

Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 45

CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

by A.W. Pink

Transcript

Exposition of the Gospel of John

CHAPTER 45

CHRIST WASHING HIS DISCIPLES' FEET

John 13:1-11

Below is an Analysis of the passage which is to be before us:— 1. Christ's unchanging love, verse 1. 2. Judas's inveterate hatred, verse 2. 3. Christ's return to the Father, verse 3. 4. Christ performing a slave's work, verses 4, 5. 5. Peter's blundering ignorance, verses 6-9. 6. Bathing and cleansing, verse 10. 7. The traitor excepted, verse 11. We are now to enter upon what many believers in each age have regarded as the most precious portion of this Gospel, yea, as one of the most blessed passages in all the Word of God. John 13 begins a new section, a section clearly distinguished and separated from what has gone before. At the beginning of the Gospel two things were stated in connection with the outcome of Christ's mission and ministry: the nation, as such, "received him not": this has been fully demonstrated, especially in chapters 5 to 12; second, those who did "receive him" were to be brought into the place of children of God. In chapters 13 to 17 we see Christ alone with His own, separated from the world, telling them of their peculiar portion and privileges. At the close of Christ's public ministry, we are told "He departed and did hide himself from them"; that is, from the nation (John 12:36). In 13 to 17 we find the Savior, in most intimate fellowship with His disciples, revealing to them the wondrous place which they had in His love, and how that love would be continually exercised on their behalf now that He was about to leave them and go to the Father. He had told them that, "the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). All through His career Christ had "ministered" to His own, but now, His public ministry was over and He was on the eve of giving His life a ransom for them, to be followed by Him taking His place on high. It would, therefore, be natural for the disciples to conclude that His "ministry" unto them was also ended. But not so. It would continue, and that is what this blessed section of John's Gospel is primarily designed to show us. He loved these disciples (and us) not only unto the Cross, but "unto the end." His return to the Father would neither terminate nor diminish the activities of His love for His own: in Heaven He is still occupied with the interest of His people. The central design of the "Paschal Discourse" of Christ was to lead His own into a spiritual understanding of their new place before the Father, and their new position in the world, as distinguished from the portion and place which

they had had in Judaism. What we have in John 13 to 17 takes the place of the long Olivet discourse recorded by each of the Synoptists. Here, instead of taking His seat upon the Mount, He brings the disciples, in spirit, into Heaven, and reveals the glories, blessedness, and holiness of the Sanctuary there. Instead of treating of the horrors of the Tribulation, He discloses to the family of God the activities of their great High Priest, as well as their own sorrows and joys during the time of their journey through this wilderness. While there is a marked contrast between what we have at the close of John 12 and the beginning of 13, there is also a close link of connection between them, a link which further develops the progressive unfolding of truth in this wondrous Gospel. In chapter 12 Christ had spoken of Himself as "the corn of wheat" which had to die in order that it might bring forth "much fruit." As we have seen, this speaks of union and communion—blessedly illustrated in the opening scene, the "supper" in Bethany. But here in chapter 13 and onwards, He makes known His own most gracious work for maintaining believers in fellowship with Himself. Two things, each most blessed and evidencing His perfections, are to be noted. First, His eye is on the heavenly sanctuary (John 13:1); second, His eye is upon His own (John 13:4). He guards the holy requirements of God, and He cares for and ministers to His people. We are left here in this world, and its dust is defiling, unfitting us for entrance into the Holiest. Here in John 13 we see Christ fitting us for that place. It is important for us to recognize, though, that it is God's interests which He has at heart in washing our feet! Christ is here seen as the Laver which stood between the brazen altar and the sanctuary, and which was approached only after the brazen altar had done its work. There is a further link between John 12 and 13 which brings out a most blessed contrast—let the student be constantly on the lookout for these. At the beginning of John 12 we behold the feet of the Lord; in John 13 we see the feet of the disciples. The "feet" of Christ were anointed, those of the disciples were washed. As the Savior passed through this sinful world He contracted no defilement. He left it as He came: "holy, harmless, and undefiled." The "feet" speak of the walk, and the fact that Christ's feet were anointed with the fragrant spikenard tells of the sweet savor which ever ascended from Him to the Father, perfectly glorifying Him as He did in every step of His path. But in sharp contrast from Him, the walk of the disciples was defiled, and the grime of the way must be removed. Note, also, that the anointing of the Savior's feet is given before the washing of the disciples' feet—in all things He must have "the preeminence" (Col. 1:18)! That which opens this section and introduces the "Paschal Discourse" is the Lord washing the feet of His disciples. The first thing to observe, particularly, is that it was water and not blood which was used for their cleansing. It is deeply important to note this, for many of the Lord's own people seem to be entirely ignorant about the distinction. Their speaking of a re-application of the blood, of coming anew to "the fountain" which has been opened for sin and uncleanness when they have transgressed, proves that this is only too sadly true. The New Testament knows nothing whatever of a re-application of the blood, or of sinning Christians needing to be washed in it again. To speak of such things is to grossly dishonor the all-efficacious sacrifice of the Cross. The blood of Jesus Christ God's Son cleanseth us from all sin (1 John 1:7). By "one offering he hath perfected forever them that are set apart" (Heb. 10:14). This being so, what provision, we may ask, has been made for the removal of the defilements which the Christian contracts by the way? The answer is "water." A careful study will show that in the Old and New Testaments alike the "blood" is Godward, the "water" is saintward, to remove impurity in practice: the one affects our standing, the other our state; the former is for judicial cleansing, the latter is for practical purification. In the types, Leviticus 16 makes known God's requirements for the making of atonement; Numbers 19 tells of God's provision for the defilements of the way, as Israel journeyed through the wilderness. The latter was met not by blood, but by "the water of purification." Judicial cleansing from the guilt of all sin is the inalienable portion of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moral cleansing, the practical purification of the heart and ways from all that defiles and hinders our communion with God is by

water, that is, the Word, applied to us in power by the Holy Spirit. "Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end" (John 13:1). This opening verse supplies us with the first key to what follows. What we have here anticipates that which was in view in Christ's return to the Father. He graciously affords us a symbolic representation of His present service for us in Heaven. He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on High, but He is there in our interests, ever living to make intercession for us, ever there as our Advocate with the Father, ever maintaining and succouring us by the way. "Now before the feast of the passover," immediately before, for on the morrow Christ was to die as the true Lamb. The "passover" itself was eaten at the close of the fourteenth day of Nisan (Ex. 12:6, 8); but "the feast," which lasted seven days, began on the fifteenth (Num. 28:17). What we have here, then, transpired on the eve before our Lord's death. When Jesus knew that his hour was come." Christ is the only One who has ever trod this earth that was never taken by surprise. All was known and felt in the Father's presence. "That he should depart out of this world": note "this world," not "the world." It is striking to see how frequently this term occurs at the close of His life: "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world" (John 9:39); "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (John 12:25); "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the Prince of this world be cast out" (John 12:31). "This world" was evidently a terrible place in the Lord's mind! He could not stay here. He had made the world (John 1:10), but sin has made this world what it is. Note "that he should depart out of this world unto the Father," not unto heaven! How blessed! It was the Father's presence His heart desired! "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." "His own"! After all the previous conflicts with an unbelieving world, after all His unavailing appeals to Israel, Christ now comforts His heart by lavishing His love upon the few who despised Him not. What a blessed expression "his own"! "Ye are not your own" (1 Cor. 6:19); we belong to Christ. We all know the delight which comes from being able to call something our own. It is not so much the value of what is possessed which constitutes this satisfaction, as it is the simple consciousness that it is mine. It is the Holy Spirit here declaring the heart of the Savior in the terms of love. It is not with our poor estimate of Him, still less with our wretched selves, that He would occupy us. He would have us taken up with Christ's thoughts about us! We belong to the Lord Jesus in a threefold way. First, by the Father's eternal election. We are the Father's love-gift to the Son: "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world." Second, we are His by His own redemptive rights. He paid the purchase price. He bought us for Himself: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it." Third, we are His by the effectual call of the Holy Spirit. If any one be in Christ, he is a new creation, and we are created anew by the Third Person of the Holy Trinity: "born of the Spirit." "He loved them unto the end." Here is the care of the Good Shepherd for the sheep. Unto "the end" of what? Who can define it? First, unto the end of our earthly pilgrimage. We need the assurance of His love as we pass through this wilderness. We shall not need it when we see Him face to face and know as we are known. But we do need the full assurance of it now. And what a resting-place for the poor heart amid all the buffetings of this life—the bosom of the Savior! It is here that John turned (John 13:23), and it is blessedly accessible to us, in spirit. Yea, it is to maintain us in the unending enjoyment of our place there, that the Lord Jesus is here seen washing the disciples' feet before He begins the long discourse which follows to the end of chapter 16. The love of Christ must be occupied about its objects, and this is what we see here. God is "light" (1 John 1:5), and God is "love" (1 John 4:16). In the first twelve chapters of this Gospel Christ is seen as light, revealing the Father, exposing men (John 1:7; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5). But now we behold Him (with "his own") as love (cf. John 13:34; 14:12; 15:9; 17:26, etc.). But mark it, it is a holy love. Divine love cannot allow that which is unclean. Therefore does the holy love of Christ begin by removing defilement from the feet of His disciples! Most blessed is this. We delight to contemplate the love which

caused Him to lay down His life for us, but let us never lose sight of the present activities of it. "He loved them unto the end? Not only unto the last, but to the farthest extent of their need and of His grace. He knew that Philip would misunderstand Him, that three of them would sleep while He prayed and agonized, that Peter would deny Him, that Thomas would doubt Him, that all would "forsake him"—yet He "loved them unto the end"! And so it is with us, dear Christian reader. "His own" are the objects of HIS love; "unto the end" is the extent of His love. He loves us unto "the end" of our miserable failures, unto the "end" of our wanderings and backslidings, unto the "end" of our unworthiness, unto the "end" of our deep need. His love no end or measure knows, No change can turn its course; Eternally the same it flows From one eternal Source.

The first part of our verse intimates two things about the Lord Jesus at this time: the Cross was before Him with all its horrors; the joy of returning to the Father was before Him with all its bliss; yet neither the fearful prospect of woe nor the hope of unspeakable rest and gladness shook His love for His own. He is the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever, therefore His love never varies. He is eternal, therefore has He loved us with an everlasting love. He is Divine, therefore is His love different from all others, passing human knowledge. "And supper being ended, the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him" (John 13:2). What a fearful contrast! From love to hate; from the Savior to Satan; from "his own" to the traitor! The mention of Judas here seems to be for the purpose of enhancing the beauty of what follows. The Devil had full mastery over the heart of the betrayer: thus in figure the Cross was passed—Satan had accomplished his design. "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God" (John 13:3) "These statements of Christ's Divine origin, authority, and coming glory, are made so as to emphasize the amazing condescension of the service to which He humbled Himself to do the office of a bondsman" (Companion Bible). "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself" (John 13:3, 4). "It was not in forgetfulness of His Divine origin, but in full consciousness of it, He discharged this menial function. As He had divested Himself of the 'form of God' at the first, stripping Himself of the outward glory attendant on recognized Deity; and had taken upon Himself 'the form of a servant,' so now He laid aside His garment and girded Himself; assuming the guise of a household slave. For a fisherman to pour water over a fisherman's feet was no great condescension; but that He, in whose hands are all human affairs and whose nearest relation is the Father, should thus condescend, is of unparalleled significance. It is this kind of action that is suitable to One whose consciousness is Divine. Not only does the dignity of Jesus vastly augment the beauty of the action, but it also sheds new light on the Divine character" (Dr. Dods). Three things are to be carefully noted here as reasons why He washed His disciples' feet on this occasion. First, He knew that His hour was come when He should depart out of this world (John 13:1); second, He loved His own unto the end (John 13:1); third, because all things had been given into His hands, and He that had come from God was returning to God—for these reasons He arose from the table and girded Himself with a towel. As we shall see, all of this finds its explanation in the Lord's words to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8). For three years the disciples had had "a part" with Him. But now He was about to leave them; but before doing so He would assure them (and us) that His wondrous love continues undiminished and unchanged after His return to the Father. Christ began a service in the Glory which, in another manner, He will continue forever. The service in which He is now engaged is to maintain our "part" with Him. There has been much controversy as to what "supper" is referred to here in John 13. Most assuredly it was not the "Lord's Supper," for in John 13:26 we find Christ giving the "sop" to Judas, and the Synoptists make it unmistakably plain that this was at the paschal supper. The Lord's Supper receives no mention in the fourth Gospel. On this fact

Bishop Ryle strikingly says, "I think it was specially intended to be a witness forever against the growing tendency of Christians to make an idol out of the sacraments. Even from the beginning there seems to have been a disposition in the Church to make a religion of forms and ceremonies rather than of heart, and to exalt outward ordinances to a place which God never meant them to fill. Against this teaching St. John was raised up to testify. The mere fact that in his Gospel he leaves out the Lord's Supper altogether, and does not even name it, is strong proof that the Lord's Supper cannot be, as many tell us, the first, chief, and principle thing in Christianity. His perfect silence about it can never be reconciled with this favorite theory. It is a most conspicuous silence, I can only see one answer: it is because it is not a primary, but a secondary thing in Christ's religion." "He riseth from supper." In the order of events this comes right after what we read of in John 13:1: the time-mark there being connected with Christ's action here. Evidently it was just before the beginning of the meal that the Lord Jesus rose from the table—the meal being the paschal one. It is important to note that John's narrative carries everything on in strict connection from this point to John 14:31, and then on to John 18:1: therefore this "supper" and Christ's discourse to His disciples was at once followed by the going forth to Gethsemane. The question of Peter in John 13:24 is inexplicable if the paschal supper had already taken place (as quite a number have insisted), for the Synoptists are explicit that our Lord named the betrayer during this meal. Most of the difficulty has been created by the first clause of John 13:2, which should be rendered, "when the supper arrived," i.e., was ready. Mark how that 13:12 shows us Christ resuming His place at the table. "He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments: and took a towel, and girded himself" (John 13:4). Everything here, we doubt not, has a deep symbolical meaning. The "supper" was the paschal one, and clearly spoke of Christ's death. The rising from supper and the laying aside of His garments (cf. John 20:6) pictured our Lord on the resurrection-side of the grave. The girding Himself speaks of service, the heavenly service in which He is now engaged on behalf of His people. It is a wonderful thing that the Lord never relinquished His servant character. Even which the modern advocates of the so-called sacramental system can never get over, or explain away. If the sacrament of the Lord's Supper really is the first and chief thing in Christianity, why does St. John tell us nothing about it? To that question after His return to the Glory He still ministers to us. Beautifully was this typified of old in connection with the Hebrew servant in Exodus 21. "If thou buy an Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve: and in the seventh he shall go out free . . . If the servant shall plainly say I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free, then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, and unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he shall serve him forever" (verses 2-5, 6). This has been expounded at length in our "Gleanings in Exodus." Suffice it now to say that it affords us a most blessed foreshadowment of the perfect Servant. Christ will "serve forever." To-day He is serving us, applying the Word (by His Spirit) to our practical state, dealing with what unfits us for fellowship with Himself on high. Luke 12:37 gives us a precious word upon His future service: "Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them." And how will He "serve" us then? By ministering to our happiness and enjoyment as "His guests"! "After that he poureth water into a basin," etc. (John 13:5). Everything here is Divinely perfect. Seven distinct actions are attributed to the Savior: "He (1) riseth from supper, and (2) laid aside his garments, and (3) took a towel, and (4) girded himself. After that he (5) Poureth water into a basin, and (6) began to wash the disciples' feet, and (7) to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded." It was their feet which He here proceeded to wash. Their persons were already cleansed. They had been brought out of Judaism, and a heavenly portion was now theirs—a place in the Father's House. But their conduct must be suited to that House. Their walk must be in accord with their heavenly calling. They must be kept clean in their ways. The water with which the Savior here cleansed

the soiled feet of His disciples was an emblem of the Word: "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Ps. 119:9). Fully and blessedly is this brought out in Ephesians 5:25, 26: "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Every clause of this passage is found here in John 13. He 'loved' them, the Church. He 'gave himself' for them, the 'supper' setting forth that: that He might 'sanctify,' separate to Himself, thus they were 'his own'; and 'cleanse' it with the washing of water by the Word. It is complete; His constant, perfect provision for our being kept clean" (Mr. Malachi Taylor). It is to be particularly observed that the Lord did not leave this work unfinished or half done: like a perfect servant, our Lord not only "washed" their feet, but He "wiped" them as well! "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" (John 13:6). Simon was ever blundering, and his sad faults and failings are recorded for our learning. "In Divine things the wisdom of the believer is subjection to Christ and confidence in Him. What He does we are called on to accept with thankfulness of heart, and as Mary said to the servants at the marriage-feast, 'Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.' This Simon Peter did not, for when the Lord approached him in the form of a servant or bond-man, he demurred. Was there not faith 'working by love' in Peter's heart? Both, undoubtedly, yet not then in action, but buried under superabundant feeling of a human order, else he had not allowed his mind to question what the Lord saw fit to do. He had rather bowed to Christ's love and sought to learn, as He might teach, what deep need must be in him and his fellows to draw forth such a lowly yet requisite service from his Master... Too self-confident and indeed ignorant not only of himself and the defiling scene around, but of the depths and constancy of Christ's love, Peter says to Him, 'Lord, dost thou wash my feet?' Granting that he could not know what was not yet revealed, but was it comely of him, was it reverent, to question what the Lord was doing? He may have thought it humility in himself, and honor to the Lord, to decline a service so menial at His hands. But Peter should never have forgotten that as Jesus never said a word, so He never did an act save worthy of God and demonstrative of the Father; and now more than ever were His words and ways an exhibition of Divine grace, as human evil set on by Satan, not only in those outside, but within the innermost circle of His own, called for increased distinctness and intensity. "The truth is we need to learn from God how to honor Him, and learn to love according to His mind. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know; this, too, was Peter's mistake. He should have suspected his thoughts, and waited in all submissiveness on Him who, as many confessed that knew far less than he did, 'hath done all things well,' and was absolutely what He was saying, truth and love in the same blessed Person. The thoughts of God are never as ours, and saints slip into those of man, unless they are taught of God, by faith, in detail, too, as well as in the main; for we cannot, ought not, to trust ourselves in anything. God the Father will have the Son honored; and He is honored most when believed in and followed in His humiliation. Peter therefore was equally astray when he once ventured to rebuke the Lord for speaking of His suffering and death, as now when he asks, 'Dost thou wash my feet?' (Bible Treasury). "Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). We take it that the force of this is, briefly, as follows: Peter, this gives a picture, a sample, of the work which I shall perform for My people when I return to the Father. You do not see the significance of it now, but you will later, when the Holy Spirit has come. This was really a rebuke; but given tenderly. Peter ought to have known that in his Lord's mysterious action there must be a purpose and a meaning in it worthy of His subjection to the Father and expressive of His love for His own. But like us, Peter was dull of discernment, slow to learn. Instead of gladly submitting to the most high Sovereign now performing the service of a slave, he plunges still further into worse error: "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet." It was ignorance, yea, affection, which prompted him; but that did not excuse him. But how blessed that he had, and that we have, to do with One who

bears with us in our dullness, and whose grace corrects our faults! "Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet" (John 13:8). We are all ready to censure Peter for not complying immediately with the Lord's will when he knew it. But let us beware lest we be guilty of something more inexcusable than what we condemn in the apostle. Peter said he would not submit, yet he did, and that very quickly. Is it not sadly true of us, that we often say we will submit, and yet remain obstinately disobedient? As another has said, "We do not use Peter's words, but we act them, which he durst not do. What, then, is the difference between us and him? Is it not just the difference between the two sons in the parable—the one of whom said, 'I go, and went not,' the other of whom said, 'I will not go, and afterwards repented and went?' Which of these did the will of the father? Whether do you think Peter's refractory expression, or our disobedient conduct, most deserving of censure?" "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8). "If I wash thee not": we cannot wash our own feet; we are totally incompetent, not only for the saving of our souls, but also for the cleansing of our defiled walk. Nor has even the Word apart from His living presence any efficacy. Our feet must be in His hands, that is to say, we must completely yield to Him. It is not simply that we are to judge our ways according to our apprehension of the Word, and its requirements, but He must interpret and apply it, and for this we must be in His presence. But what is meant by "no part with me?" Ah, here is the key that unlocks the chamber that conducts us to the very center of this incident. The word "part" has reference to fellowship. This is seen from our Lord's words concerning the sister of Martha: "Mary hath chosen that good part" (Luke 10:42). The meaning of this word "part" is clearly defined again in 2 Corinthians 6:15, "What concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?" What is the "washing"? "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." It is something which is needed by all believers. We say "believers," for though all such have a portion in Christ, how often they fail to enjoy their "part" with Him. This "washing" is something more than confession of sin and the consequent forgiveness. It is the searching out of the Word, in the presence of God, of that which led me into evil; it is judging the root, of which sins are the fruit. Yet this "washing" must not be limited to God's remedy for our declension and failure, rather should we view it as His gracious provision for our daily need, as a preservative and preventative against outward failures. We need to get alone with our Lord each day, opening our hearts to the light as the flower does its petals to the sun. Alas! that we have so little consciousness of our deep need for this, and that there is so little retirement and examination of our ways before God. To really place our feet for washing in the blessed hands of Christ is to come before Him in the attitude of the Psalmist: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Ps. 139:23, 24). This is imperatively necessary if, while in such a defiling place as this world, we are to have a "part" with Him. "Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head" (John 13:9). Here, with characteristic impulsiveness, Peter rushes to the opposite extreme. As he hears that he could have no part with Christ except the Lord wash him, he is ready now to be washed all over. It was the passionate outburst of a warm-hearted if dull-minded disciple. Nevertheless, his ignorance voiced another error. He needed not now to be washed all over. The sinner does, but the saint does not. It is only our walk which needs cleansing. "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit" (John 13:10). The distinction which our Lord here drew is of vital importance. "He that is washed," better, "He who has been bathed," that is, his whole person cleansed: "needeth not save to wash his feet," then is he completely fit for communion with the Lord. There is a washing which believers have in Christ that needs not to be ever repeated. In Him there is to be found a cleansing which is never lost. "By one offering he hath perfected forever them that are set apart" (Heb. 10:14). The believer has been purged from all sin, and made meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light (Col. 1:12). This purging needs no repetition. It is of first moment that the Christian should be dear upon this

basic truth. The benefits which Christ confers upon the believer are never recalled; the efficacy of His precious blood abides upon him eternally. The moment a sinner, drawn by the Holy Spirit, comes to Christ, he is completely and finally cleansed. It is the apprehension of this which gives a firm rock for my feet to rest upon. It assures me that my hope is a stable one; that my standing before God is immutable. It banishes doubt and uncertainty. It gives the heart and mind abiding peace to know that the benefits I have found in Christ are never to be recalled. I am brought out from under condemnation and placed in a state of everlasting acceptance. All this, and more, is included in the "bathing" which Christ has declared needs not to be repeated. I stand resplendent in the sight of God in all the Savior's beauty and perfections. God looks upon believers not merely as forgiven, but as righteous: as truly as Christ was "made sin" for us, so have we been "made the righteousness of God in him." But side by side with this blessed truth of a bathing in Christ which needs not, and cannot be, repeated, stands another truth of great practical importance: "He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." There is a partial cleansing which the believer still needs, a daily washing to counteract the defiling effects of this world. Our daily contact with the evil all around causes the dust of defilement to settle upon us so that the mirror of our conscience is dimmed and the spiritual affections of our heart are dulled. We need to come afresh into the presence of Christ in order to learn what things really are, surrendering ourselves to His judgment in everything, and submitting to His purging Word. And who is there that, even for a single day, lives without sin? Who is there that does not need to daily pray, "Forgive us our trespasses"? Only One has ever walked here and been unsoiled by the dust of earth. He went as He came, unstained, uncontaminated. But who is there among His people that does not find much in his daily walk that makes him blush for shame! How much unfaithfulness we all have to deplore! Let me but compare my walk with Christ's, and, unless I am blinded by conceit or deceived by Satan, I shall at once see that I come infinitely short of Him, and though "following his steps" (not "in his steps" as it is so often misquoted), it is but "afar off." So often my acts are un-Christlike in character, so often my disposition and ways have "the flesh" stamped upon them. Even when evil does not break out in open forms, we are conscious of much hidden wrong, of sins of thought, of vile desires. How real, then, how deep, is our daily need of putting our feet in the hands of Christ for cleansing, that everything which hinders communion with Him may be removed, and that He can say of us, "Ye are clean"! Is it not most significant that nothing is said in this chapter about the washing of the disciples' hands? Does it not point a leading contrast between the Mosaic and the Christian dispensations? Under the law, where there was so much of doing, the priests were required to wash both their hands and their feet (Ex. 30:19); but under grace all has been done for us, and if the walk be right, the work will be acceptable! "And ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean" (John 13:10, 11). Christ here referred to Judas, though He did not name the Traitor. Judas must have known what He meant, but his conscience was seared as with a red-hot iron, and his heart was harder than the nether mill-stone. Even this touching exhibition of the condescending love and grace of Christ toward His disciples made no impression upon him. In less than one hour he went forth to sell his Master. In his case it was not a matter of losing spiritual life, but of manifesting the fact that he never had it. It was not a sheep of Christ becoming unclean, but of a dog returning to his vomit. Unspeakably solemn warning is this for those who, for a time, maintain an outward form of godliness, but are strangers to its inward power. The following questions are to help the student prepare for the next lesson:— 1. What is the typical teaching of verse 12? 2. What is the important lesson on reverence in verse 13? 3. How are we to obey, verses 14, 15? 4. What is the thought suggested by verse 16 coming right after verses 14, 15? 5. What lessons are to be learned from verse 17? 6. What is the meaning of verse 19? 7. What blessed truth is expressed in verse 20?

Source:

<https://sermonindex.net/speakers/aw-pink/exposition-of-the-gospel-of-john-chapter-45-christ-washing-his-disciples-feet/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net