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Substance of a sermon preached by Mr W Croft on Wednesday evening June 13<sup>th</sup> 1928

"If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me." John 13:8.

Through the whole of this chapter, Peter was very much to the fore in speaking; he was the first to speak in almost every case; full of boldness in asserting his love and zeal before the Lord and the other disciples, giving them to see how much zeal he had for the Lord. He was the first to speak while this gracious act of condescension was going on - the Lord, the great King, stooping so low, and bemeaning Himself so as to wash their feet. It was a servant who should bring the water to wash his master's feet, not for the master to wash the servant's feet; it was a reversing of things they could not understand, but Peter would put it right - the Lord should not wash his feet, and I believe he fully intended all he said; he did not mean he would disavow Him - oh no! but he would change places - wash his Master's feet. This was not pride of heart that actuated him, but he did not know the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ as he was later on to know it; to what depth the Lord Himself must go to reach his case. He needed such a one as the Lord Jesus to take care of him; none but the Lord could look after him in that hour when, if he had not had a gracious Master, who knew everything, present and future as well as past, where would he have been?

This is a solemn important statement of truth, and a big word begins it - "IF I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." We must at the outset remove any feeling or thought that this was Peter's salvation, it was not that; he was not going to be saved eternally by the washing of his feet, but the reference is to a greater washing; we find it further on - "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." The feet washing was subsequent to the greater heart washing. That is the great point. It is a matter of importance, is it not? Many of you who have come out of the world and come up to the House of God, know what it means to come out of one element into another, to come out of that which is compulsory, and not a choice. It is not the choice of a godly man to live and linger amongst ungodly people; his choice is, as opportunity arises, to leave them and join the people of God, either in public service or in private conversation, and in so doing, he declares for clean things; he makes a statement by his walk, life and behaviour that he loves clean things, and therefore that he is not unclean; he loves the things that make for his soul's good. "When they were let go," we read in the Acts of the Apostles, "they went to their own company." They knew their own company; they knew whom they loved to be with. It would not take long for a godly soul to find his company and friends, to get where the truth is, and where the Lord's people are. He will desire to have godly conversation with them, to compare notes on the things of God, because that is what they love. Their other occupations here on earth are necessary to the body, but they are a heavy burden and hindering to the soul; not but what their faith grows in that state and environment, but they desire to be where the Gospel is and the things of God are, so that they can turn matters over to their soul's satisfaction. It is a cleansing, and if that has taken-place, there has been a washing, it must be so. If we find ourselves in this text, we shall find ourselves in this way, that we have come out of the world because the Lord drew us out, and because he keeps us out and because He will not let us go, His grace will not let us go, His hand will not let us go. We are His property, His possession. In speaking to Peter, He was speaking to one whom He was not going to let go; though he was so full of misguided zeal, warm in the ways of the Lord, yet he did not know his own heart as he was to know it, (and neither do we), but the Lord would not let him go.

The heart is just- like a bottomless pit. We only know it in part, and a very little part; the Lord may be preparing for us, something that will open our eyes, and make us cry out 'Can God dwell here, in such an unclean heart. Can I be like this even after I have had the hope of being cleansed, and after I have walked in the light of His countenance?' Yes, even after that and after that again. We shall not in this time state get to the end of this painful discovery. He will say to us, as He did to Ezekiel, "Turn again, son of man, and thou shalt see greater abominations than these that they do." We shall say, Surely there is nothing worse than what I have already seen? Yet He says "Turn again" and in turning again, we shall see in ourselves greater depths of iniquity than we thought we had. We shall see more to make us ashamed and yet we have now to turn again and see it, and we feel it.

Now, Peter was there; he did not know to the full extent his sin and depravity, therefore he was to be shown more, and in order to show him more, he was to be shown his own weakness first; after making this bold statement, he was to learn by experience that he did not know what he had said. He did not know how painfully he would have to learn it, so he is first on this occasion, "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" Yet he of all men he was the one who would need to be washed. His words caused the Lord to say, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me." I believe it means this, 'If I do not this for thee, you have not that evidence and proof of my care and goodness in atoning for thy sins. If I do not deal with thee in this way, you have no evidence that I have dealt with you in the other way. If I do not for thee the least; how can it be proved that I have done for thee the greatest? I wash your feet to make manifest that I have washed your soul, and that being so you are clean every whit, and there is no more to be done for you, but to wash your feet. He washed the souls of His people before they were aware of it in that Fountain opened in that great day of the Passover Feast. He was just going into it when He spake these words, into the suffering and the sorrow of it; the great atonement was to be made He was to lay down His life for the sheep. In that day the fountain was opened to the house of Israel and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem for sin and for uncleanness. They were the ones who needed it; it was not to be an unused fountain, a mere display to be looked at, such as we have in our day just to be admired. No! This fountain that was opened in Jerusalem was for spiritually taught sinners who shall need the washing in the wonderful fountain for the pardon of sin. "Behold... saith the Lord of Hosts, I will remove the iniquity of that land in one day." (Zechariah 3:9) Out of that Fountain came blood and water, the blood to atone, and the water to cleanse. "But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." (Titus 3:5,6)

It all came in the time appointed - there is nothing out of its place in the Gospel. All the foundations of this world were out of course, its governments, and its ways of dealing one with another, but God's Gospel, the atoning work of Christ, and the way it is all being completed is never out of course; so here He refers to the great washing - "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with Me" then there must be a manifestation, and the Lord must show to His disciples that He died in their room and stead by coming to them, dealing with them, and showing Himself openly towards them and making Himself their Servant. He who was the King of kings - a Servant! The Creator of all things a Servant! A Servant, though Lord of all. As a meek, lowly, willing servant, taking a towel and girding Himself; taking a bason, pouring water into it, and then going to each one in turn, and washing the pollution of this world from off their feet! This is just what He does; He knows how we become polluted. He

knows how the godly become polluted; this is not given to the world, or to those who think that the Lord is standing waiting for them to allow Him to wash their feet. No, this is an act of goodness and favour to those to whom He has given His grace and separated them from the world that lieth in the wicked one, in the devil, the prince of this world, the father of lies, and the author of all confusion. He brings them out of that, He brings them to Himself, but again and again they become polluted.

Now this He does for our souls, and does for our feet; it is ever our experience of the things of God. Have we been washed in the fountain, and have we no further use for the Lord Jesus Christ? Have we merely got the doctrine in our head and no further and yet think that all is right. Is it all right? not if you fear God. Is it all right in God's account? Jesus Christ has made peace by the blood of His cross, that is our hope and our great mercy; but here is our plague - the devil is at work in the world, and he plagues those whom he cannot devour, and because he cannot devour them, he will plague them to the end; he tempts them day after day, causes them to walk in an evil thing, then turns accuser and plagues them about it: no matter what resolutions we make and how much we try to keep right, we get entangled and find ourselves robbed and spoiled, mutilated by this great adversary of the people of God; he puts something attractive in our way to try to cause us to walk contrary to the will of God, but when this is discovered, we are ashamed of having brought a stain on the Name which we profess to love; it will cause some crying, some bitter tears, and will add to the load we have to carry.

There is no weight on earth so heavy to carry as a heavy heart; it makes one stoop. With the Lord's favour and when His smile is enjoyed, many afflictions in the body can be born; if He is for us we can bear a good deal that falls upon the body, but Oh if He is absent, though the body be well, yet of guilt is in the heart, there is a weight which is impossible for us in our own strength to carry about. What a mercy it is that, the Lord carries his people, brings them through, and causes them to approach unto Him, and to say with David, "Pardon mine iniquity for it is great." It is great, not a small thing - mine iniquity is great, and I cannot remove it. Then you have such a burden, you will not go to a minister to get it removed, and when you come to the House of God, it will be with an aching heart; hearing the Word does not relieve you until it pleases God to apply it and make it yours. This is the *washing of the feet* - the walk - in which is included the words of the lips as well as the action of the hands, it also includes the thoughts of the heart; it includes that which no human eye ever sees. We do need to be on our watch tower, and that the Lord would give us grace to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation. We have no strength of our own to meet it, but the Lord is able to succour them that are tempted. It is our mercy that He does not turn a deaf ear when we cry to Him, and say - 'Oh Lord, I have proved my weakness again, I am not able to stand, my feet will not carry me, I am continually in trouble with my lips, and because the thoughts of my heart run into evil.' To others we may appear to walk uprightly, but they do not see the plague within us. This is how we know that He does wash our feet. His own Word to us is, "Take with you words and turn to the Lord, and say unto Him, Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously: so will we render the calves of our lips." (Hosea 14:2) when He appears, you want to praise the Lord for His goodness. He says, Thou hast no part with me if I wash not thy feet, and show thee experimentally that I have delivered thee from the evil which causes you pain and sorrow, and which you have contracted by contact with this world. The feet touch the earth and they are contaminated by contact with it; therefore they need continual cleansing.

This walking sets forth the whole behaviour and the thoughts of the heart. We cannot sin cheaply or live carelessly, nor can we live on a mere knowledge of the doctrines of truth. There are certainly many on the way to hell with clear doctrines in their brains, but none are on the way to hell with one grain of grace in their heart, and these are they who need this washing and who say with Peter 'Not my feet only but my hands and my head!' their language is I am altogether unclean, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity and cleanse me from my sin." If we have not some evidence that the Lord Jesus Christ, deals with us in that way, we have no part with Him.

What is it to have part with Him? What is the part? The Lord separated the Levites from the rest of the tribes. He gave His people Israel a fruitful land, and caused it to bring forth abundantly. He gave them prosperity when they served him; but He took one tribe and said they were to have no part in that land and no stones or landmarks as far as territory was concerned. They were given cities here and there to dwell in, but He was their portion; their inheritance was in Himself, that is, in His service. Now if He is our part and our inheritance, He gives us a part in His service. All the people of God are spiritual Levites; they bring sacrifices, for they have, to do with God on the ground of blood-shedding.

They do the work of the sanctuary no one else does it; only spiritual Levites rightly worship the Lord, bring sacrifices and please the Lord with that which they bring. The Levites did not bring a blemished lamb - a corrupt thing - no, they brought the best, a lamb without blemish, which was a type of the Lamb of God. Spiritual Levites have to do with Divine service; they have their part in God Himself, and a blessed part it is - a wonderful inheritance! This servant of God, Simon Peter, who had so many blemishes in himself, had a part in the Lord which was without blemish and without spot; he had a Lamb to bring. All who profess godliness have not that. We read of one who was told by this same Peter, when the circumstances arose and the time came to say it, "Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." No inheritance! No part in His blood-shedding and His everlasting love; what an awful thing if that were said of any of us here if we presume! Simon Magus thought that the gift of God might be purchased with money, but he had to be set back, and shown that the way he was in was an awful way and he was enjoined to confess his sin to God. Oh if there be no mercy from God, there will be no part with Him in glory; if there be no part with Him at the Throne of grace, certainly there will be no part with Him at the Throne of Glory; there cannot be, for "The Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly." - only they who walk uprightly go this way of seeking mercy for the alone sake of Jesus. In this way He is seen with His own pure holy sacrifice of Himself, for He laid down His sacred body as a sacrifice and that was an acceptable sacrifice to God. This is the part and the inheritance of a spiritual Levite - to have part with the God of heaven; it is to have part in all the provisions of grace, in the things that God has promised to give His people and in all the graces of the Spirit which flow from heaven into the hearts of His people. How often have we tried to speak of this, and I hope I shall never get beyond it - the great gifts of God to His people received from Him in gracious humility this is the proof of having part and lot in the matter. God gives true humility. There is an affected humility which a person may have and bow down his head like a bulrush and yet seeks his own glory, has the world in his heart and a covetous nature at work in it all; but that which comes from the Lord enters the heart time after time, day after day, year after year, and will go on to the very end. The soul cries, O Lord, grant me gracious humility, and it is only the possession of it that

will produce the prayer for it, and only the sight of so much pride in our hearts will make us hate that and beg the Lord to subdue it. We have just been singing the words

*Lord, if with Thee part I bear;  
If I through Thy Word am clean;  
In Thy mercy if I share;  
If Thy blood has purged my sin;  
To my needy soul impart  
Thy good Spirit from above  
To enrich my barren heart  
With humility and love."*

*Me Thou hast forgiven much  
This my sins too plainly prove.  
Give me what Thou givest such -  
Much humility and love.            Joseph Hart.*

Give me much love as well as humility, for they dwell harmoniously together; real humility is self-abnegation, self-abasement, but still hoping in the mercy of God; the soul is not elated about it, saying to others 'Look how I am growing in grace, see how extensive my knowledge is, and how good my experience is' - that is not the result of grace. No! there will be discovery of how little there is, how little grace, humility and love. Love is the secret of having part and lot in the matter. It is as though He said, 'If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in the love that brought Me down from heaven to die on the cross at Calvary; a death of ignominy, reproach, shame and spitting being made a curse for thee.'

"We love Him because He first loved us" so that the part we have in the matter is His love for us; our love to Him wanes, is sometimes hot, and, sometimes cold, and oftentimes we have to admit that it is only lukewarm, and if that be our case, we are neither cold nor hot; this was the state of the Laodicean Church to whom He said "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth," so that to have part with Him is to have part in his love, part in receiving it and having it shed abroad in the heart, and if this is your case, you will respond, and say 'Lord what wilt Thou have me to do? How wilt Thou have me to walk? If I have part with Thee, how may I walk it out and live it out and manifest it? Oh that Thou wouldst draw me to Thyself and give me grace to seek to know what Thou wilt have me to do; and then do it, for to know the will of God is one thing, and to do it is another.' Oftentimes when we read in the Scriptures we see the manifested will of God, and sometimes love is increased and we say, I feel this is for me, now Lord give me grace, even the grace of endurance; we are ready to say,

*If on my face for Thy dear Name,  
Shame and reproaches be,  
All hail reproach, and welcome shame!  
If Thou remember me.            Thomas Haweis*

If Thou wilt remember me, and shed abroad that love in my heart, then I will remember Thee in the way that Thou hast appointed; we shall love God for the love that He has displayed in the death of His Son "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins."(I John 4:13) That is how we feel it, know it, and realise it, when our love to Him is kindled and we say, Lord I will walk that way which thou wilt have me to go, "For Thou hast delivered my soul from death : wilt Thou. not deliver my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?"(Psalm 56:13); this is the prayer of one who has part in His love; he feels to need the Lord to keep him.

If we have part in His love, we have part in His provision and He has a part for us, a hand open to provide. He will satisfy the desire of every living thing. He knows how to supply the need of every desiring soul. When He provides for His people according to their need He displays His care for each one. Each one is a part of His Body; He is their Head, and He blesses them indeed. What a blessed part He is! They are poor who have no part with Him whatever inheritance they may have on earth; they may have great tracts of territory, and be able to say of it, 'This is all mine,' and they find great satisfaction in it, but for how long? just as long as they live, and no longer; then another will take it but the inheritance of the sons of God, who are His chosen people, cannot be transferred from one to another. No! It is an everlasting portion that is secured, confirmed, sealed, signed and ratified - sealed with the blood of His cross - this is their part. He provides for them, He intercedes for them; they have a part in His intercession before the Throne of God; and if we have part in that, who can overthrow us? If He is for us pleading, who can cast us off or cast us out? He will not, the devil cannot, the world cannot, and our own heart cannot - our salvation is sure for ever and ever. The bliss of this is known by tasting it, as Joseph Hart says,

*True 'twas thine from everlasting,  
But the bliss of it is,  
Only known by tasting.*

To have a sweet taste of this is a great mercy and favour; it is to have a personal part in it. All real religion begins in the heart and eventually will land the soul in glory, it will land them safe at last, it cannot fail to do so - that is the final part, the part in heaven. The part here on earth is His service, of which the, Levitical priesthood is a type, and he who has part with Christ on earth, will be elevated and honoured, and called one day to have part with Him in heaven, to take part in that song, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever." (Revelation 1:6) They sang a new song, "And again they said Alleluia for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." This is their part and God grant that we may

*Join in the everlasting song,  
And crown Him Lord of all. E Perronet*

If we have a part here, if He has washed our feet once, He will wash them again, and He will continue to wash them until having cleansed us from all the soil and stain contracted by contact with this earth, He will take us to heaven through His grace and through that Name which is above every name to be with Himself. May the Lord bless His Word. Amen