

A SERMON ON JOHN XIII. 8.

If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.—JOHN xiii. 8.

THESE words belong to the story of Christ's washing his disciples' feet. In which—

1. The preface is remarkable, ver. 3-5. Jesus, knowing sufficiently the dignity of his person, that he was the eternal Son of God, and was now about to return to God, to take possession of all power in heaven and in earth, after the manner of a waiter and servant of the meanest quality, in all humility, sets him to wash and wipe the feet of his own disciples. By the magnificence of the preface, a man would have thought that he had been about to work some great miracle or give some notable instance of his divine power; but here was no miracle, unless it were of humility and love. We keep state, and stand upon our terms, think it much below us to do an office of kindness and love to inferiors; but Christ, when he had the highest thoughts of his glory, would evidence the greatest humility, to take down our pride, and to assure us, by so pregnant a proof, that his exaltation should not hinder him from condescending to the necessities of his meanest people.

2. The next thing is the interruption made by Peter when Christ came to perform this office to him. (1.) He diverteth it by wonder and admiration: ver. 6, 'Lord, dost thou wash my feet?' that is, purpose to do it. His admiration of Christ's humility was good, but his declining and shunning to receive this office of love from him was a faulty modesty; as the saints usually run into extremity in their humiliations, while they so far debase themselves as to refuse their own mercies. We are unworthy, it is true, and we cannot have a sufficient sense of it; but God can and will do more for unworthy creatures than they can ask or think, or imagine it to be consistent with their duty to receive from him. Christ corrects his error by instruction, showing that the action of washing had a further meaning, as he should afterwards understand when he had received the Spirit, and should be called to discharge the office of an apostle in the church, ver. 7. (2.) Notwithstanding this warning, Peter persists in his error: 'Lord, thou shalt never wash my feet.' He would by no means let Christ wash his feet. What was modesty before is now some degree of obstinacy, as infirmi-

ties grow upon our hands when we indulge them. This second refusal is more peremptory, after Christ had declared the meaning of this washing. Surely he should have acquiesced in Christ's answer; for we must yield obedience to his will, though for the present we do not know the reason of it. But he was so far from acquiescing, that he proceeded to a wilful refusal; therefore Christ rebuketh him more severely, and with a threatening that would go to his very heart. And 'Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.'

In which words—

1. A sin supposed or taxed—*If I wash thee not.*

2. A sad threatening denounced to break his obstinacy—*Thou hast no part with me.*

1. The sin supposed—'If I wash thee not.' The question is whether it relateth to his non-submission to Christ's action of washing his feet, or to the spiritual washing and cleansing of the soul. *Ans.* To both, but chiefly to the last.

[1.] I do not exclude the former, because we ought to obey God, though the reason of what he doth and commandeth appeareth not. It was Peter's fault to prefer his own preconceived opinion before the wisdom of Christ; and disobedience to a positive command is no small sin, though the precept hath no other worth to commend itself to our consciences but the will and authority of the commander. The whole world was ruined by eating the forbidden fruit, or the transgression of a positive law.

[2.] Christ doth primarily and principally speak of the spiritual washing, of which the washing of their feet was but an emblem and figure. (1.) It is usual with Christ to pass from corporeal things to spiritual benefits; as from the water of Jacob's well he discourseth of the well of life, or the gift of the Spirit, John iv. 13, 14; and from the growing of the corn to the gathering of fruit unto the eternal harvest, John iv. 35, 36; from their following him for the loaves to labouring for meat that perisheth not, John vi. 27; and afterward beginneth a notable discourse of the bread of life, or the true manna that came down from heaven; so from the drawing and pouring out of water at the feast of tabernacles of the flowing out of the Spirit, John vii. 38, 39; and many other places. (2.) He saith not, 'If I wash not thy feet,' but, 'If I wash thee not;' by the words declaring that it was not the refusal or contempt of that action which he principally spake of, and afterwards explaineth himself how far the choicest believers need to be washed, ver. 10. (3.) That washing of feet was not so necessary to salvation that a matter of such moment should depend upon the neglect of it, as exclusion from all benefit by Christ. (4.) The words are opposed to the preconceived opinion of Peter and the other disciples, who only looked to the external action: 'Ye are clean, but not all,' ver. 10.

2. The threatening on this supposition—'Thou hast no part with me.' Some make a distinction between the words, *in me*, and *with me*; as if the sense were, Though thou hast part in me, yet none with me, that is, in the supper which he was about to institute; but this is more argute than solid. The phrase implieth two things—(1.) No communion with him; (2.) No interest in him or his benefits.

[1.] No communion with him; as 2 Cor. vi. 15, 'What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' that is, there is no familiarity and friendship or communion in worship between them. Presently after this the sacrament of Christ's body and blood was instituted, to the participation of which this spiritual washing was necessary.

[2.] No interest in him; as Acts viii. 21, 'Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter.' Part and lot is right portion, or inheritance; so 'no part with me' is no interest in Christ or his benefits.

Doct. That without the washing of the soul from sin men can have no communion with God in Christ nor interest in him. I prove it—
1. With respect to the nature of God, who is represented to us as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

[1.] Our God is pure and holy: Hab. i. 13, 'Of purer eyes than to behold iniquity;' that is, with approbation and acceptance, yea, or so much as connivance, or to let it go unpunished. The sense of this is at the bottom of all that terror and astonishment that is in the heart of sinners, 1 Sam. vi. 20; and the disbelief of this is the ground of all their security, or pleasing themselves in their sins, Ps. l. 21. An unsanctified man can never have any quiet in his sins till he hath defaced the awe of God's holiness in his conscience, or entertained unworthy lessening thoughts of his purity and holiness. This is the cause of the deep humiliation of the saints, and that great self-abhorrancy, and self-loathing which they express whenever they have to do with God. They cannot think of him, but they are ashamed of the remainder of corruption in their hearts: Isa. vi. 5, 'Woe is me! for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell among a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the Lord of hosts.' So Job xlii. 5, 6, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself in dust and ashes.' Thus were the saints affected when God manifested himself to them in a way of grace. God is a most pure, holy being, and the fountain of all purity and holiness, in comparison of whom the purity of the highest creatures is but pollution: Job xv. 15, 16, 'Behold he putteth no trust in his saints, and the heavens themselves are not clean in his sight: how much more abominable and filthy is man, who drinketh in iniquity like water?' The good angels were never defiled with sin, yet, because of the mutability of their natures, God is said not to trust them, because they are creatures, and so changeable; and they are said, in a comparative sense, not to be clean in his sight. Oh! how much more should we confess ourselves to be vile and abhorred, who are actually defiled with sin, and are so mutable and fickle, and do so often show what dregs and dross remaineth in our hearts. But God, though he be so good and holy in himself, yet may dispense with the unholiness of others. No; his purity implieth an hatred and aversion from all that is not pure and holy: Ps. v. 5, 'The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest the workers of iniquity;' for none can have communion with this holy God unless they be pure and holy also. God is good to such as are of a clean heart, Ps. lxxiii. 1; and Ps. xviii. 26, 'With the pure thou wilt show thyself pure, and with the upright thou wilt show thyself upright.' So that there is no fruition

of or communion with this holy God till we are in some measure cleansed and washed from sin.

[2.] Look we to God incarnate, the second person, our Mediator and Redeemer; he also is pure and holy: and, therefore, if conformity maketh way for communion, we must be pure as he is pure. Christ is pure, whether you consider his person or design of coming into the world. For his person: Heb. vii. 26, 'Such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.' This was he who was to bring us to God, and who was set up as a pattern of holiness in our nature. He was pure and holy in his conception and birth, life and death, never tainted or stained with the least sin; his human nature being more like God, and nearer to him than any creature possibly can be. He chose not here a life of monkish sequestration, but free conversation with men, yet never was defiled with their evil company, nor made partaker in their sins. And surely they are very unlike him who are not washed and cleansed from sin, whose hearts are filled and lives are spotted with envy, malice, lust, ambition, affectation of greatness and esteem in the world, and excessive use of carnal pleasures. A life so unlike Christ is to contradict and deny our profession, and to be called christians to Christ's dishonour. Such a pure and holy head will not suit with a filthy ulcerous body. For this design Christ died, to cleanse, purify, and sanctify us: Eph. v. 26, 27, 'He loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water, through the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy, and without blemish.' The Lord Jesus, when he undertook the recovery of lapsed mankind, wanted not love to intend to us the greatest benefit, nor wisdom to choose it, nor merit or worth to purchase it. What was it then which he did intend, choose, purchase?

I answer—To sanctify and cleanse us. Herein he showed the fervency of his love, the wisdom of his choice, and the value of his purchase, and by all the necessity and excellency of holiness. He saw that our great misery was that we were polluted and unclean by sin, and so made loathsome to God. Therefore his love inclined him, not to loath us, but seek our good; so his wisdom pitched on this, as the most proper and necessary benefit for us. And because of the value of his sufferings, he despaired not to get us made clean, and accordingly pursueth that work till it cometh to its final perfection, and so at length taketh us home to himself, as fully pure and perfect, without any spot or remnant of sinful defilement. Now this being Christ's design, surely except he wash us we cannot participate of other benefits, we have no room in his family, no right to the privileges either of his table or kingdom.

[3.] If you look to God the Spirit, still the argument groweth upon our hands. The Spirit is to make up the match and union between us and the Redeemer, and to bring us to Christ, as Christ is to bring us to God. He that hath not the Spirit of Christ, is none of his Rom. viii. 9. Now the Spirit is an holy and sanctifying Spirit, the healing of our natures and sanctifying and cleansing our hearts, is his great work.

He is called the Comforter, but he is also called the Spirit of sanctification, 1 Peter i. 2, Rom. i. 4. He is both a sanctifier and a comforter; but first a sanctifier, then a comforter; yea, in this life more a sanctifier than a comforter; for his sanctifying work is more necessary, and carried on with less interruption than his comforting work. Nay, once more, he is therefore a comforter because a sanctifier; as appeareth by those metaphors whereby his comforting operation is expressed—'seal,' 'earnest;' so as the sealing of the Holy Spirit is nothing but the impress of the image of God upon our hearts, and the earnest of the Spirit is that conformity to God for the present, that assures of more to come, maketh us long and look for more communications of it. The dwelling of the sanctifying Spirit in our hearts is the earnest and pledge of our dwelling for ever with God, and beginneth that vision and fruition of him which is perfected in heaven.

2. In respect of our natural estate, in which we are altogether filthy and abominable by reason of sin. We are told, Ps. xiv. 3, 'The Lord looked from heaven;' and what did he see here below? 'They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy and abominable.' All persons, and all their actions flowing from their corrupt hearts, are vile and loathsome in God's sight; the Lord looked from heaven before and all was good, very good; there was no disorder in the creation, Gen. i. 31. Whence came the change? As we came out of God's hands we were all pure and clean, but when sin had once invaded our nature the case was altered; all became filthy and odious to God; so that there was an utter incapacity of enjoying communion with God or having an interest in him, which incapacity remaineth till we are sanctified by the Spirit. We have gentle constructions and moderate names and terms that we put upon sin to make it go down the better, or to satisfy ourselves in that polluted estate which the fall hath put us into. But if we look into the scripture we shall find sin and sinners compared to things which are most filthy and loathsome; as to the blood and pollution of a new-born child before it be washed, Ezek. xvi. 6; to the noisome steam and exhalation which breaketh out from an open sepulchre, Rom. iii. 13; to filthy dung and excrements, James i. 21; to the uncleanness of a removed woman, Ezek. xxxvi. 17; to a vessel in which is no pleasure, Hosea viii. 8, which is but a modest expression of that draught into which nature emptieth itself. These and many other expressions doth the scripture use to set forth the loathsomeness of sinners to God. Surely we need to be cleansed and washed, if we had eyes to see our natural face. The sins of others are hateful to us though we are tainted ourselves, but we are blinded with self-love. If we run into open sin we find there is a natural bashfulness or inconfidence, or shyness of appearing before God. Now, all this evinceth a necessity of being washed from sin if we would enjoy any commerce and communion with God in Christ; therefore the one is required in order to the other: James iv. 8, 'Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you'; and presently, 'Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts,' &c. Till that be done, God will not show us his grace and favour.

3. With respect to the new covenant, or our entering into the gospel state, the manner is set down, Heb. x. 22, 'Let us draw

near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.' All that would draw nigh to God by Christ must draw nigh with a true heart, and in full assurance of faith at first; and, before they can have other blessings from him, have their consciences sprinkled with Christ's blood, and their hearts and lives in some measure sanctified. Certainly it is our great duty and privilege to draw nigh to God by Christ; and it is the great drift and intent of the new covenant, as appeareth, Heb. vii. 19, 'For the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did, by which we draw nigh to God.' Granted; but how must we draw nigh to God? Some things are required with respect to the covenant, and some things with respect to the covenanter. (1.) With respect to the covenant itself, which is made up of duties and privileges. We must draw nigh with a true heart, unfeignedly resolving to perform the duties required. All serious actions must be done with the heart, especially religious actions, wherein we have immediately to do with God, who will not be mocked with a vain show. Now, no business is so weighty as the pursuit of eternal happiness, or the great affairs of our precious and immortal souls; therefore these must be gone about with our heart, and with a true heart, unfeignedly resolving and purposing to do what God requireth of us, and all that he requireth of us. God, that dispenseth with defects, will not dispense with want of sincerity; therefore we must unfeignedly yield up ourselves to do his will, and to be complete therein, otherwise we come as Judas to Christ, to betray him with a kiss; or as Joab to Abner, embracing him to smite him under the fifth rib. Any one lust reserved in yielding up ourselves to God, showeth that there is falseness at heart; the fleshly mind and interest is not thoroughly mortified; there is a carnal bias in it, which in time will make it revolt from God if it be let alone; neither can there be a thorough intention and habitual purpose to please God in all things, Heb. xiii. 18; Ps. lxi. 18. (2.) In full assurance of faith. This hath the promises of salvation for its object, and implieth not only an assent to the truth of them, but a dependence upon God that they will be made good to us, we putting no bar and impediment in our own way; that is to say, we doing what to us belongeth, performing all the duties required whatever it costs us; for it is such a trust as taketh the things promised for our whole happiness, and the promises themselves for our whole security. It is enough to the self-denying christian that they have pardon and heaven to hope for, and God's word to bear them out; and they venture their all upon it, that whatever befall them they can comfortably rely upon God, and keep up the rejoicing of their hope: they dare not draw back whatever temptations they have to the contrary, Heb. iii. 6-14; Heb. x. 39. This was chosen as their sole comfort and blessedness, and to this they would adhere and stick to, and find joy and comfort enough in it, Ps. cxix. 111.

4. With respect to the person covenanting: That to qualify us for communion with God in Christ we must be washed from sin; we must have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water. These two graces explain how Christ

must wash us that we may have part with him. This washing is more plainly expressed, 1 Cor. vi. 11, 'Such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God;' where there is a general word *washing*, the kind or species of it, sanctification and justification; there is a relative and real change. But let us explain the text in hand.

[1.] Justification is expressed in that phrase, 'Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience.' The part sprinkled is the conscience, which is the most quick, lively, and sensible power of man's soul; when other faculties are corrupted, this taketh God's part. And by an evil conscience is meant a conscience unquiet by reason of sin. Every man's conscience is witness and judge of that impurity and corruption which he is defiled with. Now, the heart is said to be sprinkled from this evil conscience with allusion to the sprinklings of blood under the law, and signifieth the sprinkling the blood of Jesus, which speaks better things than the blood of Abel, Heb. xii. 24; and is done when a poor sinner, being sensible of sin, maketh hearty application of the blood of Christ for remission and pardon with devoting himself to God. Well then, the person that would draw nigh to God with comfort, must be one that is sprinkled from an evil conscience; that is, in a penitent and broken-hearted manner, confesseth his sins with a purpose to forsake them, depending upon the merit of Christ's sacrifice and intercession for his reconciliation with God, 1 John i. 9; for while we lie under the guilt of sin, we cannot draw nigh to God with any comfort or hopes of acceptance. The blood of Christ is sprinkled, on God's part, by his Spirit through the ordinances, on our part by faith and repentance; and this sprinkling doth qualify us for lively and spiritual worship, or, which is all one, for communion with God through Christ. Witness the apostle's reasoning, Heb. ix. 13, 14. As the legally unclean were purified by the sprinkling of the blood of a red heifer, so the spiritually unclean by the blood of Christ, 'who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God.'

[2.] The other benefit is expressed by having their bodies washed with pure water. As the former alluded to the sprinklings of the law, this to the washings of the law; that to the sprinkling of blood, and this to the washing of water: 'Our body is cleansed,' not but that the heart is washed from sinful pollution as well as the body, no, but there must be salt cast into the spring. If the heart be washed from sin, it will show itself in the purity of the outward man. Now this washing implied sanctification, which is accomplished by the Spirit. See Titus iii. 5, 'He hath saved us by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost.' This is promised to penitent believers: Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your filthiness.' Now, our bodies are said to be washed to show that if the Spirit hath renewed our hearts, our outward conversations should be blameless and holy. All outward actions are done by the body, and our bodies must be washed as with pure water. Well then, Christ doth justify and sanctify the penitent believer to qualify us for communion with God;

and the purging of Christ's blood is joined with the renewing of the Spirit. He that is justified must be sanctified, and his sanctification must be evidenced by an holy and blameless conversation. He that would dwell in God's holy hill must have a clean heart and pure hands, Ps. xxiv. 3, 4, or else he hath no part or right in the matter of the new covenant.

5. With respect to the seals or confirming signs of the new covenant, which are baptism and the Lord's supper. The analogy of the two sacraments showeth the necessity of this washing, and they are both employed in Christ's speech. In the supposition, 'If I wash thee not,' is implied baptism, in the commination, 'Thou hast no part with me,' is implied the Lord's supper, which Christ was then about to institute. Clearly in baptism washing is implied; in the Lord's supper, the benefits of Christ's death are signed, sealed, and confirmed to us. In *foro ecclesie*, none but baptized persons have right to the Lord's table; so in *foro celi*, before God, none but those that have the fruit of baptism have right to the benefits thereof; no right to the benefits purchased by his blood till we have the spirit of sanctification. More distinctly—(1.) Baptism is the sign and seal of spiritual washing by regeneration; it assureth us of the purifying virtue of the Lord's grace, and bindeth us to seek after it. If we do our part, God will on his part give grace, whereby our hearts may be purified and cleansed. By the visible act we profess the acceptance of the gospel covenant to both ends, and it is but a nullity and empty formality if sin be not washed away. That baptism signifieth the washing away of sin is clear by the scriptures: Titus iii. 5, *λουτρόν παλιγγενεσίας*. Water, by its mixing quality, doth purge and cleanse: Acts xxii. 16, 'Arise and be baptized, for the washing away of thy sins.' It is the rite used by us when first dedicated to God. Now the external application is nothing without the internal effect or renewing of the Holy Ghost. Baptism saveth, 'not the putting away the filthiness of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,' &c., 1 Peter iii. 21. Careless christians forget their baptismal covenant; some renounce it, but most forget it, 2 Peter i. 9. The water is sprinkled on their bodies, but the Spirit is not poured out upon their souls. Christ would revive this signification before he would admit his disciples to his table—(1.) For the efficacy of baptism is the true preparation required to the Lord's supper; (2.) The Lord's supper, as it supposeth baptism or washing from sin, so it promoteth it. We remember Christ's blood, which is the foundation of all the grace communicated to us, 1 John i. 7, and bind ourselves anew to purge out sin, that we may keep an holy feast to God, 1 Cor. 5-8, and that we may partake more of the sanctifying Spirit, and be encouraged to pursue after holiness in confidence of his blessing; for it is but a renewing of the covenant that we made in baptism; not another, but the same covenant, Mat. xxii. 20.

6. With respect to the types of the law. Drawing nigh to God, and having communion with God, was the privilege of priests under the law; for when the people were kept at a distance, the priests had leave to draw near, and to be conversant about his holy things. Now under the gospel we are all made priests to God, 1 Peter ii. 5; yea, we have the privilege of the high priest to enter into the holiest, Heb. x. 19:

he but once a year, but we at all times, Heb. iv. 16. Here I would observe three things—(1.) Their consecration to their office. No priest could officiate and draw near to God till he was consecrated by certain rites, which consisted either in oblations or offerings, and ablutions or washings. For full communion with God our whole life is our consecration; but for such communion as we are capable of now, our first dedication sufficeth, when sanctified by the Spirit. There is our ministration before the throne of glory in heaven, when justification and sanctification are complete; before the throne of grace, when first accepted, renewed, or washed in the laver of regeneration, Rev. i. 6. (2.) In the exercise of their office. The priests went to the laver first before they went to the altar. The high priest was not to enter into the holiest but after many washings and purifications, Lev. xvi. 4; after a five-fold sprinkling, washing his body: Exod. xxx. 20, 'They shall wash with water, that they die not, when they come near to the altar to minister.' So must we be washed. (3.) In the privileges of their office and function. They had a portion for their own table; but if they eat it in their uncleanness they were to die. He must not eat the bread of God in his uncleanness, Lev. xxii. 30; Lev. vii. 20, 21, and other places. They were in danger of cutting off by the hand of God, and so for any of the offerings, which otherwise were their allowance.

Use 1. Information—That we have all need to be washed if we expect benefit by Christ. There is a double necessity of this washing—

[1.] Because of our natural pollution; for we are all sinners, and sin is of a defiling nature, making the person unclean and loathsome to God wherever it is. (1.) That we are all sinners by nature the scripture everywhere witnesseth: Job xv. 14, 'What is man that he should be clean? and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?' that is, man by nature is neither clean nor righteous, destitute of purity by nature, and uprightness of conversation. They are ill acquainted with man who think otherwise; for if you consider the universality of sinning, his earliness in sinning, his easiness in sinning, his constancy in sinning, you may soon see what his nature is; and the fountain being so corrupt, the streams and emanations from it must needs be defiled also. Now (2.) that we are therefore odious and loathsome to God, scriptures witness also: Prov. xiii. 5, 'A wicked man is loathsome.' To whom? To God chiefly, being a stench in the nostrils of his holiness. To good men, Prov. xxix. 27. There is *odium offensionis et odium inimicitie*; the first is opposite to the love of complacency; the second, to the love of benevolence. To indifferent men; for they that allow sin in themselves dislike it in others, Titus iii. 3. To themselves; for they are unwilling to look into themselves, John iii. 20. Therefore certainly if they would become Christ's people, have communion with him, and interest in him, they must be purified.

[2.] Because of daily infirmities: John xiii. 10, 'He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit.' Though we be not wholly unclean, yet we contract new filth by walking up and down in a dirty and defiling world, so that a man that needeth not to wash his whole body, needeth still to wash his feet. Every spot or every sin that we commit doth not alter our estate; yet we should be still purging out the relics of sin. Though we do not wallow like swine in

the mire, yet we contract much soil. Daily failings must not be swallowed without remorse and a new exercise of daily repentance. If a man were unclean under the law, he was to wash his clothes before even. Every night look to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world. God's reckoning with Adam would not let him sleep in his sins. Especially before solemn duties we must humble and cleanse ourselves for these sins, and seek strength against them; especially when we would get our interest in Christ more confirmed, our communion with him more free. Though we have actually renounced profaneness, yet we must bewail failings.

2. That soul-washing is Christ's work, and communicated to us in his own way, for it is said here, 'If I wash thee not.' Certain it is that none can change or cleanse his own heart: Job xiv. 4, 'Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one.' That which is wholly corrupt cannot cleanse itself. Our pollution is so universal, that there is nothing left untainted, no sound part to mend the rest. And it is not a slight tincture, but a deep dye, like the leopard's spots or the Ethiopian's skin. The word cannot do it without Christ. Good instructions may show a man his duty, but cannot change his heart. Christ needed not only to be sent as a prophet, but must sanctify himself as a priest and sacrifice, before this benefit could be procured for us. Therefore it is said, John vii. 17, 18, 'As thou hast sent me into the world, even so also have I sent them into the world; and for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth.' It was impossible to recover holiness into the world, unless a price, and no less price was paid than the blood of the Son of God. Therefore it is said, 'He hath washed us in his blood,' Rev. i. 5. This is the fountain opened for the washing of our guilty and sinful souls, Zech. xiii. 1. Well, then, soul-washing is Christ's work, and communicated to us in his own way; that is to say, would we be cleansed from sin, we must beg it of God, for it is a divine operation. 'Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.' But whatever God doth he doth by Christ. He would not look towards us but for Christ's sake. Come we to Christ then, for it is his blood cleanseth us from all sin; he purchased this grace into his own hands; but what Christ doth he doth by his Spirit: 'For the renewing of the Holy Ghost is shed on us abundantly through Christ Jesus our Lord,' Titus iii. 6. Go we to the Spirit then, waiting for his work; but what he doth he doth it by the ordinances, the word, and sacraments; for which end also Christ died: Eph. v. 26, 'Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it by the washing of water through the word.' But what must they do in the ordinances? Will their bare presence work? or can we expect this benefit by an idle and slothful attendance? No; we must diligently use the means, obey the Spirit's sanctifying motions, act the grace received: 1 Peter i. 22, 'Seeing ye have purified your hearts in obeying the truth, through the Spirit.' It was Naaman's error that he would be cleansed from his leprosy and sit still; but the prophet bids him go and wash: he must wash himself if he would be made whole. So, if we lie upon the bed of ease, and say, Christ must do all, we miss the benefit. In cleansing the leper, besides the sprinklings of the priest, he must wash himself,

Lev. xiv. 6. We must make conscience of using the means diligently, and the rather as being encouraged by Christ's purchase or the merit of his death.

3. It informeth us that they handle the gospel amiss, and do not take a right way to be partakers of the fruits and benefits of Christ's death, that do not seek to be washed from sin by him. It is in vain to seek comfort without holiness. These do not consider the ends of Christ's undertaking. He was manifested to take away our sins, 1 John iii. 5; and he came to dissolve the works of the devil, 1 John iii. 8; to give his Spirit to sinful miserable man, to sanctify and cleanse him. Surely it is a mistaken Christ that we close with when we use him to increase our carnal security and boldness in sinning; as many are possessed with an ill thought that God, since the exhibition of Christ, is more reconcilable to sin than he was before, and by reason of Christ's coming there were less vanity and malignity in sin. Oh! let this conceit be far from you, lest you make Christ a minister or encourager of sin, Gal. ii. 17. This is to set up Christ against Christ, his merit against his doctrine and Spirit; or rather, you set up the devil against Christ, and varnish his cause with Christ's name, and so it is but an idol Christ that you dote upon. The true Christ came first to wash us, and then to comfort us; therefore take heed of setting his death against the ends of his death, and running from and rebelling against God because Christ came to redeem you and recover you to God. To seek Christ only for comfort argueth mere self-love; but those that seek holiness from the Redeemer have a more spiritual affection to him. The guilt of sin is against our interest, but the power of sin is against God's glory. The great aim of his death was 'To redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works,' Titus ii. 14. Not only to free our consciences from the bondage of fears, but our hearts from the bondage of sin, that we may serve God with more liberty and delight.

Use 2. Direction. In the Lord's supper, where we come to renew our interest in Christ and his benefits, we must look to this first, Are we washed? Have we made conscience of our baptismal vow? It is a lie to the Holy Ghost when we make use of his covenanting signs without a real minding the duties of the covenant; this is to tear the bond and prize the seals. Alas! if you be not washed, you come to lay claim to the benefits you have no title unto; and if you think you have a title, it is only the fruit of your ignorance, mistaking a conditional offer for an actual absolute grant. Well, then, are your hearts true to God in the covenant which you are to renew and feel?

But who can say, my heart is clean? Prov. xx. 9. I answer—Perfection or absolute purity, we cannot expect; for the work is but a-doing; but sincerity we must require, and that may be discerned by four things—

1. If there be no sin but what you are willing to know, and therefore prize the light that discovereth it: John iii. 20, 21, 'Every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd; but he that doeth good cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.' *Iniqua lex est, quæ te examinare non patitur.*

2. If there be no sin that you know, but you truly and heartily desire to leave and get rid of it, though to your carnal part it be never so near and dear, and count it the greatest happiness in the world to master it; though the heart be more inclined to one sin than another, yet you mainly set yourselves against it: Ps. xviii. 23, 'I was also upright before him, and kept myself from my iniquity.'

3. If you are not only content to subdue it, but resolve seriously to make use of the means God hath made known to you to purge out sin: Isa. i. 16, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings;' Jer. ix. 14, 'O Jerusalem, wash thine heart from wickedness, that thou mayest be saved.' Many are content God should search them, but will not stir hand or foot, nor do anything to their own cure; they do not act like creatures in misery, &c.

4. Do you make conscience of your covenant vow and engagement to forsake all impurity so far as that your inward and beloved lusts are weakened, though you cannot wholly get rid of them? I put this last question to you, partly because our sincerity is not only to be determined *quoad conatum*, as to the endeavour, but *quoad eventum*, as to the success, Gal. v. 24. The back bias of corruption is weakened, and we must get a greater readiness, and be the fitter to serve Christ in purity and sincerity: 2 Tim. ii. 21, 'If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel of honour, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared for every good work.' There must be something in a christian above natural men. In some measure he must be ready and fitted for the service of Christ, and perform acts of obedience, not by constraint, but with delight and cheerfulness; which cannot be till the heart be cleansed from accustomed sins. Partly because the main intent of the covenant is to cleanse us from sin. Consider it either on God's part or man's. On God's part, there are promises to allure or attract us to all manner of purity, as promises of being received by Christ as children into his family. These oblige us to purify ourselves from sins of all kinds, 2 Cor. vii. 1. And promises that offer help to enable us to vanquish the inclinations of the sensual and carnal life, which promises if they be received by faith, do make a wonderful change in sinners, 2 Peter i. 4. Now, we sincerely accepting this covenant, it cannot be imagined but some effect must be produced, if we on our part do not put a bar. We are under a vow and obligation to die unto sin, Rom. vi. 11, which a sincere christian doth make conscience of. He is a debtor, Rom. viii. 12, 13, and therefore doth not forget his vow, but is mortifying and weakening the power of sin every day, and therefore giveth over all care of satisfying or gratifying the flesh, but all his business is to live a pure and holy life, to the praise and glory of God. Therefore, having by God's promises greater strength, by his own vow stricter obligations, he cometh in some measure to overcome sin. Thus I have given you the lowest marks of sincerity in this point. Will you now try yourselves? Are you thus far washed from sin?

But here a question ariseth, Are we bound to have assurance of our sincerity before we come to the Lord's table? I answer—

1. We are bound to be sincere, and to examine whether we be sincere; and so the decision is, we may come without assurance, but

we cannot regularly come without examination. I shall prove both parts.

[1.] That we may come without assurance; for though sincerity be absolutely necessary to the acceptance of the new covenant, yet being and seeing are distinct. A man may be sincere, and have a right to the blessings of the covenant and yet see it not, or not discern his right and title. That dependeth on the clearness of our sanctification, and the evidence of the Spirit witnessing the truth thereof, which is not vouchsafed ordinarily, but to eminent self-denying christians; and therefore, if none but those who have evidence of their sincerity should come to the Lord's table, a great part of those that profess his name should be cut off from an use of this holy means, because they have not the fruits of serious diligence, 2 Peter i. 10, and self-denying obedience, 1 John iii. 19, and so would lose not only the sense of their interest in spiritual privileges, but God's help to obedience; for sacraments are not only means to confirm our faith in God's promises, but to engage us to purity and holiness; and the absurdity of cutting off so many christians from this help and means is obvious.

[2.] We ought not to come without examination, because we have the express injunction of scripture, 1 Cor. xi. 28. And the reason of the thing enforceth it, that you may find out what inward corruptions and sinful inclinations are yet strongest in you, and hear what God and conscience have to say to you as to the fulfilling of your former covenants, or what you have yet to complain of as your greatest burden, what grace you most need to remove the impediment; for on God's part all things are ready.

2. If we cannot approve ourselves as sincere upon examination, we must the more seriously renew our faith and repentance by these acts.

[1.] You must dedicate yourselves anew by renouncing sin with an utter detestation, or renewing your purposes to forsake all sin, never to meddle with it any more: Isa. xxx. 22, 'Thou shalt cast them away as a menstruous cloth, and say unto them, Get you hence.' The phrase implieth hatred and abhorrence of sin; So, get you gone; I have nothing to do with you, Hosea xiv. 8; and so Job xxxiv. 33. Never purpose to commit any sin; yea, purpose to oppose all sin; and these purposes often renewed, lest you grow remiss in them.

2. Bewailing our failings; when God hath opened a fountain for uncleanness, that we are not clean unto this very day, Isa. lxiv. 6, 'We are all as an unclean thing, all our righteousnesses as filthy rags,' for which we are justly loathsome to God.

3. Hunger and thirst for this grace, Mat. v. 6, in confidence and hope, through Jesus Christ, to have the work brought to greater perfection: Col. i. 21, 22, 'And you, that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprieveable in his sight;' and Eph. v. 26, 27, 'That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.'