

May 23

Ye also ought to wash one another's feet. John 13:14

THIS would signify that the members of Christ's body should have a mutual watch-care over one another's welfare; to keep each other clean, holy, pure, and to

R3542 "WASHING ONE ANOTHER'S FEET...*JOHN 13:1-14... Golden Text:--"By love serve one another."*--Gal. 5:13...

Some of the apostles had, by the Lord's instruction, made ready beforehand; and now, as they assembled without a host to appoint them their places at the Supper, a discussion as to their prominence and their rights to the most honorable places, nearest to the Master...

SELFISHNESS EVEN IN LOVE

Nor are we to think of the apostles as each striving for the highest position merely from a selfish standpoint. Rather we should suppose that Peter, James and John, whom the Lord had in various ways specially favored in times past and who seemed to be specially close to him, loved the positions nearest his person, not merely because of the honor thus implied, but largely because of their love and esteem for the Master himself, and perhaps with the feeling that they appreciated this privilege more than some others could appreciate the same. Indeed we may suppose that a considerable number of the other apostles strove on their behalf, insisting that they should have the most honorable position. But however we view the matter, it is evident that a wrong spirit had been engendered, one very inappropriate to the occasion, especially inappropriate to the Memorial Supper which our Lord intended to institute after the Passover Supper.

It is difficult for us to gage our own hearts thoroughly and hence we should use great charity in measuring the hearts and intentions of others, and should err rather on the side of too great sympathy and leniency than on the side of too strong condemnation. Doubtless had the apostles been inquired of respecting the matter they would have denied any elements of selfishness in their motives and conduct, and would have thought and spoken only of their zeal for the Lord and desire to be near him. This illustrates to us, what the Scriptures declare, that the human heart is exceedingly deceitful--that it needs scrutinizing carefully lest, under the cloak of something good, it might harbor qualities which without that cloak we would despise or spurn.

As further illustrating this subject, and as helping us each and all to apply the lesson personally, we relate a dream told by a Scotch minister, Horatius Bonar, shortly before his death. He dreamed that his zeal was represented in a package of considerable size and weight, and that some angels came to it and weighed it and assured him that it was full weight, an hundred pounds--all that was possible. In his dream he was greatly pleased with this report. They next determined to analyze it. They put it into a crucible and tested it in various ways and then reported the result thus: "Fourteen parts selfishness; fifteen parts sectarianism; twenty-two parts ambition; twenty-three parts love to man; twenty-six parts love to God."

assist one another in overcoming the trials and temptations and besetments of this present evil world, arising from the three sources of temptation, "the world, the flesh and the devil."...Only as we cultivate the various graces of the spirit,--meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness,

Awakening he realized that it was but a dream, yet felt greatly humbled, and doubtless was profited by it throughout the remainder of life. That dream may be equally profitable to each of us in leading us to a close inspection of the motives which lie beyond our words and thoughts and doings--especially beyond our service for the Lord and for the brethren.

The first verse of our lesson calls attention to our Lord's love as the basis of all his dealings with "his own." Because of his love he laid aside his glory and became a man; because of his love he devoted himself as the man Christ Jesus; because of his love he was now anxious to help his dear disciples over a difficulty which, if not conquered, would hinder their usefulness as his followers both in the present and future. This love not only led our Lord to administer the reproof necessary, but led him to do it in the wisest and best and kindest manner. His example in this respect should be observed and copied by all his followers, especially those who in any public capacity or service are his representatives in the Church.

Had our Lord and his disciples been the guests of some host on this occasion, it would have been considered the duty of the host to have sent some menial to wash their feet. This was the custom of the country, and very necessary to comfort... As the Lord's company were not guests, but merely had the use of the room, no servant appeared to wash their feet, and it would have been properly the duty and custom for one of the number to have performed the menial service for the others... This, however, rightly understood and appreciated, would have left the greater opportunity for some of them to have volunteered this service to the others. What an opportunity they all lost!

A FAVORABLE OPPORTUNITY LOST

Our Lord apparently let the matter go to the full limit to see whether or not any of them would improve the opportunity and make himself servant of all: he waited until the supper was being served (not ended, as in our common version;) then arising from the table he laid aside his outer garment or mantle and took a towel and girded himself--that is to say, tightened the girdle worn around the waist, which would hold up the flowing under-garments and keep them out of the way of his activity. We can well imagine the consternation of the apostles as they watched this procedure, and then saw the Lord go from the feet of one and another as they protruded from the couches on which they reclined...

Apparently the apostles were so astonished at our Lord's procedure, and so felt the condemnation which his course implied, that they knew not what to say, and so silence reigned until it came Peter's turn. Peter had a peculiar combination of character, part of which was extremely good. He objected to having his feet washed by the

love--can we hope to be specially helpful to others in putting on these adornments of character and purities of life, and to get rid of defilements of the world, and the flesh. Z.'97-243R2201:6; 2202:4

Lord, saying, "Dost thou wash my feet?--It is not appropriate, Lord, that one so great as you should serve a person of my standing, a poor fisherman." But our Lord answered that although Peter did not discern the full meaning of the matter, he would explain to him later when he had finished the washing of all. Peter's second remark was less praiseworthy than his first. He said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

It was hard for Peter to realize that he was the disciple and the Lord was the Teacher,--that it was for him to obey and not to dictate; but Jesus' answer, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," at once brought out the better side of Peter's impulsive nature. If his washing had anything to do with his nearness to the Master and his relationship to him, then he wanted it. Going even to the other extreme again, fearing to leave matters in the Lord's care, he cried, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." There is a lesson for us in this matter: We are not to dictate to the Lord, not to attempt to be wise or good or obedient in ways that he has not directed. This is a hard lesson for some dispositions to learn,--continually they want to do more than is written in the Scriptures. Such a course indicates either a lack of reverence for the Lord and his Word and the wisdom thereof, or else a too great self-confidence, too much self-esteem. A humble and trustful heart should learn to say, Thy will, O Lord, thy way and in thy time--"Thy will, not mine be done."

WASHING THE FEET OF THE BATHED

Our Lord's answer in our common version is somewhat obscure; the revised version is better--he that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet to be clean every whit. Properly they had all bathed in accordance with the Jewish requirement of the putting away of all filth at the beginning of the Passover season. Our Lord's intimation, then, signified that having bathed they merely now needed the rinsing of their feet, the cleansing of the members that had come in contact with the earth. Our Lord added, referring to Judas, "Ye are clean, but not all." This expression shows us clearly that he had in mind a higher cleansing, of which this washing of their feet and their previous bath were but figures.

The Lord knew that the hearts of his disciples were loyal. He had accepted them as his disciples and had reckonedly imputed to them the merit of his sacrifice as a covering of their blemishes, the full testimony of which would be given them by and by at Pentecost, the holy Spirit testifying that the Father had accepted the Lord's atoning sacrifice on their behalf. But there was one in the number whose heart was not clean. Our Lord did not pass him by, but washed the feet of Judas with the rest, knowing the while of his perfidy, and that he had already bargained with the chief priests, and was merely awaiting the opportune moment for

the carrying out of his malevolent scheme.

Our Lord's words, although not understood by the rest, must have been appreciated by Judas, as were also his subsequent words recorded in *verses 18,26,27,28*. Our Lord went so far as to quote the very prophecy which marked Judas and his disloyalty, his violation of even the common hospitality. None of these things moved Judas; none of these things appealed to his heart in such a manner as to change his course. We have thus strong evidence of the willful intention which marked his crime and enforced the meaning of our Lord's words when he called him the "son of perdition," and declared that it would have been better for him that he had never been born. The quotation from the Psalm was, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

PATIENCE TO ITS LIMIT

We may be sure that our Lord's conduct in dealing with Judas is not only a proper outline of what our conduct should be to any of a similar class, but additionally we should note the lesson that the Lord is long suffering toward all who become his disciples, not willing that any should perish, but disposed to do for them until the very last, and to bring to their attention the error of their ways repeatedly, in hope that thus they may be turned therefrom. The latter lesson has associated with it the thought that those who have received the Truth, and who in spite of all the favors connected therewith encourage and develop in themselves the spirit of selfishness, are apt to become so hardened, so calloused, that not even the Master's reproofs and the words of the Scriptures will influence them. This reminds us of the Apostle's words, "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance"--to a proper course--if once the Spirit of the Lord has been fully subjected to the spirit of selfishness in their hearts.

In harmony with what he told Peter--that he should know later on the significance of the washing--our Lord explained the matter after he had gone the rounds of all the apostles. He said, "Know [understand] ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet."

THE MEANING OF THE LORD'S ACTION

Here we have the entire lesson explained. In their fear to be the least, all the disciples had shunned the opportunity of service for the Master and for each other. Our Lord, their acknowledged Head and Master, the Messiah, had humbled himself to serve them all, and had thus rebuked their inhumility, and at the same time set them an example that would apply to every affair of life, namely, that they should be glad to serve one another on every proper occasion, in the high things or in the common affairs of life. This washing of one another's feet we may readily see applies to any and every humble service of life, any and every kindness, though specially to those services and kindnesses which would be along the lines of spiritual assistances and comfort...

The pope of Rome...once every year, at this season washes the feet of twelve poor men, perhaps beggars... We see no such

formality in our Lord's intention. Indeed so far from it being a comfort or necessity to literally wash feet in our day and under our conditions, the reverse would be true. On the contrary, the Apostle points out, to wash the saints' feet in olden times was a mark of special hospitality, and entitled the performer to a loving respect in the Church.--1 Tim. 5:10.

How many blessed opportunities we have for comforting, refreshing, consoling one another and assisting one another in some of the humblest affairs of life, or in respect to some of the unpleasant duties, experiences or trials of life. As our Golden Text expresses it, we are in love to serve one another and not through formality. Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, we may be sure has the divine approval and blessing. Let us lose no opportunities of this kind; let us remember the Master's example; let us, like our Master, not merely assume humility or pretend it, but actually have that humility which will permit us to do kindness and services to all with whom we come in contact, and proportionately enjoy this privilege as we find the needy ones to be members of the Lord's body--the Church."

(John 13:14 KJV) "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

R194 "The lesson here taught the disciples by our Lord is humility, and that they should love one another to such an extent that they would consider no service too great nor too degrading which would minister to each other's comfort..."

There are hundreds of opportunities of showing the meek, lowly and loving spirit of our Master. Would that Christians could realize that, as God's stewards and servants, it is not self we are to minister to and serve and pamper, but it is our mission to "do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially to the household of faith," remembering that we are to walk in His footsteps who "came not to be ministered unto (served), but to minister..."

R5375 "We should not serve merely because we like to work, like to be busy, but because we perceive there is a work necessary, and we are glad to lay down our lives in this blessed service..."

Rejoice in having the privilege of doing something really helpful to others, especially the brethren in the Body of Christ. As we apply this principle broadly, we see how it is exemplified in the world, in the affairs of every day life. The whole human family are servants. One man serves as a jeweler; another as a manufacturer of woolen goods. He serves by buying wool, converting it into cloth and into garments. Another serves as a grocer and supplies food. Some are chiropodists; some, barbers; some, tailors; some, physicians; etc. In every case it is a service to others...

Whoever separates himself from this arrangement of service is getting away from his own good, and violating a Law of the Universe. Whoever gets to the place where he does no service, but has others to serve

him, is to be pitied. He will be unhappy, he will be ever so wealthy. Whoever would take this attitude would be arrogant and selfish, and his life would be devoid of beauty or of worth."

R2278 "In this climate by washing their feet -- this would be an inconvenience, the very reverse of a pleasure and service to them, and therefore contrary to the "example." But we can serve the "body" otherwise, and truly follow the example. We can improve our various opportunities to serve them in matters temporal as well as spiritual. We can be on the lookout, and when we see sadness or discouragement, we can lend a helping hand to lift our brother's burdens, or our sister's sorrows, and we can let them see by deeds, as well as words, our anxiety to serve them--figuratively speaking, to wash their feet.

Do not wait until they request your assistance; for in proportion as they are developed disciples, they will not ask your aid. Do not wait until they tell you of their burdens and trials, but watch to anticipate; for in proportion as they partake of our Master's spirit, they will not be complainers, but will live "always rejoicing"--rejoicing even in tribulations.

Be not ashamed of such service of the "body," but seek and rejoice in it--"ye do serve the Lord, Christ." But still more important than temporal service is our service one of another as "new creatures."

The washing of the body with the truth--the sanctifying and cleansing of it with the word--is in progress now. (Eph. 5:26,27.) What are you doing to cleanse and purify the faith and lives of your fellow members? Do you approach them humbly with the truth, sincerely anxious to serve them, to bless and comfort and refresh them therewith? If so, go on; grand is your service; the Master served thus; this is his example; follow on."

R5091 "It is the sympathetic ones who are most successful in helping the various members of the Body of Christ out of the besetments and difficulties incident to the following of the Lord in the present time. Oh, let us study and strive and pray that we may be very successful in obeying the Master's injunction, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet!"

How many opportunities we have for comforting, refreshing, consoling and assisting one another in some of the humblest affairs of daily living or in respect to some of the unpleasant duties, experiences or trials of life! By love we are to serve one another, but not as a mere formality. Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, has, we may be sure, the approval of the Head of the Church.

Let us lose no opportunities of this kind; let us remember the Master's example. Let us not merely assume the guise of humility, but let us actually have that grace of character which will enable us to do kindnesses and service to all with whom we come in contact. Then we shall all the more enjoy this privilege as we find the needy ones to be members of the Body of Christ--The Christ."

Note: In the *Reprints*, the two articles below (R2200 & 2201) are combined in one article. In the *Original Towers*, these two articles are printed separately from one another. The "Manna Mailings" utilize the *Original Towers*; therefore, the two articles are printed separately below.

R2200 (From Harvest Truth Database V7.0 2013)
ZEAL THE MEASURE OF LOVE

"There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he to whom he forgave most. And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged."--Luke 7:41-43.

THE peculiar circumstances which drew forth the above colloquy will be very generally remembered. It was toward the close of our Lord's ministry, and a prominent Pharisee had invited him to dine with him and a company of friends; and while they reclined at dinner, after the custom of those times,--the table being spread in the centre and couches surrounding it on which the guests rested upon one elbow, while their feet extended out behind the couches--there came behind the Lord a woman, Mary Magdalene, widely known as a disreputable character; she was in deep contrition and was weeping, her tears falling copiously upon the Master's feet. She had with her an alabaster box of very expensive ointment, and as she prepared to anoint our Lord's feet with it she first wiped them with her hair. Such a scene probably never occurred before or since, and was well calculated to move even the hardest hearts. But, so far from entering into the real spirit of the situation, the Pharisees were of cynical mind and merely interpreted this as a proof that our Lord was not a prophet: arguing that, if he were, he would have known the character of the woman, for she "was a sinner." Our Lord, discerning their hearts, gave them a better explanation of the case in the language of our text.

We are not to understand from our Lord's illustration that Mary was ten times as guilty before the divine law as was Simon, the Pharisee, but rather that in this illustration our Lord pictured the sentiments of the two sinners. Really "there is none righteous, no, not one;" "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God;" both Simon and Mary were under the Law of Moses, according to which he who was guilty of violating one feature of the Law had broken the Law as a whole; and had therefore failed of the reward promised to the one who would keep the whole, and had incurred the penalty pronounced for the violation of the whole,--death. Strictly speaking, then, both Simon and Mary owed the same amount--the lives of both were forfeited because of sin: and if either one of them were ever to obtain eternal life it could be only by the mercy of God, in the forgiveness of their sins. Strictly speaking, then, they each owed five hundred pence (were under sentence of death), and were alike unable to meet their indebtednesses.

Our Lord put the illustration of ten to one, not as representing his view of the situation, but as illustrating the sentiments of Mary and Simon. Mary realized her unworthiness, and in this respect was like the publican mentioned in one of our Lord's previous illustrations, who smote upon his breast, saying, "God be merciful to me a sinner;"--she realized her sinful load and how much need she had of the Lord's mercy in its removal. But Simon was like the other character of our Lord's discourse, who thanked God that he was not like other men, but that if not entirely perfect in every particular he was at least very nearly perfect. Alas! those who are in this condition of mind are farther from the Lord than the truly humble and penitent who realize their need of a Savior, even tho as respects many moralities they may be humanly on a higher plane. So in this case, while the Savior was present and Simon might have had a great blessing, it was penitent Mary who really received it. She heard the Master's words, "Thy sins are forgiven," while Simon who appreciated his unworthiness but slightly got no forgiveness. Here we have an illustration of our Lord's statement at another time,--"The whole need not a physician, but the sick." In reality there are none whole, all are sick; but only those who realize their sickness apply to the physician for his remedies.

Not only did our Lord justify his course in receiving the kind offices of penitent Mary, but, turning the argument, he administered a gentle but sharp reproof to Simon; he pointed out that he had neglected the common courtesies of that country and time. It was customary then to receive guests with a kiss, as it is now our custom to shake hands; it was customary then to provide water for the washing of the guest's feet, uncomfortable by reason of travel along the dusty roads of that time; in the case of an honored guest a servant would be sent to wash the feet. Furthermore, with special guests sometimes perfumed ointments for the hair and toilet were provided. Our Lord

calls Simon's attention to the fact that these little courtesies had been ignored by him, but had been more than made up for by Mary; and that the secret of the difference of sentiment lay in the fact that Simon loved him little, and that Mary loved him much.

It could not be that Simon had accidentally omitted these courtesies, for all Pharisees were punctilious on the subject of washings; nor need we suppose that it was an intentional slight put on our Lord. On the contrary, we may reasonably suppose that Simon, like Nicodemus, had a genuine interest in the Lord, and a surmise that he was a more than ordinary prophet. But both Simon and Nicodemus belonged to the respectable class, or higher caste, and came under the description of John (12:42,43), "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."

Nicodemus came to the Lord by night to interview him, but Simon more shrewdly thought to get the opportunity of a conversation directly with the Lord by inviting him to dinner; but to prevent the thought that he had anything more than a general interest and curiosity respecting Christ, and thus to maintain the good opinion of his co-religionists, he treated the Lord and the disciples, who evidently were also guests, as persons of a lower caste; and as tho he thought that it was a sufficient honor to them to be his guests at all, he entertained them as inferiors; altho, probably, could he have done so without endangering his standing as a Pharisee, he would have enjoyed extending to the Lord every courtesy.

How many who like Mary have realized their sins and have appreciated the divine mercy in the forgiveness of their sins have almost envied Mary her privilege of touching the feet of the blessed Master and, as he declared, "anointing them for his burial." With us, such opportunity might properly be appreciated still more highly, because of greater knowledge; for we have learned what Mary probably very imperfectly understood, that our Lord Jesus for our sakes left the glory which he had with the Father and humbled himself to human conditions in order that we through his poverty might be made rich. And not only so: Mary at this time had no knowledge of the extent to which the Master would go on her behalf and ours, to redeem us from sin and its sentence of death;--Calvary was then still in the future.

What a comforting thought it should be to all who are of Mary's attitude of mind that it is still possible to wash and to anoint the Lord's feet. His own lips have declared that, whatever is done for the least one of his consecrated followers, is accepted by him as done unto himself. Ah! blessed thought; the Lord is still in the flesh, representatively; his faithful are to be esteemed "members of his body," as new creatures. And while these are still in the flesh, the sufferings of Christ in the flesh are still in progress, and will not be finished until the last member has been glorified.--Col. 1:24.

Moreover, the Scriptural figure holds good: Christ is the Head of this body which is his Church, and which for eighteen hundred years has been in process of development; and now the last members of the body are here,--"The feet of him." As members of the feet class many are weary, discouraged, needing rest, refreshment and comfort, such as was bestowed upon the literal feet of the Master.

Here comes in a test with respect to the symbolic feet of Christ, similar to that with respect to the natural feet which proved the great love of Mary and the slight of love of Simon. The members of the feet class are unpopular to-day as was the Master himself in his day, with a class corresponding to the scribes and Pharisees and doctors of the Law. Only those who love the Master much and appreciate greatly their own forgiveness will love his "feet members" in the present time to the extent that they would be willing to serve them and to fellowship them; while others like Nicodemus and Simon, altho well-meaning and considerably interested, will be ashamed of the gospel of the Nazarene in the present time, and ashamed of his feet, which published to Zion glad tidings, saying, "Thy God reigneth"--the Millennial age is dawning and the reign of Christ has

already begun. (Isa. 52:7.) But those who are ashamed either of the gospel or of its servants are ashamed of the Master and of the Father; and such cannot be recognized as "overcomers" of the world, because instead they are overcome by the world and its spirit. Such shall not be accounted worthy to progress into the full knowledge and privileges of discipleship.

How few there are who seem to have a large measure of the spirit of Mary Magdalene! How few are really very helpful to one another. How few pour upon one another the spikenard ointment of comforting words, helpful suggestions and encouragements. Those

who are thus helpful will be found filled with a genuine love for the "head," for the "body" in general and even for the "feet." And the secret of their love as in Mary's case will be found to be a large appreciation of their own imperfections and of the Lord's mercy and grace toward them, in the forgiveness of their sins. The Apostle expresses the sentiments of these helpful and loving members of the body, who are the only ones who are making their calling and election sure, saying,--"For we thus judge, that if one died for all then were all dead; and that we who live should not henceforth live unto ourselves, but unto him who died for us and rose again."

R2201 (From Harvest Truth Database V7.0 2013)

"WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET"

IT WAS shortly after the incident related foregoing that our Lord, alone with the twelve disciples, took a basin of water and a towel and began to wash the disciples' feet. Strange indeed, this conduct seemed to them: not only their Master's words but also his actions were inexplicable riddles to them. He had acknowledged himself as the Son of God, the Messiah, their Lord and Master; and yet here he was, kneeling before them in the attitude of the humblest servant, washing their feet. Wondering and dumbfounded, but accustomed to obey the Master, no remark or protest was made until in turn he came to Peter. But Peter, as humble as he was bold, refused to allow the Master to perform the menial service, until assured that the explanation of it would be given after the service had been performed, and that unless he was washed he could have no part with the Master, whereupon he desired that his head and his hands as well as his feet might be washed.

Since literal feet-washing was frequent, the custom of that day, and almost indispensable to comfort, we may suppose that our Lord's example would be frequently followed in the early Church. But, we do not see in it any command that feet-washing should be performed simply as a ceremony--regardless of its usefulness and its convenience.

Our Lord's words to Peter, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me," certainly imply that the washing was more than a mere ceremony--more also than a mere expression of humility, as we shall endeavor to show. Nevertheless, the principle should hold good in every time and in every clime: that whatever useful service can be rendered to a fellow-member of the body of Christ, however humble or menial, it should be performed, as unto the Lord.

Having finished the service the Master explained its significance. He had set them an example (1) of humility, in being willing to perform the most menial service to those who were truly his; (2) the washing was an illustration of a great truth, namely, that altho already cleansed by the Lord--justified freely from all things, through faith in him--yet that there were certain defilements which would attach to each of them so long as they would be in the world, from contact with its evils and besetments. While the general washing (justification) would stand good for all time, yet they would need continually (figuratively) to wash one another's feet--with the "washing of water by the word." (Eph. 5:26.) ⁽¹⁾This would signify that they should have a mutual watch-care over one another's welfare; to keep each other clean, holy, pure, and to assist one another in overcoming the trials and temptations and besetments of this present evil world;--arising from the three sources of temptation, "the world, the flesh and the devil."

This cleansing work which is to be done for one another is in harmony with the injunction, "Keep yourselves in the love of God." They could not get each other into the love of God: that could be attained only in the one way; through the original cleansing of the precious blood, through faith; and no one can thus cleanse us or help us into divine favor, except the Redeemer himself. But he having cleansed us and brought us into divine favor, has commissioned us that we should help one another to "abide in his love" and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. The merit, the way and the privilege are all of God through Christ. The agencies used in applying these to one another are ourselves. "Ye ought also to wash one another's feet;" to help keep each other separate from the world, and clean through the Word he has spoken unto us,--by "the washing of water by the Word;" "building one another up in the most holy faith."

This again reminds us of the Scriptural statement, in reference to the Church perfected and glorified,-- "His wife hath made herself

ready." (Rev. 19:7.) While the entire arrangement for her wedding robes, the washing of regeneration (justification) and the water for her feet-washing, are all provided for the bride through the agency of the Bridegroom, and she is thus made ready, yet the use of these means, the putting on of her adornment, the embroidering of her robes and the arrangement of the jewels presented to her through the spirit, is left for herself to do; each member of the body co-operating unto the edification of the whole body in love.--1 Thes. 5:11; Rom. 14:19.

It would doubtless be pleasing in the sight of the Master, our Head, that we should have a disposition to help and to reform the world in general, and to wash the vilest of the vile from all their sin; but however praiseworthy such a disposition might be, we are to remember that this is not the command which he has placed before us in our text. His injunction here is not to do general washing of all the unclean, but to do special washing for those whom he already has cleansed, justified, through faith. It is in respect to the fellow-members of his body that he has given this charge; and we emphasize it here, because this fact seems to be very generally overlooked by Christian people, who give their time rather to the outward cleansing, the moral and social uplifting, of those whose hearts have never been washed by the Master, and correspondingly neglect one another, his "feet." Yet, as already seen, preceding, tho it is a great honor to render such a service to one another, the privilege will be properly appreciated and much used only by the truly humble who have much love for the Master.

But, it requires peculiar qualifications to enable us to help each other in this respect; before we can help others to remove the motes out of their eyes, and to cleanse their way of life, in all its little particulars, so that every thought as well as every word and act shall be brought into subjection to the divine will, it is necessary that we have experiences along the same lines ourselves. We must endeavor to get rid of the motes and beams that would obstruct our own vision. We must cultivate purity in our own lives,--in our deeds, words and thoughts. ⁽²⁾Only as we cultivate the various graces of the spirit,--meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly-kindness, love, can we hope to be specially helpful to others in putting on these adornments of character and purities of life, and to get rid of defilements of the world, and the flesh.

To this end it will be found helpful to remember the lesson of Mary in her service to the Lord's literal feet. Many who would reject well-meaning criticisms of conduct, resent well-meant efforts to wash their feet, as interferences with their private business, would be very amenable to the influences of the same person if he approached them with such evidences of true devotion and loving interest as would be symbolized by tears. It is the sympathetic ones who are most successful in helping the various members of the body of Christ out of the difficulties, besetments and defilements incident to the following of the Lord in this present time. Oh, let us study and strive and pray that we may be very successful in obeying the Master's words, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

It will also be a great help and comfort to the fellow members of the body, if in connection with these efforts to help one another in the cleansing of our ways, by taking heed unto the Word of the Lord, we will have with us also some of the precious ointment of sympathetic and, as far as possible, commendatory and encouraging words, and helpful assistance: for all the members of the feet class who are seeking to walk worthy of the Lord need the ointment of sympathy and encouragement, as offsets to the trials, difficulties and persecutions incident to the "narrow way," coming to them from the great Adversary and his blinded servants.

⁽¹⁾ ½ May 23 Manna, Jn 13:14

⁽²⁾ ½ May 23 Manna