

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
at Galeed Chapel, Brighton
~~about 20th~~ March 1926

21st

John 13 v 10

And ye are clean but not all

The context reveals the infinite condescension of the Lord Jesus Christ. It shows what is not visible at the first sight; it shows more than the physical act declares. It is remarkable that the Lord Jesus, just before He was to leave this world, knowing that now was committed into His hands by His Father all things; that He was come from God and was returning to Him, should take to Himself this great act of condescension. He took off His outer garments, girded Himself with a towel, poured water into a basin, and began to wash His disciples' feet. I say there is more in it than appeared, at any rate, at this moment, to Peter. And when, in the course of washing His disciples' feet, He came to Simon Peter, Peter was unable to understand what His Lord was doing and he protested. Dost Thou, my Lord, Master, God, King, Redeemer, dost Thou wash my feet. And the Lord said - "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter, or presently". But Peter said - never shalt Thou wash my feet. So strong was his feeling that he could not permit this stoop by his Master. He said - "Thou shalt never, or never shalt Thou wash my feet." We may be able to understand something of Peter's shrinking from this, the Lord's dealing, but if we think it is true humility we make a mistake. True humility submits without question to the Lord. It is enough that He says; it is enough that He does. A true faith, which always is connected with true humility, has nothing to say. It was a mistake on the part of Peter to do what he did, to say what he said. If the Lord comes to any of us and blesses us with faith in anything that He is to do or permit to be done, then the real, the blessed spirit of faith and humility, will make us dumb. That is the greatest humility, that connected with faith, when faith is strong enough to cast a ruined soul upon the merits of the Saviour. Then the Lord Jesus took fast hold of Peter in a moment; not by taking

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his feet into His hand and insisting against Peter's protest of washing them, but He took hold of him in another way. "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me". And that took hold of Peter. What! be separated from Christ; God have nothing to do with you. My soul have no part or lot with Him. This was more than Peter could bear and more than we could bear. If some of us were favoured to hear Him speak such a word as this - "If I do not this for thee, thou hast no part with Me" it would kill all opposition in a moment and bring out that that here is so strongly expressed by Peter. His natural disposition coming out, he said "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." From saying he would not let the Lord do anything, now he says - Lord do everything and that is what every child of His, more or less distinctly, from time to time, is brought to. And Jesus saith to him - "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet but is clean every wit, and ye are clean, but not all." There is a washing, a being washed or having been washed in the text preceding the washing of the feet. He that is washed needs nothing but to have his feet washed. There are washings in the Scriptures; very solemn, typical washings. All in the sacrifices expressed that there must be purity. The sacrifices, the slain beasts, had to be parted according to God's word, and direction and then washed before being offered. They must be clean. In the washing in the word of the gospel we have these washings. First the washing of regeneration, and if we are washed with that washing we shall never need to be washed again with it. Born again, you will never need a repetition of that. Men who are born again never so die as to need that operation of the Holy Ghost to be repeated. "After", says the Apostle Paul to Titus, "After that the kindness and love of God our Saviour hath appeared unto all men, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost". O, what a washing that is. Think of it. The Holy Ghost coming down from heaven in a mighty, unsought, undesired, unthought of act, and quickening the immortal soul into eternal life, whereby that soul becomes instantly and for ever a partaker of the divine nature and escapes the corruption that is in the world through lust, and that is the first washing in vital religion. That is the

beginning of all true religion; that is the first cleansing that takes place in vital godliness. A new life given to a dead soul. "And you hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins". It is the impartation of a principle of life to a sinner; it is the giving to the sinner all that is in the chapter from which this morning's text was taken. "I am the life". "I give unto My sheep" as Christ says in the 10th chapter of this gospel "eternal life". "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly." This act of regeneration constitutes a sinner a Christian. It is the life God has given to him, and though, as to his experience, he is more a devil than anything else, he really is, in God's sight, by God's own act on him, a Christian, for he must be a Christian who lives the life of Christ. This is the washing; he that is washed in the laver of regeneration, not by being sprinkled as an infant, but by being washed in that wonderful act of the Holy Ghost, whereby he is made a living soul, and is delivered from the corruption that is in the world, from the course of the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience. This distinguishes a Christian from a professor who has no possession; this distinguishes one to whom this change has come from one who is born in religion, who has a natural religiosity of mind. It distinguishes him and separates him from himself. Now perhaps some of you would, if you had thousands of gold and silver, gladly part with all to know that you are washed in the washing of regeneration. Is it so? Do you honestly, before the Lord, sometimes ask Him if indeed you are born again and if you are, to show it to you? Do you ask Him to give you the proofs of His precious love by giving you His life? To give evidences that indeed you are passed from death unto life, that now you are not leading the life of the flesh, though you are in the flesh, but you live the life of Christ, that life which is imparted to you. Is it so? Now if every evidence of divine life could be put before you in the clearest possible way, and God did not accompany that teaching, you would say - Well, there is one thing I think you have left out. You will be sure to find a lack in yourself, but what you need is the witness of the Spirit.

The witness that I am Thy child
O Jesus to me now impart
The pleasing sensation will yield
Unspeakable joy to my heart

That is one good proof that you have been born again; to think that you would rather know you are born again than know you possess millions of gold and silver; that you would rather have the favour of God than the smile of this world; to feel that you would choose to have the testimony from heaven rather than all human testimony that might possibly be brought to you. It is a good sign and what advice I would give to you is this - press that petition on God's notice; press your case upon His attention. Never give up as you can go on, though you may do it in great weakness. Never give up this search. Tell me, tell me, tell me that I am born of God. It is an unspeakable mercy to have this, and may the Lord grant that many of you who have made no profession and who would now be afraid of making a profession, be brought to this point. I would not urge you to make a profession of religion before you know you have got religion. I would not urge you to take on yourself the name of the Lord before that has taken place - Let Thy Name be named on them. May the Lord put His own Name on you. I am the life; that life that animates the soul, carries it out of self from time to time, Godward. That life puts a stamp of death on all other life; that life makes the world empty to the one who possesses it. That life is holy; that is why a sinner is troubled about his sins. It is holy; that is why he is afraid of approaching a holy God being, as he feels, such a sinner. That life is spiritual; therefore it seeks spiritual nourishment and there is nothing in the world can nourish it. That life, being godly, can only delight in godliness. Then one says - but I am a sinner; who told you so? He says - I am guilty; who told you so? He says - I am separated by my sins from God; who made you feel that? I say, life from heaven gives such experience; life from heaven makes God desirable and yet tells the sinner that he is separated from that God by his sins. He that is washed with this washing is a happy person though he may feel the misery of sin,

the burden of it and feel dead in the law. Come poor sinner, you who may be very doubtful about your state and standing before God, and look seriously and honestly at this. A change has come, has it not? You say, I do not know how it came. That is not the essence of it; that is what men would call an accident in the case. It is not the essence of life that you should know when it came to you. It is not of the essence of life that you should know how it came; only the devil sets you on these two points and holds you up sometimes. I do not know when I became convinced of sin. I do not know how. It was not the ministry; it was not that sermon; it was not that chapter. I do not know how it came. The seed is sown, and you rise early and sit up late and it grows and you do not know how, but there is this washing; there is the new life; born again. And I will tell you one thing that you may not always feel, that you may question in yourself. There is one thing you have got if you are born again - you have got love. O you say, I have got enmity. Yes, I do not doubt that, but you have got love, and that explains why you, by occasions, feel a singular glow in your heart when the Name of the Lord is named. That is why you would sooner have a part with Christ than the whole world for your own. And this love runs not only to Him, but to His people, and there may be moments when you feel a singular attraction to the saints; when perhaps one child of God in whom you see grace to be eminent, is so dear to your heart, though you would not dare to say it to him; so dear to your heart, that you would cleave to him. I remember when I was quite young; it is more than 60 years ago now; I remember when I used to follow two or three old men after service to listen to their godly conversation and if one of them turned round then I would stop lest they should think I was following them. How I loved them and I think of them now at times; how I walked behind them to hear what they might have to say about God. He that loveth Him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of Him. Great is the child of God in the eyes of one who is washed in the washing of regeneration. You have got another thing - you have got prayer. "Behold he prayeth". And this is not a thing that you can work up. You deplore the lack of it perhaps at times, and then at other times it comes up, and you do not know how. It

bubbles in your heart and whatever you are doing and wherever you are, there is this feeling - "Lord do save my soul. Forgive my sins; shine upon me; give me what Thou givest to Thy people". Prayer is that life in the soul, trembling, moving, running, rising after God. Well, there is this washing.

And there is another washing for me to name, this namely, the washing away of sin. "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood", nothing else. That makes a man clean. As spiritual life is clean, and the sinner is clean in his desires, though he does not understand what is come to him, so when the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son cleanseth him, then he is washed. "Ye are washed", washed from your sins; loosed from your sins; loosed from your condemnation under and by the law; loosed from these corruptions that have killed you again and again; loosed from your sins by the blood of Jesus Christ. It is not nitre and much soap that has done it. The blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed from all sin. O sinner, this was done on Calvary for you, and that is the reason you have undergone the washing of regeneration. And if, at present, your experience is that you are not washed from your sins because you feel the burden of them and the pollution of them, wait on Him who only has to say - "Thy sins are forgiven". That is the washing. The dying thief got that washing and flew to heaven the same day and he whose sins are washed by the blood of Christ is there made fit for heaven. Then and there he has got the title in his soul and the fitness by the Holy Ghost. O what a washing this is. When the sins of a sinner thus washed are sought for they are not found. When the sins of Israel are sought for they shall not be found. They are cast behind God's back into the depths of the sea. This is what you sing about sometimes.

Forgiveness, 'tis a joyful sound
To malefactors doomed to die

This is washing. Have you had it? Some say, No! and what a sorrowful No it is, is it not, to you? What a solemn, sad feeling you have sometimes that your sins are not put away; that

you seek God but He has not blessed you with pardon, that you are still bound, bound in your spirit, tied up there. There is this sin that hangs about your neck like a millstone, and you feel whatever you have, till you get this you cannot be satisfied. May God keep you in that frame of mind. May God grant that you may be kept from that easy religion that is in the land and that is coming into the churches of truth. May He keep you from that easy religion that Satan would deceive you with and keep you anxious, concerned, prayerful, sorrowful, until you get that one blessing

Forgiveness, 'tis a joyful sound
To malefactors doomed to die

That is the turning point; that is the change; that is the leaving the law and coming into the gospel; that is passing under the rod of divine teaching and correction out of the law and entering into the bond of the covenant; that is life in the conscience; that is the peace of God that passeth all understanding; that is the blessing. O my brethren, you who are seeking it, you do not know yet what God has got for you. I can just tell you about it, but I cannot make you feel it. He can, and I wish He would send you home this evening with that blessing in your consciences, that you might go to your beds happy in the Lord and saying - now I am ready to die, whatever follows; that is the real thing, that God is yours and you are His, and there is nothing between you in the way of quarrel or sin or law or curse. How free it is - washing. Washed us from our sins in His own blood. Washed us. He, He washed us. Ah, as I have said, there is more than the physical act in this condescending work of Christ. It sets forth how that He washes His people from their sins. He came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many. He came to pour this blessing into their troubled hearts and this washing upon their souls that they should be without stain, acceptable and accepted in Him. Now these two things, these two washings are distinctly set forth in Holy Scripture and I have tried to set them before you now. Now Christ said to Peter "He that is washed needeth not

save to wash his feet", as if He should say - you are washed and therefore there is no need for you to be washed again in that way. The word washed in the text is repeated. The first washing is a word that means bathing; means the whole person bathed and he who is bathed in the bathing that I have mentioned, of regeneration and in the washing away of his sins needs no more that, but he needs to have his feet washed from time to time. In the east this had a significance that it does not possess for us. I mean a literal significance. They wore sandals. Any journey taken, short or long, by one in the east would bring some dirt to his feet. He was to be a guest; he is going to dine with a friend. The first thing on arriving at the house is that the servant washes his feet, because they have got some dirt, some defilement. We are on a journey; pilgrims we are; some of us bless God for it. Some of us can sing

Pilgrims we are to Canaan bound
Our journey lies along this road

and here we gather defilement. Here there is much to defile us and it is in this respect that a washed person needs to be washed, needs to have his feet washed. Apply this to a Christian's course; apply it to what you have been today; what thoughts you may have had; what unbelief; what prayerlessness; what pride; what anger; what wicked things have been in you this very day. Perhaps even since you entered this chapel and while you have been sitting there something has come to defile you and what do you need? Not to be born again, no; not a new sacrifice for your sins, but the Saviour of sinners to come again and sprinkle you with clean water; give you a new application of His precious blood.

I would like, if the Lord will help me, just to run along this line of experience. We have got, some of us, a good many milestones upon which we can look back; a good many troubles through which we have been brought; some tribulation; but in connection with them all, from the beginning until now, have we not contracted defilement? Are you ashamed to look back sometimes on a day, to look back on the years of profession, the

years since you were separated from the world. Just take your thoughts; God notices thoughts. "Thou thoughtest", said the Lord, charging sin on some, "Thou thoughtest". "When thou sawest a thief thou consentedst with him." His sin was not a sin to you; it was not grievous; and you got defiled with it. O these thoughts. As a man thinketh in his heart so is he. We have thought hard thoughts of God; hard thoughts of providence; very hard thoughts sometimes have moved, moved us to anger. "I do well to be angry" said one of old when God did not please him. Now every honest man will be caught here. Every honest conscience will be caught here. Every Christian is, if I may use such a word, every Christian is an internal jurist. He has a line in his conscience that reaches the character of God and he judges of his thoughts by that. You have got that line; I have got that line and very solemn it is to judge yourself by it. O Christian, what have been your thoughts, thoughts about God, thoughts about your business, about your ways, about your neighbours, thoughts about your friends? What have they been? Well you have got a line in your conscience which says they have been ungodly. Well what a troubled person you must be. Then, what do you need for these wicked thoughts? Washing. Who is to wash you? The condescending Saviour. He is to wash you. This is the course, the only course, the only way of ever being clean again. Thinking sometimes has been very terrible to me viewed from this point of view; terrible. Here is a poor man whose thoughts rise; you cannot help thinking; naturally we think; it is proper to think; naturally proper to nature to think; and then these thoughts bring trouble, bring trouble. O if a man's thoughts are straight with God the Father, with God the Son, with God the Holy Ghost; straight with the gospel, with its doctrines, so that you are not fretting against them; with its precepts so that you do not want to turn away from them or break through them; if a man's thoughts are straight thus for a single hour, what a favoured man he is. Then he needs washing when he gets defilement. One says - it is very close. Ah but we have got to come close; it wont do to be wide when you have to die. I like sometimes to think of Huntington's cushion and the corner in his room, when every night he had good reckoning and settlements with God. And that is what we want my friends, because if it be

otherwise then there is an accumulation and there is a growth of hardness and a departing from the living God. So may Jesus gird Himself with the gospel towel and bring the gospel remedy and wash our defiled feet with respect to our thoughts; wash us with respect to our prayerlessness, our worldliness, our carnality. Let us put them all together, they are all neighbours, and they go hand in hand, and all seek our ruin and separation from God. Now take these things. How do you stand? How do you stand? Well, I think I hear some say - "We cannot stand; cannot stand before God; cannot stand before the gaze of the gospel; cannot stand before the precepts of the gospel. We are wrong everywhere, always wrong. What you want is this, that the Lord Jesus should take this blessed position and say - "I came not to be ministered unto by you, but to minister to you". "I am not to be ministered to by you, but you are to be ministered to by Me." "I, your Lord, will condescend again to wash you." Now you turn to Israel, turn to Ephraim. "O Ephraim" said the Lord, "your goodness is as the morning cloud and as the early dew". Perhaps Ephraim had been thinking that he was wrong, that his idolatrous and adulterous evils were all accumulating and he just saw them and repented for a moment and then turned away again, like the morning cloud, driven away, and the early dew, absorbed, when the rays of the sun reach it. So was Ephraim's state, his condition. "O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself". Think of it. Do you know Ephraim? Do you know Israel? Did you ever walk with them, act with them, kill yourself, with them? And what do you need? This washing your feet. Did the Lord do it? "O", He said - "How shall I destroy thee; how shall I give you up?. Take with you words and turn to the Lord again and say, take away all iniquity and receive us graciously, so will we render the calves of our lips." Take your conduct in your business; what is it? If you are prosperous, are you humble? Did you never say - I have done this; I have done that. Were you never dishonest in your spirit? Did you never convey an untruth without saying an untruth? Take your family life; were you always what you should be according to the gospel precept and doctrine, there? Take your estimate of the world - was it always good, always beneath God, always but trash, dung and dross, as the Apostle Paul expresses

it? Says conscience, No, no, no. Then what? Give up. That is what the devil says under the curse of the law. That is what a legal heart says. What says the gospel? Sanctified. How? By the Lord washing your feet, sprinkling you with blood, His own precious blood; shining once more, in the light of His countenance, upon you and again saying "Having loved you, I love you to the end." "O Ephraim how shall I give thee up. How shall I set thee as Adma? How shall I make thee as Zeboim? for since I spake against thee, I do earnestly remember thee still." What, this defiled person? Yes, this defiled person. Then I will wash him. He says "I have heard him; I have heard Ephraim bemoaning himself. I have heard him saying what have I to do any more with idols. I have observed him; observed his repentance and his trouble and his grief. I have heard him say - O if I could but live near the Lord; if the Lord would but give me more of the Holy Spirit and grace. I have heard him say "I hate my sin, I loathe myself". I have heard him say - Lord give a daily repentance, daily cleansing, a daily pardon. I have heard him" Nobody else did; it was in secret that you said these things; your tears spoke them and your broken spirit spoke them. He says - "I have heard and I have observed him. He is sick of himself; he is sick of his ways; he wishes to be near Me." Then says the Lord - "From Me - root, vine, life - from Me is thy fruit found", and this blessed washing is granted. He needs not anything else. The feet get defiled and they need to be cleansed.

Now I believe some of you can fill up ever so much for yourselves. I have given you hints and general words, but you can fill up. I expect you are doing it perhaps even now. I have been filling up a good part of the afternoon in my own case and what a filling, what a filling. And I have sinned, as you cannot sin. You cannot sin in the ministry. Then what washing is needed, and will He wash? Does not He get tired of it? Does not He get tired of these things, of this people? No. We have dearly tried Him; we have dearly tried Him; but He says - "I earnestly remember him still". "My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that is gone out of My lips". If He has done the greater, will He not continue to do the lesser? If He died for

us, will He not continue to grant these merciful washings which are needed by our carelessness and sinfulness bringing defilement to us? Why do some of us get so far off and seem shut out of the house and do not get near to Him at a feast as we would? Defiled feet will explain it. My friends, live close; live close to yourselves; live close to yourselves; live close to your thoughts and your judgment and your ways and your words; live close; and then you will find the dear Saviour coming to you. Be clean. He says "Ye are clean; clean through the word that I have spoken unto you". And though that means His husbandry, still it comes to the same thing in experience; if He cleanses you by a solemn dispensation and gives you to feel that He has put away your sins, it is the same as this washing the feet. We have great need of it. May the Lord grant it to us and let me say again, in conclusion; live close. If you would have distance, darkness, thorns, troubles, frowns - live carelessly; indulge the world in your hearts; indulge your sins; and you will get these other things. God, though a Sovereign, is a Father and He says in His house - This is My rule and if you break this, My rule, then I, as your Father, will use the rod. The rod of correction is to drive folly from the child. May the Lord look upon us; may He bless us individually and collectively and grant that we may enter into the washing, that blessed washing that is never to be repeated and then the frequent washings that are necessary and are repeated. The Lord save us from ourselves, from our idolatrous, wicked, worldly, hard, unthankful selves and wash us, for His Name's sake.

AMEN.