do live this life of reception of great grace for little occasions, unless we live receiving wonders of lovingkindness which we feel we have no right to receive, marvels of mercy surpassing all expectation, unless, I say, our life is made up of tender mercies of which we are utterly unworthy, Jesus is not washing our feet, and we have no part with him.

Put these four things together, and I think you have caught the thought of our Master. It is very blessed to think that the very first portion of the least believer is to be washed, and this is the most essential thing of all. Though we may not as yet wear those brighter graces which are the ornaments of the Christian life, and cannot as yet rejoice that we are full-grown men in Christ, yet if we are only little

babes whose chief portion is to be washed, we have sure evidence of a part with Jesus. We may be too little to do much service, we may be too weak to achieve great victories, but if our Lord has but taken us to himself, and washed us, we have a part with him. The most essential thing, you see, is that which the feeblest and the newest born of all the heavenly family possesses. Washing is for every trembling truster, and it is as good proof of a part in Christ as the highest degree of grace.

III. But I must pass on now to notice, in the third place, WHY THIS WASHING IS SO ESSENTIAL? And I answer, first, except Christ wash us we have no part in him, because *the claims of our Lord require it.*

Suppose a man shall say, "I have no need of washing," brethren, it is clear that he has no part in Christ, because Christ came on purpose to cleanse his people from their sins. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. The whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick. If a man does not take Jesus to be his Saviour, he may say what he likes about him, but he does not even know the meaning of his name. May not a very sincere person admire Christ's character, and talk well of him? Yes, and we shall be glad that he is able to go so far in the right way; but let not such a man deceive himself with the hope that he will be a partaker of any of the blessings which Christ brings, unless he acknowledges that for which Christ is the Christ or the anointed One, namely, to bring the gospel of salvation to the unworthy. One of old said, "*Aut Cæsar aut nullus*," he would be either Cæsar or nobody; and so Jesus Christ will be either acknowledged the anointed Saviour, or he will be nothing to you. If you will not take him to be an expiation for your sins, and the true refiner of your life, you refuse him altogether. Mere admiration of the physician gives no part in his healing power. The loudest praises of light give not vision to blind men. Jesus is either the Saviour or nothing. For this he lived, for this he died. Alas, for those who will not receive him in this character! In the long run you shall always find that, despite their soft speeches, they have not received the true Christ of God. He who rejects Jesus as an atoning sacrifice is sure to doubt his Godhead, and so to reject his grander nature. The deniers of the atonement, who are supposed to be admirers of the example of Christ, generally turn out to be the greatest enemies to vital Christianity. There are no more real enemies of Christ than those who deny the doctrine of the cross. If they do not accept Christ to wash them, they soon prove that they have no part in him. Our Lord came on a frivolous errand, he descended to this world to perform an unnecessary work, and he was foolish enough to shed his blood with the most absurd of motives, unless men need cleansing from sin, and unless his blood alone could cleanse them. If men need to be washed, then he came in divine wisdom and philanthropy, and he lived and he died with an object worthy of his divine mind, and his life was no mistake; but if men do not need cleansing, Christ's death was a mistake, and his whole life, I dare to say it, was a piece of base imposture, for he was evermore professing himself to be the Saviour of sinners, and the pardoner of sin. He spake of giving rest to the weary, and of saving the lost, and if he could not save, or if men

did not require saving, the life of Christ was a mistake, and his mission an imposition. Jesus Christ is nothing, his very name is ridiculous, if there be none to save, and if he be not a Saviour anointed.

You have no part in Christ, then, however much you applaud him, unless you are washed by him, for you have rejected that for which he lived, and for which he died; you have despised that which he considers to be his noblest life-work, and for the joy of which he gave himself up to death.

Some one, perhaps, may say, "I believe I want washing, but I am confident I can purify myself. I have bad habits, and undesirable infirmities, but I can master the habits and can conquer the infirmity. I believe a man ought to be holy and become like God, and by diligent perseverance I conceive that I can do it." Do it, then, sir; I challenge you to do it, but you certainly have no part in Christ. Whatever you may think of Christ, you can have no part in him, for he comes on purpose to save his people from their sins. His very name is Jesus the Saviour, for that selfsame reason was he born, and if you can do it yourself you are a rival to him, you are an Antichrist; you will owe him nothing, and you shall have no part in him. Ah! see then, and mark it well, unless we be washed we ignore the claims of Christ, we cast a slur upon the great labour of his life, we rob him of his main glory.

Furthermore, *the Lord Jesus Christ is himself so infinitely pure*, so altogether holy both as God and man, that when we come to him we must first be cleansed by him before he can enter into fellowship with us. There is a fellowship with us as sinners which he graciously adopts, for he receiveth sinners and eateth with them; but into fellowship with his deep thoughts, his blessed purposes, and his divine nature, he brings no man till first he has washed him in his blood. If thou refuse him, then, as the refiner who shall purify the sons of Levi, and take away their dross and tin, and then present them to himself as much fine gold, thou hast refused all part in Christ.

Again, *the blessings which are in Christ are so spiritual that till we are cleansed we cannot enjoy them*. Who can see God but those who are first made pure in heart? Who can have peace with God but those who are justified by faith? The blessings of the covenant are not like oil and wine, which the ungodly man can rejoice in; neither are they like silver and gold, which the carnal heart can laugh over; but they are blessings pure and refined, which the natural man knoweth not, which only the man renewed by the Spirit of God can ever prize, for to others they are far above and out of their sight. Ye must be born again, ye must be washed, ye must be renewed in the spirit of your minds, or else heaven itself would not be a heaven to you, and the things of the kingdom of God ye could not know, its joys ye could not enter into, want of washing disqualifies you.

Moreover, *man's nature is such*, if he did but know it, *that it is impossible for him to have part with Christ without washing*. Peter did not see on his feet what Christ could see there, I mean not on the flesh of his feet, but on what they represent, namely, his daily life. Christ could see in Peter blots and blurs, and spots and defilement, which made him indeed say, "Alas! my poor follower, thou canst have no part with me unless I wash thee. Poor Peter, if thou didst know

thyself, thou wouldst see how impossible it is for me to give thee a portion with me till first I have cleansed thee." So, brethren, if we had a sight of ourselves, a true sight in God's own light, instead of starting back from Christ the purifier we should cry to him incessantly, "Wash me, O Lord, purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." For all these reasons, then, the being washed becomes a necessity. Ye cannot have a part in Christ unless ye be washed by him.

IV. Just for a moment or two I shall ask you to think of SOME THINGS WHICH HAVE BEEN PUT FORWARD AS SUBSTITUTES for being washed by Jesus Christ.

Peter had such a love for his Master, and such an admiration for him, that he very humbly said, "Dost thou wash my feet?" Now would not Peter's humble reverential estimation of Christ stand him in good stead? Might he not be accepted even though his feet were not washed? Ah, no! "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me." If any of you feel your unworthiness, and mourn it, and are kept back from Christ by the thought that you are not fit to be saved, will this humility, this supposed humility save you? My hearer, no; except thou have faith in Christ, and he wash thee, thou hast no part in him. No repentance, no remorse, no chastenings of thy spirit, no humblings of thy soul, if they exist apart from a living faith in him, can give thee any part in him. O that thou wouldst give up this ruinous humility and trust in Jesus to cleanse thee, for unless thou dost, though thou humble thyself from morning to morning, and water the earth with thy tears, and make thy bed to swim with them, yet shalt thou have no part in Christ.

Peter had performed distinguished service for his Master, he had gone with the other apostles and preached the gospel, and cast out devils, and he was one of those who returned and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us:" would not this do, would not these achievements prove that Peter had part in Christ? He preached so boldly, he faced the crowd so nobly, would not that suffice? No, my dear hearers, though any of us should possess tongues of men and of angels, and give our bodies to be burned, yet if Christ wash us not, we have no part in him, we must not hope that the noblest service can stand in the place of the washing by the expiatory atonement of Christ.

But Peter had enjoyed very remarkable views of Christ's glory. He was one of the three who went up the mount of transfiguration, and there saw the Lord in splendour; and at other times with the other two favourites of the Master, he had been admitted to sights denied to common eyes: would not all this prove his part in Jesus? I sometimes hear men and women boasting out of measure of the "coming glory;" and I know they give their chief attention to the prophecies of that glory; I would not deny them all that they are likely to get from such studies, but I would remind them that it is not as glorified that Jesus puts away sin; he atoned for it as Christ crucified, and as such he is our hope. Though a man bathe day after day in the very light of the Millennium, and though he understand all mysteries, yet if Jesus wash him not, if he have not justification through the blood, and holiness through the work of the Spirit, it profiteth him nothing.

Visions of glory, however transporting they may be, give you no part in him.

But Peter had walked the water once, when his Master bade him come to him; though he did at last begin to sink, yet for awhile he trod the waves, and found the water marble beneath his feet. Did not that prove him to possess a part in Christ? No, my brethren, not if Christ washed him not. If thou hadst faith to remove mountains, yet if thou hadst not this blood-washing, this daily washing, thou wouldst have no part in Christ. Yes, but this man Peter had received deep instruction! Did not his Master say, "Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee"? Ay, but I add that though you possessed all knowledge, and could interpret all mysteries, yet if Jesus wash you not, you have no part in him. It is not the power to occupy the pulpit, it is not the power to cast out a devil, it is not the power to work a miracle, it is not the power even to shake heaven or earth, that can prove you to have a part in Christ, it is the simply humbly going down to the fountain filled with blood, and being washed there, which is the indispensable qualification, and nothing else can stand in the place of this.

Peter, no doubt, was full of zealous enthusiasm. He could say, "Though all should deny thee, yet will not I. I will go with thee to prison and to death;" but the greatest imaginable zeal does not prove a man to have a part in Christ if he be not truly washed.

I do implore you, my dear hearers, to do what I anxiously wish to do myself, namely, to make sure that you have been cleansed in the blood of Jesus. It is one thing to know about that blood, it is another thing to have it applied to the conscience. It is one thing to know you ought daily to be washed, it is quite another thing to get that daily washing. It is one thing to believe, "I ought to be holy," it is another thing to have the Holy Ghost dwelling in me to make me holy. It is one thing to see the faults of others, but quite another thing to confess my own and to be cleansed from them by the Saviour. Search ye then yourselves, I pray you. Ye may have but little time to do it in, therefore be on the alert, and examine yourself, for hear ye not the sentence full of love and full of pity, and yet as stern as the thunder-claps which pealed from Sinai's smoking summit—"If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me"? If I justify thee not, if I do not daily forgive thee, if I do not daily sanctify thee, if I do not daily perform condescending deeds of tenderness and kindness towards thee, thou hast no part in me.

V. So let us close with LESSONS OF WISDOM, upon which I linger but a minute or two.

The lesson of wisdom which comes first is this: *let no supposed humility keep any of you from believing in Jesus Christ.* The way of grace is miracle from beginning to end. Stagger not, therefore, to begin with accepting a miracle of grace. You say, "I cannot believe that Christ could forgive such a hell-deserving sinner as I am. I have not any claims on him. I have been such a wretch. I cannot think that simply on my trusting him, he, out of his abundant mercy, will forgive my sins." My dear friend, if you cannot believe that to begin with, it is but the commencement miracle, there are still greater things

than these. "But I am so unworthy!" I know you are, it is all true, you are much more unworthy than you have any idea of. You do not deserve to live, you do not deserve to be out of hell, but since God is gracious, and he bids you trust Christ and you shall live, do not be damned because you are too proudly humble to be saved. You tell me I speak sarcastically. I tell you, rather, I speak the truth. It is the devil who deceives you by making you believe that there is any humility in doubting the mercy of God in Christ Jesus. What if you be the worst sinner out of damnation, yet if God tells thee he will save thee upon thy believing and being baptised, why, man, believe and be baptised and be saved, and may God the Holy Spirit lead thee to do that now. What hast thou to do with saying it is too good a thing; if God chooses to give it, who are you to say it is too good? You must be washed by Christ, or else perish; O do not stand back because it seems too good for you to receive! You must be washed, I say, or perish. Take the good that God provides you, and be grateful for it. What if God himself came down from heaven, and put on human flesh and suffered and died that you might not suffer and die? I grant you it is a miracle that makes the very seraphim astonished, and causes the whole universe to tremble with amazement. But why dost thou draw back from it and say, "Because it is so great I will not receive it?" Dost thou refuse the air because a bounteous God has made it so abundant? Dost thou refuse to drink of the river because it is so deep and broad? Wilt thou refuse God's mercy because that mercy is so illimitable, so vast, so divine? O do not so, I say again, damn not thyself under pretence of humility, but come as thou art, and accept the mercy which is freely presented to thee in Christ Jesus, in the gospel which he has bidden us preach. Remember, "He that believeth and is baptised, shall be saved; he that believeth not, shall be damned."

A further lesson of wisdom is this: *as you must not let a supposed humility keep you back, so let no other kind of feeling keep you from Christ.* The feeling may seem to be very right and very proper, but if it prevents your being saved, it is a bad feeling. I know your human nature may excuse it and say, "Why, this is commendable for a man to feel his sin so great; is it not even praiseworthy?" I answer, nothing is commendable which makes a man think that God cannot forgive him. Feel thy sin to be as great as thou wilt, but do not therefore slander God as though he were unwilling to forgive thee. Thy feeling may look pretty in the darkness of thine ignorance, but in the brightness of the eternal light any feeling that keeps thee away from the cross and away from thy Father God is a damnable feeling, and therefore away with it. Believe thou at once! I charge thee to believe in the name of Jesus of Nazareth! I, his servant charge thee in his name believe him! As he spoke to the winds and they were hushed, and to the waves and they were still, so in his name I speak to thee all, and say trust thou him and thou shalt find peace for thy spirit and joy for thy soul, both now and for ever.

The last word shall be this: *remember, my dear friends, what you are if you remain unwashed, and remember what you will be if you are washed.* If you remain unwashed you have no part in him. The past unforgiven, the present unchanged, the future unsanctified, there remains

for you when the dread summons comes that shall separate your soul from your body, nothing that can comfort, nothing that can afford a ray of hope. Convicted before the bar of God of ten thousand offences against his righteous law, convicted of mad, insane rebellion against God in having refused the gospel of his dear Son, you must be driven from his presence; and I warn thee that within the cover of his book there is not so much as a single jot or tittle that breathes anything like consolation to a spirit that has once been condemned of God after death. Men have tried if they could contort this Bible, and rack it if possible to the saying of something that might encourage a soul to reject Christ; but there is here nothing but a fearful looking for of judgment and of fiery indignation which shall devour the unbeliever. It is now or never with thee. I beseech thee look to Jesus Christ and live. To be washed, how simple! nothing is asked of thee but to take what Christ has made ready for thee. To be washed, how necessary! To be washed now, how easy! O cast not away the promise of God through unbelief, but accept the washing, lest thou cast thyself into eternal condemnation. If thou believe in Jesus now, thou shalt be cleansed, thy life shall become new. The preaching of morality helps but little. Men have been preached at with morality till they have become drunkards and swearers. Vice laughs at the preaching of morality. But the preaching of Christ crucified and the gospel of substitution is efficacious, as many here are testifying by their renewed lives and changed behaviour. Trust Christ then, and as your present life will be changed, your future life will be unboundedly blessed. When your turn shall come to depart out of the world unto the Father, you shall be with Jesus where he is, and you shall behold his glory. Oh then be washed and have part in all the splendour that is to be revealed! Be washed now, and his shall be the glory. Amen.