

## CHAPTER XVI.

## THE ORDINANCE OF HUMILITY.

"If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an *example*, that ye should do *as* I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. *If ye know* these things, happy are ye *if ye do them*." John 13: 14-17.

The word "*ought*" in this scripture is from the Greek *ὀφείλω*, and, according to Greenfield, means, "to be bound to the performance of some duty, be obliged, be under obligation." The lexicons are agreed that it has the full strength of command, duty, or binding obligation. It is so translated in the common version. See Luke 17: 10; Rom. 15: 27; 2 Thess. 1: 3; 2: 13.

Dr. Wayland says:—

"*'Ought'* puts us under obligation to act."—*Moral Science*, p. 54.

"The word is of binding force, and imposes duty."—*J. Winebrenner, in Practical Sermons*.

"To be held or bound in duty or moral obligation."—*Webster*.

"Some have understood this *literally*, and have thought these words amount to the institution of a standing ordinance in the Church; that Christians, should, in a solemn, religious manner, *wash one another's feet*, in a token of their condescending love to one another. St. Ambrose took it so, and practiced it in the church of Milan."—*Matthew Henry's comments on John 13: 14*.

"Feet-washing became, as might be expected, a part of the observances practiced in the early Church. The real signification, however, was soon forgotten, or overloaded by superstitious feelings and mere outward practices. Traces of the practice abound in ecclesiastical history."—*Kitto's Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*, art., *Washing of Feet*.

"We confess that feet-washing is an ordinance of Christ, which he himself administered to his disciples, and recommended by example to the practice of believers."—*Waldensian Confession of Faith*, p. 12.

In the "Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature," vol. 3, p. 616, we find the following:—

"The act thus performed by Christ at the institution of the supper, suggests to believers at every communion this lesson of humility. It is also an *example* of humility, patience, forbearance, and charity. . . . In the post-apostolic times, the command, 'Ye also ought to wash one another's feet,' came to be observed, not only after the spirit, but also after the letter. . . . In the Greek Church, feet-washing came to be even considered as a sacrament."

"The Church of England at first carried out the letter of the command."

"The Anabaptists continued the practice of feet-washing, which in consideration of the passages, John 13: 24, 1 Tim. 5: 10, they considered as a sacrament instituted and recommended by Christ." [See the "Confessio" of the United Baptists or Mennonites of 1660.]

Mr. C. Schmidt, Professor of theology of Strasburg, Alsace, France (now Germany), in his "History and Doctrine of the Sect of the Cathares, or Albigenses," p. 26, says:—

"They had adopted the custom of washing one another's feet, in imitation of the example of the Saviour, who had washed the feet of his disciples to give them a lesson of humility."