

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

We come now, in John's Gospel, to the beginning of the Lord's private ministry to the chosen Twelve. Chapter twelve ends the disclosure of the Son of God by Himself to the Jewish people and the record of their rejection of Him. Large portions of the Synoptic gospels are taken up with discourses of Jesus during the last week of His ministry which are not recorded in John's gospel. Some of the great teachings of Jesus that take place chronologically between chapters twelve (Triumphal Entry) and thirteen (The Last Supper) of the Fourth gospel *not* recorded in therein are: (cf. Map #7, p263).

- a. Great questions answered by Jesus, Matt. 21 and 22; Mk. 11 and 12; Luke 20.
- b. Denunciation of Scribes and Pharisees, Matt. 23; Mk. 12; Lk. 20.
- c. Predictions of destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the world, Matt. 24; Mk. 13; Lk. 21.
- d. Discourse on the Judgment, Matt. 25.
- e. Judas' plot to betray Jesus, Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22.
- f. Preparation for the Passover, Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22.

Now, beginning with chapter thirteen we have recorded for us the Word manifested, with a few exceptions, to the disciples privately and their eventual acceptance of Him (cf. our outline, page 19, Vol. I). Especially does John record (chap. 13 through 17) the more intimate, personal and private self-disclosure of Jesus to His disciples. Chapter thirteen is unique in this for no other gospel writer records these parting instructions of Jesus. Thus John 13 is vital in its complementary and explicatory connection to the synoptic accounts of the Last Supper.

John 13:35 is a condensation of the theme of the entire thirteenth chapter. Chapter thirteen is a very pertinent lesson on humility and service growing out of a bickering argument concerning places of honor and station in the anticipated kingdom of the Messiah (cf. Luke 22:24-30). It is also the beginning of a period of poignant instruction by the Master who must soon leave His disciples. Chapters 13 through 17 are the parting words of comfort and strength of the Incarnate Father to His soon-to-be bereaved children.

It is Jesus' desire to reveal unto them privately and graphically the character of the Son of God and His kingdom by example and precept.

We now take up a new division in our outline of the Fourth Gospel where the record naturally divides itself:

III The Word Manifested to The Disciples and Their Acceptance of Him, 13:1—20:31

A. Private Instructions and Encouragements, 13:1—17:26

1. Lesson on Humility and Service, 13:1-38
 - a. The Act of Loving Service, 13:1-11
 - b. The Lesson on Loving Service, 13:12-20
 - c. The Selfish Servant of Sin, 13:21-30
 - d. The Sacrificing Servant of Christ, 13:31-38

THE ACT OF LOVING SERVICE

Text 13:1-11

1 Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that his hour was come that he should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved his own that were in the world, he loved them unto the end.

2 And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he came forth from God, and goeth unto God, 4 riseth from supper, and layeth aside his garments; and he took a towel, and girded himself.

5 Then he poureth water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

6 So he cometh to Simon Peter. He saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet?

7 Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt understand hereafter.

8 Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me.

9 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head.

10 Jesus saith to him, He that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all.

11 For he knew him that should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean.

Queries

- a. Does verse 1 indicate that this foot-washing incident was at another supper, separate from the Passover?
- b. Why Peter's change of attitude as in verses 8 and 9?
- c. What does the figure of speech in verse 10 mean?

Paraphrase

Even before the Passover Jesus was omnisciently aware that He must depart this world and His disciples and return unto the Father. And now at the Passover, more vividly aware than ever of the appointed time for His departure, and having loved His disciples fervently throughout His earthly ministry, He knew that the proper time had come to reveal to them His love to the uttermost. And during the paschal supper Jesus, fully aware that Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, had previously succumbed to the devil's temptations and had decided to betray Him—and in full consciousness of His deity and His divine prerogatives—arose from His couch at the supper table and, taking off His outer garments, He picked up a towel and put it around His waist. Then He poured water into the wash basin and began to perform the customary task of a servant by washing the disciples' feet and drying them with the towel around His waist.

Around the table from couch to couch Jesus performed this service until He came to Simon Peter. In shocked astonishment Simon Peter said, Lord, are you going to wash my feet? Jesus answered, Simon, you do not understand the significance of what I am doing now but later on you will understand plainly. But Peter objected strenuously saying, Lord, you must never lower yourself to wash my feet! Jesus answered, If you cannot surrender to my way of humility, which I am here exemplifying, you can have no share in my kingdom. Then Simon Peter said to him, Lord, if to share in your kingdom I must be washed by you, then wash not only my feet but my hands and head also. Jesus said to him, Once a person has been cleansed and has become my follower he is cleansed completely and need not repeat the initial cleansing but must sanctify himself and grow in grace by daily repentance and humble acts of love. And you have all become initially true followers of mine but need to grow in grace and humble acts of love and service to one another—all of you except one are true disciples. Jesus knew from the first that Judas would betray Him and to show His omniscience to His disciples who would later remember this prediction, He said therefore, You are not all clean.

Summary

Jesus teaches the proud and ambitious disciples a lesson on love, humility and true discipleship by performing a humble deed of love.

Comment

How expressive the words of this first verse of the thirteenth chapter. Long before this Passover Jesus was fully aware of the terrible suffering He must endure (Matt. 16:21; 17:22-23; Jn. 5:18, etc.)

and yet His main concern was not for self but for His beloved disciples. All during the three years as the shadow of the cross grew more and more ominous His first care was teaching, encouraging, providing for and serving His disciples. They understood Him not and comforted Him not in His trials, yet He loved always. And now, having come to the crucial hour, more vividly aware than ever of His "exodus" He is not found selfishly engrossed with His own sorrows, but we find Him revealing His love to them to the uttermost. A. B. Bruce says, in *The Training of The Twelve*, "Jesus loved His disciples to the end, though they did not all so love Him. One of them at this very moment entertained the diabolic purpose of betraying his Lord. Yet that Lord loved even him, condescending to wash even his feet; so endeavoring, if possible, to overcome his evil with good."

Ever since the second century it has been disputed as to whether the Passover and Last Supper as recorded in the Synoptics (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22) and the Supper in John 13 are the same or not. That they are one and the same should be plain when a comparison of the two accounts is made. Both John and the Synoptics record incidents which are identical. Compare them! Compare John 13:16-17 with Luke 22:14-15, 24-27. Compare John 13:18, 21-30 with Mark 14:17-21; Matt. 26:20-25. Compare John 13:38 with Matt. 26:34; Mark 14:30; Luke 22:34. As Hendriksen says, "Must we, indeed, assume that these three identical incidents occurred in connection with two different meals on two different evenings?" McGarvey, in his *Fourfold Gospel*, says significantly, "It accords with the supplementary nature of John's Gospel to thus mention it as a meal thoroughly familiar to his readers."

This being the same Passover supper as that of the Synoptics we may determine the precise evening of the week in which Jesus washed the disciples' feet. The disciples had been instructed by Jesus to prepare for the Passover at the regulated time and in the usual manner (cf. Matt. 26:17-21; Mark 14:12-16). The regulated time for eating the Passover that year very evidently fell on Thursday evening for Mark, Luke and John all three state unequivocally that Jesus was crucified on *Preparation Day*, Friday, "the day before the sabbath," (cf. Matt. 26:17-21; Mark 14:12-16). We quote here from an essay by Seth Wilson on John 13, entitled, "*An Example in Humility*": "The Sabbath mentioned (Mk. 15:42) must have been the regular Saturday sabbath, too; for the special day of holy convocation in Passover week (if it ever was called a sabbath) was the *first* day of unleavened bread (Ex. 12:16; Lev. 23:6,7) and would have

been the day on which Jesus was crucified or even the day before, according to Mark 14:12, since Jesus was alive and free on the day on which the passover lamb was killed and the leaven was put out of the houses of Israel. The next day He was killed. The next day was 'the sabbath.' 'And when the sabbath was past' was the first day of the week. The accounts do not say that two sabbaths passed before the first day of the week (read Lk. 23:54 through 24:1; Mk. 15:42 through 16:2)." For further discussion of this problem see the essay entitled, "*Was Jesus Crucified on Friday?*" by Seth Wilson, Special Study in the last pages of this volume.

Judas had probably made final arrangements with the authorities to betray Jesus on Wednesday. Now on Thursday night this same Judas is back with the other disciples hypocritically going through the rituals of the greatest feast of them all. Does he think Jesus is unaware of his evil plot and his hypocrisy? Never! He knew it all along (cf. Jn. 6:71; 12:4-6).

Where do we place the incident of feet-washing within the chronology of the events at the Last Supper? Most commentators and authors of harmonies place John 13:1-30 just after the dispute of the disciples (Luke 22:24-30) and just before the disclosure of Jesus concerning the betrayer among the Twelve (Matt. 26:21-25), assuming that Luke's account of this disclosure is chronologically out of sequence. Thus the chronology of events transpiring at the Last Supper seem to be as follows:

- a. Preparations for the Passover and coming into the Upper Room. (Matt. 26:17-19; Mk. 14:12-16; Lk. 22:7-13)
- b. Opening of the Passover supper by Jesus (Lk. 22:15-18)
- c. Dispute among the disciples (Lk. 22:24-30)
- d. Feet Washing and lessons in greatness (Jn. 13:1-30)
- e. The Betrayer revealed and he goes out (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22; Jn. 13)
- f. Institution of the Lord's Supper (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22)
- g. The New Commandment Given (Jn. 13:33-38)
- h. Peter's denial and denial of all disciples foretold (Matt. 26; Mk. 14; Lk. 22)

The opening remarks of Jesus concerning the fulfillment in the "kingdom of God" (Lk. 22:14-15) no doubt set the imaginations of the disciples to dreaming grandiose dreams again of thrones and positions. As they began to envision the kingdom and the positions available they began to strive with one another for the places of honor and position at this supper table. We quote again from Seth Wilson's essay "An Example of Humility": "It must have grieved Him and

made Him feel lonely in this selfish world to know that they were quarreling with one another about their relative ranks and places of honor, in the very night when He was descending to the very depths of self-abnegation, claiming nothing of His own in order to bear the cross of shame to a criminal's death for the sake of those who so wrongly thought they had rights and rank. He was fully conscious of His own divine power and majestic rights by which He could have abased and humbled them into abject and cringing fear; but He loved them. He sought to teach them, not coerce them. He wanted to draw them to Him, not drive them from Him.

"So He arose from the supper, prepared Himself as a servant, and washed their feet. But why did He do that? Not only for a lesson. It was a genuine act of loving service, an act of humble willingness to do the most lowly service for His friends, an act of practical courtesy which they had forgotten or avoided in their preoccupation with selfish pride.

"In the land of Palestine the rough and dusty roads, the absence of stockings, the use of sandals, the habit of walking barefoot, the much greater amount of walking than we do, all make it necessary to give the feet frequent washings. (Read Gen. 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; Judg. 19:21; I Sam. 25:41; II Sam. 11:8.) These passages show that washing the feet was the first act on entering a tent or a house after a journey. This is regularly done when entering a house, especially the better upper rooms which are usually carpeted. The shoes were never worn in the house. It was the common dictate of good manners to provide either water for the guests to wash their own feet, or a slave to do it. It became almost synonymous with hospitality (I Tim. 5:10). Jesus rebuked a Pharisee, in whose house He was entertained, for not providing water for His feet (Lk. 7:44). From an early date, however, it was considered one of the lowest tasks of servants (I Sam. 25:41), probably because it was done by the youngest and least-trained servants, or because of the idea of defilement connected with the foot. Therefore, if rendered voluntarily, it was a symbol of complete devotion. The undoing of the latchet, or thongs, of the sandals (Mk. 1:7; Lk. 3:16; Jn. 1:27) seems to refer to the same menial duty."

Whether Jesus began His loving act of service with Simon Peter or, having begun with one of the other disciples, came to him later we cannot tell for certain. The picture John paints seems to indicate to us that Jesus had already washed the feet of some who were so busy discussing rank and preoccupied with selfish dreams of glory they were oblivious to their Master's self-humiliation. But when Jesus

came to Peter, He found one disciple with at least enough respect and reverence to object. The Lord's first answer to Peter (v. 7) is mild, but firm, assuring the respectful Peter that what He was doing was fitting and although Peter did not understand now, he was to submit to the act and later he would understand.

But Peter (v. 8) objected more strenuously with even the note of dictating in his voice as to what the Master could or could not do. We can almost see Peter hastily drawing his feet back from the Master's touch.

Simon Peter's intentions were no doubt motivated by a sense of respect and reverence which is good, except when it leads one to object to the Lord's will and to refuse to obey Him. This was the dangerous frame of mind possessing Peter here. Let us quote here from *The Training of the Twelve*, by A. B. Bruce, page 346: "Observe, then, what was involved in the attitude assumed by Peter. He virtually took his stand on these two positions: that he would admit of nothing which seemed inconsistent with the personal dignity of his Lord, and that he would adopt as his rule of conduct his own judgment in preference to Christ's will . . . In other words, the ground taken up by this disciple compromised the whole sum and substance of Christianity, the former principle sweeping away Christ's whole state and experience of humiliation, and the latter not less certainly sapping the foundation of Christ's lordship." That is, Peter was objecting to the very basic tenet of Christ's ministry—humiliation—voluntary participation in the experiences of the flesh that He might conquer and redeem. In so refusing the Lord, Peter was in the dangerous position of disobeying Him and distrusting His demands because he did not understand and therefore letting his own fallible reason be his guide when Jesus had expressed His will in the matter. And, are not all of His disciples of all ages guilty at one time or another of the same misguided respect and reverence?

The Lord's answer (v. 8) was more explicit and stern. For if Peter would not surrender to the way of humility which the Master came to exemplify and teach—if Peter could not in whole-hearted faith obey his Master, even when he could not understand—Peter could have no part with the Master in His kingdom of which Peter and the others so fondly dreamed.

As A. B. Bruce points out in *Training of the Twelve*, if God, in Christ, may not humble Himself, He can have no part with us. He is relegated to the "Wholly Other" as our contemporary existential neo-orthodox theologians would confine Him. A great impassable gulf

separates the Divine Being from His creatures. His creatures may reach Him, perhaps, through the existential "leap" after they have reached the "crises." But as for God, He may peer wistfully from His prison-house of the realm of the Absolute and contemplate the sorrowful estate of man, but He cannot come near them, and reach forth a helping hand.

"But if the Son of God may have no part with us, then, in the second place, we can have no part with Him. We cannot share His fellowship with the Father, if He come not forth to declare Him. . . . A God whose majesty, like an iron gate, kept Him aloof from sinners, could not even effectively forgive them. Still less could He sanctify them. Love alone has sanctifying virtue, and what room is there for love in a Being who cannot humble Himself to be a servant?" (A. B. Bruce, *ibid*).

The epistle to the Hebrews is the most extensive of all the books of Holy Scripture dealing with the necessity of Christ's participation in humanity in order that He might save, sanctify and intercede for man. If by grace God does not become incarnate in flesh so as to win the victory, how will man ever be restored to fellowship with a perfectly righteous and just Judge? By grace are we saved, and that through faith in a humiliated, yet triumphant Lord!

And if our carnal minds cause us to judge honor and dignity as the world judges and we reject the way of humility and service which our God chose and bids us follow—**WE SHALL HAVE NO PART WITH HIM!**

The stern warning of Jesus shook the impulsive Peter to the very innermost feelings of his heart. There is much to commend in Peter. Who can doubt his willingness to follow the Lord (Jn. 6:68-69)? Who can doubt his courage (Matt. 26:35; Jn. 18:10-11)? Peter believed in Jesus and he wanted earnestly to follow Him, to death if necessary, to establish the Messianic kingdom. But Peter's concept of Messianic kingdom was carnal—earthly. We believe that it was disappointment with Jesus in not fulfilling his earthly concept of the Messianic kingdom that caused Peter and the others to "be offended" in Jesus at the hour of crucifixion—not their cowardice. They would have fought at a mere suggestion to do so by Jesus (Jn. 18:36).

So when Jesus suggested that unless Peter allow himself to be washed he could not participate with Him in His kingdom, the thought of being excluded caused him to jump to the opposite extreme of overdone compliance. Lord, wash me all over, if that be one of the requirements for having part in your kingdom, was Peter's reply (v. 9).

The reply of Jesus in verse 10 must be interpreted in harmony with all that has preceded in this incident and, especially, in harmony with verse 11. We have attempted such an interpretation in our paraphrase of this text. What Jesus is trying to get the impetuous Peter to see is that once a man has become a devoted and faithful follower of His by an initial cleansing and sanctifying call (whatever that initial cleansing process may be) the new disciple must then grow in his spiritual comprehension of Christ's will and work. The disciples (all except one who was a hypocrite) had in all sincerity and honest desire answered His call to discipleship. They had all, no doubt, been baptized with John's baptism of repentance unto the remission of sins. Being therefore of honest hearts and having by obedience to the command of God through John the Baptist been initially cleansed, they needed not to go back to first principles, but they definitely needed to be purified of their carnal conception of the way in which the Messiah was to accomplish His purpose and their earthly idea of the Messianic kingdom. They needed to grow in humility and love for one another even to the extent that they would willingly perform the lowliest services for one another. Every disciple of Christ must see the need for daily "washing of the feet" (purifying, sanctification). It is a daily task, this cleansing, by renewing the mind (Rom. 12:1-2; II Cor. 4:16; Col. 3:1-17).

But they were not all honest and sincere. One was a thief and a hypocrite—Judas. Jesus knew all along who the betrayer was (cf. Jn. 6:70-71). In order to indicate to the disciples who would later recall His omniscience in this matter and in order that they might record for all time that He was not taken unawares by Judas, but is in complete control of the situation and in order to give the traitor an opportunity to repent, Jesus said, "You are not all clean." But Judas had allowed the devil to take possession of his heart and was greedily plotting to betray the One who had in love and humility even washed the betrayer's feet and tried to bring him to repentance.

Quiz

1. What great division within the ministry of Jesus appears at Chapter 13?
2. Why are the actions of Jesus at this supper so full of pathos?
3. Prove that the supper of John 13 is the same as the Last Supper of the Synoptics. Upon which day of the week was the supper held?
4. Name, in order, the events transpiring at the Last Supper.
5. What two things are indicated concerning Peter in his refusal to let Jesus wash his feet?

6. What is the meaning of Jesus' statement in verse 10?
7. Why inform them that there was one among them who was not clean?

THE LESSON ON LOVING SERVICE

Text 13:12-20

12 So when he had washed their feet, and taken his garments, and sat down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you?

13 Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.

14 If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.

15 For I have given you an example, that ye also should do as I have done to you.

16 Verily, verily, I say unto you, A servant is not greater than his lord; neither one that is sent greater than he that sent him.

17 If ye know these things, blessed are ye if ye do them.

18 I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me.

19 From henceforth I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am he.

20 Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Queries

- a. Did Jesus establish "foot washing" as a commandment to be literally obeyed?
- b. How is the "blessedness" promised in v. 17 to be experienced?
- c. What connection does v. 20 have with this context?

Paraphrase

And when Jesus had finished washing their feet, He put on His outer cloak and reclined again at His place at the supper table, He began to teach them, saying, Do you know the meaning of what I have just done to you? You recognize and call Me, The Teacher, and, The Lord. This is what you should recognize and call Me, for this is Who I am! Here then is the lesson for you—If I, The Lord and The Teacher, perform the lowly but loving task of washing the feet of disciples and servants, you should lovingly condescend in like manner by humbly serving one another rather than disputing with one another over rank and position. I have washed your feet to give you

an example to follow in performing loving acts of lowly service to one another. I say to you very plainly, If a lord is willing to serve in the most menial of tasks, so should a servant be willing thus serve for no servant is greater than his lord, neither is a person sent greater than the one who sends him. And, although you vocally acknowledge the truth of these lessons you will discover that real happiness and blessedness is enjoyed only when you are actually practicing them. I do not mean to infer of you all that you are hypocritical and assent to what is right but do not do it; or that you all are capable of deliberate and habitual neglect of known duty. I have chosen you twelve, and I know the character of every one of you, but there is one among you capable of such conduct. Now this was foretold in the Psalms, He that eateth my bread lifted up his heel against me, and the character and conduct of this evil one among you is in fulfillment of this prophecy. Now I am telling you that I know of his evil character and plan against me before his schemes are actually carried out so that when it is carried out you will recognize my divine omniscience and your faith in Me as the Son of God will be the more strengthened. So, I say to you most emphatically, when you see Me betrayed and apparently defeated do not be misled for in my extreme humiliation I am truly become Lord and Christ, and he who receives the one whom I send with the message of Christ crucified receives Me and he who will receive Christ crucified will receive the Father who sent the Christ to be crucified.

Summary

After the beautiful deed of loving service comes the divine instruction as to its meaning for those who will learn. With the instruction comes the promise of blessedness to those who will humbly serve one another in deeds of love.

Comment

Jesus finished washing their feet and resumed His place at the table. How many of the disciples had their feet washed we do not know. The verb translated "sat down" is the aorist of *anapipto* which means literally to "fall back" but is better translated "reclined" since that was the customary position for dining in that age. Reclining again on His couch at the supper table, Jesus takes immediate advantage of the foregoing preparation in the minds of His disciples and presents the lesson contained in His deed. This socially unorthodox action of a Teacher washing the feet of his disciples would attract the attention of even the most insensitive of the disciples as they argued about places of position and rank (cf. Luke 22:24).

Momentarily taken aback as their Lord stooped to wash their feet they began to wonder what had prompted such an unheard of action. Jesus asks the rhetorical question, "Do you know the meaning of what I have just done to you?" Then He answers His own question with a very precise and logical argument. He reminds His disciples of the respectful titles they have sincerely accorded Him, and in a marked, emphatic manner He accepts these titles as His rightful due. He tells them distinctly that He is indeed their Teacher, whose doctrine it is their business to learn, and their Lord, whose will it is their duty to obey. His humble act of washing their feet does not mean that He is ignorant of His Lordship or even that He has lowered or degraded His kingly dignity. To the contrary, He has really enhanced the dignity and greatness of His Lordship by this expression of loving service (cf. Matt. 20:25-28; Mk. 10:42-45; Lk. 9:48; Lk. 22:26-27).

Now in verse 14 comes the central point of His argument. If the Lord of glory, the Holy One of God (cf. Jn. 6:69), can condescend to take the form of a servant and perform the most menial of tasks upon those so very far below Him, surely those who are actually the servants can render loving service to one another. This lesson is for us all! And how we need it—even within the kingdom of God, the church! So often trouble in the church comes because of jealousy over place and position. But those of the kingdom of God are not to be like the pagan world which spends all its energy seeking fame and fortune (cf. Matt. 20:20-28, etc.). When we are tempted to think of our dignity, our prestige, our place, our rights, let us see again the picture of the Son of God, girt with a towel, wash basin in hand, kneeling at His disciples' feet. Let us have in us the mind of Christ (cf. Phil. 2:5-11).

The question inevitably comes up concerning verses 14 and 15 whether or not these verses uphold the ritual of literal foot washing as observed in the history of the church past and present. Hendriksen points out that "foot-washing was practiced on Maundy Thursday by the Church of Augustine's day. It was recommended by Bernard of Clairvaux in one of his sermons. The practice was continued by the pope at Rome and by emperors of Austria and Russia and by kings of Spain, Portugal, and Bavaria. For a while it was practiced by the Church of England and by the Moravians. It has been continued to this very day by certain Baptist and Adventist bodies . . ." There are only two other places in the New Testament where washing of the feet is referred to—Luke 7:38, 44 (the sinner woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears) and I Tim. 5:10 where it is used figura-

tively to describe the lowly service to christian brethren in the past by widows needing the support of the church (cf. Paul's Letters to Timothy and Titus, by DeWalt, pub. College Press, page 99).

We believe Bro. Seth Wilson's essay, quoted previously, contains the most lucid comments on the subject of foot-washing we have read and we quote these comments herewith: "Whenever washing one another's feet is an act of practical courtesy and helpfulness, that we can perform in a true spirit of simple love and humble service, we ought to wash one another's feet. But when it is of no practical helpfulness, when it is performed as a public religious ritual to *display* our "humility," at special seasons, toward select persons, it does not seem to fit the pattern Jesus gave. 'Ritualizing such an act of love absolutely destroys its meaning.'

"The Great Commission assigned to the apostles the task of teaching the believers to observe all things that Jesus commanded; but we have no teaching from them concerning foot washing as a ceremony in the church. They do teach, however, lowliness, subjection, and loving service (Rom. 12:3, 10, 16; Gal. 5:13; Eph. 4:2; 5:21; Phil. 2:3-8; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 5:5, etc.). There is no indication in the way that Jesus did the act at the Last Supper that He was instituting a form of worship or making it part of His death. It is not an act of worship to God, but of service to man out of the right kind of a godly heart of humility and love. Even those who urge it as a perpetual ordinance in the church teach that it 'symbolizes humility and service.' Exactly so: Jesus gave a very striking example and symbol of that manner of conduct and attitude of heart that He wants us to have. *He does not want us to repeat the symbol, but to practice the reality.* His example was clear, and no command of His is more direct or authoritative."

Verse 16 adds more emphasis to the main point of the lesson. No servant is greater than his lord . . . etc. If the Christian's Lord is willing to perform the duties of a servant, the Christian (who is really the servant) should be willing to serve and not make position and prestige his aim.

Verse 17 contains both a warning and a promise. The warning implied is against knowing the right and failing to do it. The promise is definite that knowing the divine will which has been revealed both by precept and example we will find blessedness when we *do* what Jesus is teaching here. The true road to happiness and joy and blessedness is service motivated by love. Man was not created to be just a taker and never a giver. Man was created to give joy and honor to the heart of God. This is man's ultimate purpose and only when he

is fulfilling that purpose by loving acts of service to God and man does he find joy and satisfaction of soul. Jesus said, "It is more blessed (happiness) to give than to receive." There is a noticeable dissatisfaction, almost unhappiness, in some of the disciples before the resurrection of Christ when they were always seeking and waiting for the Lord to appoint them to places of earthly honor and prestige. They bickered with one another and were jealous of one another. But, notice the change in these men as evidenced in the book of Acts and their Epistles when they put into practice the teaching of Jesus here in John 13:17! They found "joy unspeakable and full of glory." Jesus said it another way later when He said that "bearing fruit" would result in true godly joy (cf. John 15:1-11).

The blessedness of lowly service out of love is both objective and subjective. The objective blessedness must come before the subjective. That is, we must *know* that we have God's approval before we can feel joy and blessedness emotionally. That knowledge comes when we, as Jesus exhorts, "*do*" these acts of service because we then know we are living in accord with the Divine Will as objectively expressed in His written revelation. John expressed it later in his First Epistle when he wrote, "All who keep his commandments abide in him, and he in them" (I John 3:24). The fourth chapter of I John is also an excellent commentary on the words of Jesus in verse 17.

Thus when we do serve one another in love we *know* the blessedness of seeing godly fruit in the lives of those served; we *know* the blessedness of living in accord with the revealed will of God; then we can *feel* in our hearts the peace which passes understanding.

Jesus goes on (v. 18) to inform those gathered there that night that there is one in their midst who is capable of knowing right and deliberately neglecting to do it, (see our Paraphrase on this section). There was one there who was sly and scheming. Pretending to be desirous of serving the poor (Jn. 12:1-8) he was even then scheming to steal the money. While pretending to be a close friend of Jesus and accept His doctrine (eat His bread), he was scheming to betray (lift up his heel against) Him.

A. B. Bruce, in his *Training of the Twelve*, paraphrases this section in this manner: "In hinting at the possibility of a knowledge of right, unaccompanied by corresponding action, I have not been indulging in gratuitous insinuation. I do not indeed think so badly of you all as to imagine you capable of deliberate and habitual neglect of known duty. But there is one among you who is capable of such conduct. I have chosen you twelve, and I know the character of every one of you . . . there is one among you who knows, but will not do; one

who, having eaten bread with me as a familiar friend, will repay me for all my kindness, not by loving obedience, but by lifting up his heel against me."

There is more than one reason Jesus made this general prophecy of one very close who would betray Him. Primarily, as verse 19 points out, the prophecy was made so that when it came to pass the disciples would have their belief in Jesus the more strengthened. Secondly, it was another attempt by Jesus to penetrate the hardened heart of Judas and bring him to repentance. Again, the recording of the omniscient foreknowledge of Jesus was for man's benefit for all time. For those who will accept the testimony it shows that that which was happening was all within the eternal purpose of God. It was as Scripture said it would be ages before. Jesus and the Father both knew what was happening at all times. God was in control. Jesus was not the unfortunate victim of the schemes of men. He was not killed; He willingly chose to die and did lay down His life. He was not the victim but the master of circumstances.

Barnes has a note on verse 18: "These things have occurred in order that the prophecies may receive their completion. It does not mean that Judas was *compelled* to this course in order that the Scripture might be fulfilled, but that this was foretold, and that *by this* the prophecy *did* receive a completion." The prophecy is from Psalms 41:9 (cf. also II Sam. 9:7-13; Psa. 55:12-14).

In verse 20 the Lord continues to look forward to the time when what He is prophesying concerning Judas' betrayal will have come to pass and He anticipates the reaction of despondency and defeat by the disciples. Hendriksen points out the connection of verse 20 with the context very well: ". . . when the disciples see their Lord delivered into the hands of his enemies, let them not despair. Let them not think, 'Now it is all over, not only with him but also with us, his followers.' On the contrary, everything continues just as it was. Nay rather, the very facts of the humiliation confirm *his* authority and the validity of *their* commission. An ambassador of 'Christ Betrayed, Condemned, and Crucified,' is still a true ambassador; in fact, he is *the only* true ambassador."

When the eternal plan of God is carried out—when Christ is betrayed, crucified and risen, and when the disciples go out to preach Christ crucified and raised (cf. I Cor. 1), whoever receives them and their message receives Christ and the Father. But whoever rejects them and their message of Christ crucified and raised, rejects the Father and His omnipotent plan of redemption. The point is, that a betrayed and crucified Christ is within the plan of God. Jesus was

completely aware of this. He now forewarns his disciples against the dark hours of the coming days. Verse 20 is not a disconnected afterthought of Jesus but is well within the context of the teaching He is now giving His disciples. They should not only *serve* with all lowliness and humility, but they will have a message of a crucified Saviour which the world will look upon as lowly, weak and humiliating. They will need their faith in the omnipotence of Christ increased!

Quiz

1. How would Jesus have "sat down" at the supper table?
2. What is the main line of argument presented by Jesus to teach the disciples about humility?
3. Give three reasons why "foot-washing" seems not to be commanded by the Lord as an ordinance for the church's observance.
4. Give two ways we may know the "blessedness" provided in v. 17.
5. Why did Jesus foretell the betrayal of Judas (3 reasons)?

THE SELFISH SERVANT OF SIN

Text 13:21-30

21 When Jesus had thus said, he was troubled in the spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

22 The disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake.

23 There was at the table reclining in Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.

24 Simon Peter therefore beckoneth to him, and saith unto him, Tell us who it is of whom he speaketh.

25 He leaning back, as he was, on Jesus' breast saith unto him, Lord, who is it?

26 Jesus therefore answereth, He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him. So when he had dipped the sop, he taketh and giveth it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot.

27 And after the sop, then entered Satan into him, Jesus therefore saith unto him, What thou doest, do quickly.

28 Now no man at the table knew for what intent he spake this unto him.

29 For some thought, because Judas had the bag, that Jesus said unto him, Buy what things we have need of for the feast; or, that he should give something to the poor.

30 He then having received the sop went out straightway; and it was night.

Queries

- a. Why was Jesus "troubled in the spirit"?
- b. Why did none of the disciples know for "what intent" Jesus spoke to Judas?
- c. Why did Jesus instruct Judas to do quickly what he was doing?

Paraphrase

Having prophesied these things concerning his betrayal and the disciples' future need for faith, Jesus was deeply disturbed of spirit and said to his disciples, I tell you solemnly, One of you will hand me over to the authorities. The disciples began looking at one another in startled perplexity, and kept looking at one another in silent suspicion, puzzled concerning whom he spake. One of his disciples, the one with whom Jesus was especially delighted and loved, was reclining at the table next to him on the same couch. So Simon Peter, on the next couch, signaled with a nod to this disciple and said, Tell us who it is of whom he is speaking. That disciple, leaning his head back upon the bosom of Jesus, whispered to him, Lord who is it? Jesus answered softly, It is that one to whom I shall give this morsel of bread after I have dipped it into the sop. Taking the piece of bread he dipped it into the sop and gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. After Judas had taken this piece of bread he made up his mind completely and allowed Satan to enter his heart and totally possess him. Jesus said to him in a voice loud enough for all to hear, What you are going to do, do quickly! None of those reclining at the table, not even those who were told about the traitor, understood the meaning of what Jesus said to Judas. Some of them thought since Judas had the money purse, that Jesus was instructing Judas to hurry and purchase provisions for the seven-day festival of Passover, or that he was instructing Judas to make haste on a mission of alms-giving to the poor. So Judas took the piece of bread and then went out quickly; and it was night!

Summary

In spite of the lesson on humble love and in spite of the Master exposing his shameful, deadly scheme, the selfish servant of sin, Judas, surrenders completely to the Devil.

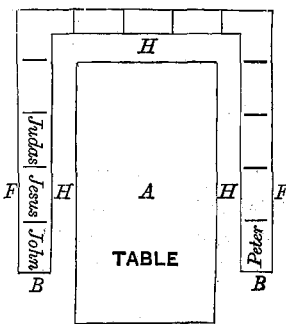
Comment

After Jesus had prophesied concerning the betrayer (v. 18), He became deeply disturbed in His spirit. The inward turmoil of spirit was apparent to John who later recorded it. His heart is troubled by the one who is planning to betray Him and He repeats His warning.

His heart was sick and groaned within Him over the imminent spiritual suicide of Judas. Jesus loved Judas! He tried until the very end to bring Judas to repentance. The tender Shepherd of souls is not willing that any should perish. Jesus was also much concerned about the spiritual weakness of the other disciples which they had exhibited here at this last supper. When He thought of the betrayer He also looked forward prophetically when they would all flee from Him like scattered sheep (cf. Matt. 26:31). The anguish of spirit here was also a prelude to the anguish of spirit in Gethsemane and Golgotha where He suffered the burden of all man's sins.

Judas was a master at deception. Outwardly no one could tell the difference between him and the other eleven disciples of Jesus. He was an excellent play-actor (hypocrite). He had even faked a concern for the poor (12:45) with such finesse that he prompted the others to criticize Jesus at one time. He had fooled the other eleven completely. When Jesus uttered His solemn warning (v. 21) it fell like a bombshell in the midst of that festive evening. The disciples were startled, incredulous, perplexed and began looking round about at one another in silent suspicion. Judas joined in, skillfully portraying one who was innocently dumbfounded.

Now the Jews did not sit upright when they ate at a festive table such as this. The Greek word *anakeimēnos* means "reclining at table." The table was usually a low solid block. The couches were arranged around the table in U shape. The couches were placed with their heads toward the table and their feet away from the table in an oblique fashion (see diagram below). The chief place is near the center of the right side of the table. The next place of honor is that at the left side of the host (occupied by Judas) and the next place of honor at the right side of the host (occupied by John). The diners reclined by resting upon their left elbow, thus leaving the right hand free to deal with the food. Reclining in such a way a man's head was literally upon the bosom of the person reclining on his left.



PLAN OF SUPPER TABLE.

THE SUPPER SCENE. Around a low, Eastern table, oval or rather elongated, two parts covered with a cloth, the single divans or pillows are ranged in the form of an elongated horseshoe, leaving free one end of the table, somewhat as in the accompanying cut. Here, *A* represents the table; *BB* respectively the ends of the two rows of single divans on which each guest reclines, lying on his left side, and leaning on the left hand, with his head (*H*) nearest the table, and his feet (*F*) stretching back towards the ground. Thus we see how Jesus could wash their feet. As to the arrangements of the guests, the chief personage would sit near one end of the table. If there were three persons, he would sit between the two. We know from the Gospel narrative that John occupied the place on Jesus' right, at that end of the divans, as we may call it, at the head of the table. But the chief place next to the Master would be that to his left, or above him.

After a few moments of stunned silence and suspicious glances, the disciples began to ask one by one, "Is it I, Lord?" (Matt. 26:22; Mark 14:19) and they began to question one another, which of them it was that would do this (Lk. 22:23). The first answer of the Lord was a general one simply indicating that the betrayer was sitting and partaking with Him at the same table (cf. Matt. 26:23; Mk. 14:20). It is plain that the other disciples did not yet know who was meant. It seems that Jesus was conducting an almost private conversation with Judas. Judas even asked, "Is it I, Lord?" Jesus replied, "Thou hast said!" And apparently, no one heard this reply—not even John.

Simon Peter, the impetuous, signaled with a nod to the disciple "whom Jesus loved," the one reclining upon His bosom, to tell the rest of them who the traitor was. Peter assumed that John, favored with a place so close to the Master, would know if anyone did. John, however, did not know and so he leaned his head back upon the bosom of Jesus and whispered, "Lord, who is it?" John's question was probably unheard by the others. Evidently the reply of Jesus, "He it is, for whom I shall dip the sop, and give it him," was also inaudible to all except John and Judas (and perhaps, Peter).

There must be some significance that Judas was sitting so close to the Saviour, on His left in the place of honor, that night. Even the offering by the host of a special morsel dipped in the sop to a particular guest was a sign of special concern. When the Jews wanted to show their concern for a guest, they invited the guest to dip food with them (cf. Ruth 2:14). The very fact that Jesus kept reminding Judas that his scheme was known was an attempt to rescue Judas from his headlong rush into spiritual suicide. All of these acts of love and concern were appeals from the very heart of Jesus toward Judas' reclamation.

After Judas had taken this piece of bread he made up his mind completely and surrendered his whole heart to Satan. Then Satan entered into Judas. The point to remember is that Satan accomplished total victory over Judas only because Judas allowed him to do so. We are warned ". . . neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27). We are encouraged "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). We are warned that Satan can take advantage of us if we are ignorant of his devices (II Cor. 2:11). Satan is a spiritual being and he operates in the spiritual realm. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood . . ." but against ideas, philosophies and thoughts. Unless we fill our minds with the thoughts and revelations of the Holy Spirit, we are leaving it open for Satan to enter. And when we willingly concentrate on worldliness and evil,

Satan has a completely unrestricted highway into our heart. This is what Judas did! He so loved money that he was trapped and drowned in destruction and perdition (cf. I Tim. 6:7-10).

When men deliberately and rebelliously "exchange the truth of God for a lie," (Rom. 1:25), God gives up! When men do not wish to retain God in their knowledge (Rom. 1:28), when they have no love for the truth (II Thess. 2:10-12), God gives up and allows them to be deluded into believing a lie!

Jesus knew that Judas had allowed the devil to take complete possession of him. Judas had exchanged the truth of God for a lie. The Incarnate God could do no more for Judas and so He said, "What thou doest, do quickly!" Why would Jesus make this command? Perhaps to drive the betrayer from the midst of the others immediately so that the few remaining hours may be directed toward those who will profit from the instructions. Judas had bargained to hand Jesus over to the authorities but the exact time for His arrest and death had not yet been set. The authorities had definitely decided Jesus should not be killed during the feast (Matt. 26:5). Judas thought that Jesus was in his hand; Jesus tells him that the reverse is true. Jesus orders Judas to do this business quickly, to carry it out when Jesus wants it done (Matt. 26:2) during the feast!

John knew who the betrayer was. Perhaps even Peter knew his identity, but none seemed to know the meaning of Jesus' last command to Judas. It appears that they thought Judas was sent quickly to buy something needed for the remainder of the passover feast, or, perhaps to act quickly in giving something to the poor. Judas was the treasurer of the group and these two suppositions seemed the only reason for the command.

Some commentators use verse 29 to prove that the supper here recorded in John 13 is not the passover supper because the disciples would have known that Judas could *not* purchase anything that night for a feast which was already over. However, the Passover lasted seven days. It is, therefore, entirely reasonable to record that the disciples supposed Judas to have been sent for more supplies for the remaining days of the feast. Especially would he be sent with haste if the next day was a holy day of the feast when nothing could be purchased.

Judas acted the deception out to the end. He brazenly took the morsel offered to him by Jesus. And then, probably to be away from the penetrating and meaningful looks of Jesus as quickly as possible, he went out "straightway."

The phrase "and it was night," has great impact. It was night for the sun had gone behind the horizon, but it "was night" for another

reason also. The outer darkness had overtaken Judas for he had allowed the god of this world to blind him to the Son of Righteousness. It is always night when a man turns his back on Jesus Christ the True Light. He who walks in darkness does not know where he is going and he stumbles and falls because the darkness blinds his eyes (cf. Jn. 1:4-5; 3:19-21).

Quiz

1. Give 3 reasons why Jesus would be troubled in the spirit.
2. How would the principle characters of this section probably be located around the supper table?
3. How did Satan enter into Judas?
4. Why did Jesus command Judas to act quickly?
5. How many do we suppose knew who the traitor was?

THE SACRIFICING SERVANT OF CHRIST

Text 13-31-38

31 When therefore he was gone out, Jesus saith, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him;

32 and God shall glorify him in himself, and straightway shall he glorify him.

33 Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me: and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say unto you.

34 A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

36 Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, whither goest thou? Jesus answered, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow afterwards.

37 Peter saith unto him, Lord, why cannot I follow thee even now? I will lay down my life for thee.

38 Jesus answereth, Wilt thou lay down thy life for me? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice.

Queries

- a. Why did Jesus say, "Now" is the Son of man glorified?
- b. How is "love one another" a new commandment?
- c. Was Jesus questioning the courage of Peter in v. 38?

Paraphrase

When Judas had been sent out to consummate his evil scheme, Jesus said, Now I have willingly sent the traitor to seal my death—

now by this act is the Son of man glorified and God is also glorified. And God shall glorify the Son in intimate union with himself and in just a few hours shall he glorify him in the ultimate victory!

Oh, my little children, I will be with you only a few hours longer. And the time is coming very soon when you will long for my presence but I must tell you, as I told the Jews, Where I am going you cannot follow. Since I am about to leave you I am giving you a new precept to follow. This new precept is built upon a new concept—it is that you love one another with the same self-sacrificing love with which I have loved you. If you shall do this, all men shall know that you are my disciples even though I be not with you in bodily presence.

Simon Peter said to him, Lord, where could you possibly be going that we cannot follow you? Jesus replied, I am going where you cannot follow me now, though you will follow me later. Peter asked quickly, Lord, what can possibly keep me from following you right now? Why, I am ready even to lay down my life for you! Jesus replied, Will you indeed lay down your life for me? I most solemnly assure you the rooster will not crow at coming daybreak until you have disowned me three times.

Summary

Jesus shows the marks of a true and loyal disciple both by example and precept . . . one who will sacrifice self-will. Peter, trusting too much in self, shows he has the wrong concept.

Comment

At the moment of the Lord's betrayal and arrest it would seem to the disciples that their Master had become the victim of unfortunate circumstances. But later when the Holy Spirit should call to their minds His complete mastery of the situation even before the betrayal they would glorify His name. Judas did not escape detection. Judas did not even steal away secretly to do something which was against the plan of Jesus. Here, this night, the Lord of the universe willingly and purposefully sends his betrayer off to do his deed. The sacrificing servant of God is glorified in a majestic surrender of self.

God the Father, in intimate union with the Son, is also glorified by His majestic giving up of His only-unique Son. At the Father's command is an unnumbered host of angelic warriors. At the instant word of the Father they would have slain every human enemy of His Son. But the glorious love and mercy of the Father for a world in sin kept this command from being issued.

And soon, very soon now, would the ultimate victory be accomplished—the victory over sin upon Golgotha and the victory over death in Joseph's tomb. Then shall the Son of man be glorified in-

deed. Then shall all His claims to deity be vindicated for all time.

The subject of his glorification in death, resurrection and ascension leads Him to make preparation for His physical departure from among them. Just as He told the Jews at the feast of Tabernacles, some six months earlier, now He tells His disciples He must leave them. They will long for His presence but where He is going they cannot follow immediately. He must ascend to the Father, but they must remain behind in the world until they are called up higher at death. And until their decease (exodus) and reunion with Him they will know His living presence by keeping the new commandment which He leaves with them.

Is this a *new* commandment? Has He never before given them the precept of love to keep? The newness of the commandment is contained in that His disciples are to love one another *even as* their Master has loved them. No such love could have been commanded before because no such love had ever been exhibited before! This love of Jesus for men goes even deeper than the command for a man to love another as he loves himself, for Jesus loves us more than we love ourselves. It is only by allowing Christ to dwell in us through faith that we can even come near to comprehending what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge (cf. Eph. 3:17-19)! The dimensions of His love are as boundless and limitless as faith! If His disciples have this love for one another, His presence will be living and abiding in them and working through them. And by such love will the whole world know the presence of Christ and know that such men are His disciples. Doctrinal correctness is not all there is to Christian discipleship, as important as that is (I Jn. 2:3-4), but a Christ-like love for one another is equally essential (cf. I Jn. 2:8-11). This is the type of love that would cause a Paul to write, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh" (Rom. 9:2). By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.

What a contrast between the selfless love of Christ and the love of self of Judas. The love that moved Jesus to willingly sacrifice Himself is the self-sacrificing love which is to be the distinguishing mark of a disciple of Christ.

The manner in which John records this section gives us the impression that Peter, in all his impetuosity and eagerness to demonstrate his loyalty to Jesus, brushed aside the teaching on love and directed the conversation abruptly back to the ominous note of impending conflict. If his Master is about to engage in battle he sees no reason why he cannot follow Him into the thick of the conflict. He is ready now!

If there is a fight to be fought for the right he is prepared now. Even if he must die he would go with his Master. He is ready and willing to lay down his life in battle for the Christ. Peter was no coward. He armed himself with a sword and would have challenged those who came to arrest Jesus in the garden (Jn. 18:10-11). He had the bold courage to follow the authorities as they led Jesus to the very house of the high priest and stood without until allowed to enter.

We do not believe that cowardice prompted Peter to deny the Lord and take an oath that he never knew Him. We believe Peter would have quickly admitted being a disciple of Jesus if the Master had just given the signal to fight. Perhaps he emphatically denied being the disciple of Jesus hoping to remain incognito until Jesus would give the signal to resist. When Peter finally realized that his Master was not going to resist he gave up his ambitions for the Messianic kingdom. That seemed to be Peter's trouble—ambition for the Messianic kingdom in his earthly concept of it. He had not denied self! We believe that basically Peter denied the Lord in that he refused to deny his own self-ambitions. When Jesus offered not the least bit of resistance, Peter, with the other disciples scattered—not because they were cowards, but because their aspirations and ideals were dying (they supposed) with Him. When Jesus had prophesied His death at Cesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:13-28), Peter rebuked Him for thinking such a thing should happen to the Messiah. It was here that the Lord told Peter he was minding the things of men. It was in connection with that very rebuke that Jesus warned the disciples they must lose their lives for His sake in a sense different from physical death. Before Pilate, Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews" (Jn. 18:36). Jesus forbade the disciples to fight to rescue Him—the very thing that the disciples would have done!

We believe that in essence Jesus is saying, "Peter, I know you are willing to fight and die physically for your concept of Me as the Messiah. But Peter, are you willing to put self to death and accept My concept of the Messianic kingdom. I assure you, Peter, you will deny Me before morning comes. Peter was not yet ready to crucify himself (cf. Gal. 2:20).

Quiz

1. How was Jesus glorified by His actions there in the upper room?
2. Why does Jesus give His "new" commandment?
3. What is "new" about this commandment?

4. What will be the results of keeping this "new commandment"?
5. Was Peter afraid to die physically for Jesus?
6. In what way was Peter unwilling to lose his life for Jesus?

EXPOSITORY SERMON THIRTEEN

DIVINE LESSON ON HUMILITY AND SERVICE

John 13:1-38

Introduction

I. THE SCENE

- A. The age-old ritual of the Passover is begun by Jesus.
- B. The disciples were arguing among themselves as to rank and position in the Messianic kingdom (which they believed to be coming to earth).
- C. The disciples had forgotten to perform the most customary act of hospitality toward their Master, washing of His feet.

II. THE LORD'S ATTITUDE

- A. Having loved His disciples with fervent, demonstrated love, He now comes to the crucial hour, more vividly aware than ever of His suffering and their misunderstanding and worldliness, and He demonstrates this wonderful act of humility, love and service for them.
- B. Even the betrayer was there but the Lord's concern is not for Himself. He is extending His love even in effort to reclaim this one.

Discussion

I. THE ACT OF LOVING SERVICE 13:1-11

- A. Reason for the act.
 1. The disciples needed a lesson in common courtesy and humility.
 2. Jesus sought once more to turn Judas from his evil scheme.
 3. Jesus desired to teach the disciples the nature of His mission (He came to minister, not to be ministered unto).
 4. The Master demonstrates again His love for them personally.
- B. Reaction to the Act
 1. Some probably were so engrossed in politicking that they were unaware of it for a few moments.
 2. It did not reach into the heart of Judas Iscariot at all.
 3. Impetuous Peter finally came to his senses and objected that the Lord would so degrade Himself.
 - a. Peter was objecting to the very basic tenet of Christ's

ministry—humiliation—voluntary participation in the experiences of humanity. Peter was letting his own reason be the guide in his concept of the Christ rather than allowing Christ to reveal His true nature.

b. All followers of Christ of every age are guilty of the same rationalizations at one time or another.

4. Later, Peter swings to the opposite extreme (v. 9).

C. Reply of Jesus

1. Peter must obey the Master even when he cannot understand.

a. This obedience is, of course, based upon the evidence Jesus has given him before of His own deity.

2. Peter (and all the disciples) must surrender to the humiliated Son of man as their Messiah and Saviour and divest themselves of the richly-regal concept of a worldly Messianic kingdom (see our comments on this portion).

3. In reply to Peter's leap to the other extreme Jesus said:

a. Once a person has been cleansed and become a follower of Jesus, he need not repeat the initial cleansing but must sanctify himself and grow in grace by daily repentance and humble acts of love.

4. All were cleansed and would repent except one.

a. This warning to strengthen their faith in Him and His mission later.

II. LESSON ON LOVING SERVICE 13:12-20

A. Preachment

1. His method—

a. motivated learning by asking questions to direct thinking;

b. on a positive note—started by complimenting disciples on what they did know;

c. followed logical progression—used example to illustrate

2. His message—

a. the example not intended to establish an ordinance in the church;

b. the principle—if your Master is willing to serve in the most menial of tasks, so should you, the servant, be concerned with service and not with arguing over position;

c. **HOW THIS PRINCIPLE NEEDS TO BE APPLIED BY EVERY SERVANT OF THE LORD: PREACHERS, BIBLE COLLEGE TEACHERS, ELDERS, DEACONS . . . EVERY CHRISTIAN MUST REALIZE HE IS CALLED BY THE MASTER TO *SERVE*.**

B. The Prize

1. Knowledge—there comes a knowledge of the Divine Mind when we follow the steps of Jesus.
 - a. There is also a warning implied here—knowing the right and failing to do it brings not blessing but curse.
2. Blessedness (literally, happiness)—the road to true happiness and joy is service motivated by love.
 - a. Man's ultimate purpose is to glorify and serve God—when he does not he is out of harmony with his purpose.
 - b. "It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).
 - c. Bearing fruit brings joy (Jn. 15:1-11).

C. Prophecy of the betrayer.

1. Given as predictive prophecy so that when it is fulfilled the disciples' faith in the deity of Jesus would be strengthened.
2. Another attempt by Jesus to penetrate the hardened heart of the hypocrite (play actor disciple) Judas.
3. Also it indicates to the disciples the divine omniscience of Jesus then and there—He knows His destiny all the time—He controls and is Master of the events.

III. THE SELFISH SERVANT OF SIN 13:21-30

A. Frantic Soul Searching.

1. The personal grief of the Master as He reclined in the room and at the same table with the greedy and hypocritical betrayer.
 - a. Jesus' grief was mostly His concern over Judas.
 - b. Jesus was deeply concerned over the spiritual immaturity of all the disciples.
2. The disciples are at first incredulous, then stunned, and then perplexed.
 - a. There was a period of soul searching (but they did not look deep enough).
 - b. Then they began to look around suspiciously at one another.
 - c. They all were betraying Him, in a sense, by their dullness of heart concerning His true mission.
3. Simon Peter, the impetuous, dared to know who, but was hesitant about asking aloud.

B. My Familiar Friend, the betrayer.

1. Jesus quoted Psa. 41:9 in verse 18 to show that His betrayal was prophesied.

- a. David knew that the disloyalty of friends is the sorest of all hurts.
- b. Here is one who had companied with Jesus, eaten with Him, slept with Him, had been trusted with the purse—was even then dipping sop with Him (cf. Psa. 55:12-14).
2. The offering by the host of a special morsel dipped in the sop to a particular guest was a sign of special concern (cf. Ruth 2:14).
3. **HOW MANY PROFESSED FRIENDS OF JESUS WHO MEET WITH HIM ABOUT THE SUPPER TABLE GO OUT IMMEDIATELY AND BETRAY HIM BY UN-CHRISTIAN DEEDS, WORDS AND HABITS.**

C. Fooled Followers.

1. Judas was a master at deception.
 - a. Outwardly one could recognize no difference between him and the other eleven.
 - b. He faked a concern for the poor (Jn. 12:4-5).
 - c. He innocently asked "Is it I, Lord?" (Matt. 25:25).
 - d. He acted the deception out to the end, brazenly taking the morsel offered.
2. When men deliberately "exchange the truth of God for a lie," (Rom. 1:25), God gives them up to their desires (cf. Rom. 1:28; II Thess. 2:10-12).
3. None of the disciples knew what was transpiring.
 - a. They did not know Judas was the betrayer.
 - b. But Jesus knew!
 - c. **THERE ARE HYPOCRITES IN THE CHURCH TODAY, AND SOME MAY GO UNDETECTED BY THE OTHER FAITHFUL DISCIPLES . . . BUT GOD IS NOT BLIND . . . HE KNOWS.**
 - d. Notice: none of the disciples deserted the band later when they did find out there was a hypocrite among them.

IV. THE SACRIFICING SERVANT 13:31-38

A. Glorified in His sacrifice.

1. "Now" means that in His humiliating (to the world) death the Son would be glorified, exalted.
2. The Father would also be glorified because of the love and obedience of the Son.

3. This glorification also included the marvelous resurrection and ascension.
4. **GIVING AND LOVING** are the attributes which bring glory.

B. Going away.

1. Even at the near hour of His own cruel death His concern is for the soon-to-be bereaved disciples.
2. But they may know the presence of His living Spirit within their hearts by keeping the new commandment which He leaves with them.
 - a. The newness of the commandment is in the newness of the self-sacrificing love which He exemplified.
 - b. No such love could be commanded before, because no such LOVE had been exhibited before! (cf Eph. 3:17-19) and (I Jn. 2:8-11).
 - c. The contrast is between the self-sacrificing love of Christ and the love of self on the part of Judas and even the other disciples this night.
3. **THERE CAN BE NO QUESTION BUT THAT BROTHERLY LOVE IS A MARK OF CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP.** One cannot say he knows and loves God and not have love for his brethren!

C. Grieving disciples.

1. Peter is grieved at the thought that the Master must leave and that he cannot follow.
2. Peter is no coward—he will gladly engage in physical combat on behalf of the Master and His glorious Messianic kingdom.
 - a. Peter would shed his blood for the Jewish throne.
 - b. But this is not the type of sacrifice which Jesus desired.
3. Peter would deny the Lord.
 - a. Not because he was physically afraid.
 - b. Because he was ashamed of what he thought was a humiliating way for the Messiah to surrender without a fight.
4. **SO MANY CHRISTIANS ARE TOO READY TO WIELD THE SWORD IN SUPPORT OF THEIR OWN CONCEPTS OF CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT FIRST STUDYING TO KNOW WHAT THE WILL OF GOD IS!**