

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Culmination of the Ministry

The Rite of the Footwashing

References: John 13:4-17; Luke 9:48; Matthew 23:23, 25, 27.

THE two words which encompass the entire life and work of the Master are love and humility. Nowhere in the Hebrew or any other oriental scripture is there a more touching representation of these qualities than in the story of the Foot Washing as it is told in the New Testament. Throughout the Gospels the Master warns against the sins which stand, as it were, in contrast to the divine virtues of love and humility; and His denunciations of hypocrisy and pride, the contraries of love and humility, are particularly scathing. It is only in the Gospel of John, however, that the Rite of the Foot Washing occurs, the most humble of the Master's deeds, for it was not a miracle such as had excited the admiration of the multitude and the respect of the Disciples. It was a simple, domestic act which anyone could perform and which carried with it no halo of fame or extrinsic reward.

According to oriental custom, the feet were clad only in sandals. It was the duty of servants to perform this menial service for guests, pouring water on the feet as they were held over a basin, and drying them with a towel. The Disciples had made no effort toward thus serving Christ Jesus, nor yet one another. They were occupied instead with disputations among themselves as to "which of them was accounted to be the greatest." When the Master observed their selfish personal ambitions He gently and lovingly took upon Himself the lowly task of performing this service for them. "What I do, thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

This simple deed has emphasized humility as the most essential requisite

for aspirants to Christian attainment. "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done unto you."

The Philosopher's Stone, that celestial body which Paul describes in the fifth chapter of II Corinthians, that body which becomes either as a diamond or a ruby stone, depending upon the type of development, is not built when courting the adulation of throngs or seeking positions of prominence. The lofty spiritual development of the Christ lifted Him to the heights of the Transfiguration, and His love for humanity caused Him to take upon Himself the form of a servant and to be fashioned in the likeness of man.

John's is the only Gospel in which the denial of Peter is foretold. The other three simply record the fact after its occurrence. At the conclusion of the Last Supper at which He has given His Disciples His deepest esoteric instruction, the Master had but one more word for them, and that was love.

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

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

This commandment is as applicable to the present age as when spoken by the Lord of Love. Just so long as there are wars and rumors of wars, so long as man hates his fellow-man and seeks revenge for wrongs, we are Christians in little more than profession and aspiration, for we are still in that attitude of mind or state of consciousness which belongs to the Jehovistic regime and the external law of the Ten Commandments. Christians are followers of that Way which is set forth in the Sermon on the Mount. Not until we begin to live these precepts are we truly Christians; before that we are

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ities." Because the sensitive child was so horrified at seeing children whipped at school, his father refrained from forcing him to attend. Most of his education was therefore obtained at home by reading and the assistance of other members of the family. (Mercury, ruler of the third house, squaring Mars in the third.)

Blake's father wisely decided to encourage William's artistic bent and sent him at the age of ten to Par's drawing school in the Strand. (The progressed Sun in the fifth, sextile to Saturn.) He also gave him casts to draw from and allowed him to buy prints after the Old Masters. In 1771 (the progressed Sun semisextile Venus and square Uranus, and progressed Moon trine Saturn) he was apprenticed to Besire, the engraver, and served his time faithfully in learning the conventional (Saturn) style of engraving. He also made drawings of the monuments in Westminster Abbey and these were engraved for Gough's "Sepulchral Monuments." His mind was greatly influenced by the surroundings in which he worked, and the Gothic style was to him the ideal, "the living form," forever after. "Angels Hovering over the Body of Jesus" is the title of a painting well illustrating this ideal. The artist also cultivated his mind in other ways, reading Burke, Bacon, and a translation of Winckelman, indicating an interest in political and social reform which later took on larger proportions.

Blake's creative fancy--note three planets, including the all-powerful Sun in Sagittarius, in his creative fifth house--found its outlet in those early years in poetry, some of which survives in the thin volume of "Practical Sketches," printed by his friends in 1783. These pieces were composed between his 12th and 20th years. They remained unknown and therefore had no influence on the poetry of that time. Nevertheless, they were the forerunners of the freer age in poetry which began some twenty years later. In these poems, too, may be found hints of the radical political ideas expressed more forcibly later on.

In 1778 Blake completed his apprenticeship, being then twenty-one, and set out to earn his own living as a professional engraver. He executed many commissions for booksellers and publishers for the next twenty years, largely supporting himself by this means. In 1780 (the progressed Sun trining Mars in Leo) he first exhibited pictures at the Royal Academy where they were admired by Romney.

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merely aspirants to the Christian ideal.

After the inner lesson given to the Disciples through the Triumphal Entry, the Master again emphasized the importance of love as the supreme power.

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