

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY



The Last Supper and Footwashing

By JANE TEMPLETON



Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me.

And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

And he answered and said, He that dippeth his hand

with me in the dish, the same shall betray me. The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom. (Matthew 26: 20-29.)

And supper being ended . . . He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel and girded himself.

After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. (John 13: 2, 4, 5.)

The key to the deeper meaning of this step on the Christian Mystic Path may be found by considering the inner significance of the two articles served: *bread* and *wine*.

Bread, a product of the immaculately conceived, earthgrown wheat, is symbolical of the feminine principle in the human being—the negative pole of spirit. Wine, a product of the earthgrown grape, represents the masculine principle—the positive pole of spirit. Both are made

possible by the life radiated through all parts of the earth by the Christ Spirit, the indwelling Planetary Spirit, and do in truth constitute the body and blood of our Savior. No mere idle words were those of Christ Jesus when He said: "Take, eat; this is my body . . . this is my blood of the new testament."

During the ceremony of the Last Supper, Christ Jesus was teaching His disciples the mystery of transmutation as embodied in the grain and grape. Partaking of the bread and wine symbolizes the mastery of the powers of the spirit—the complete transmutation of the lower nature into the transcendent glories of the higher self. In the workshop of his own body the spiritual alchemist evolves the Philosopher's Stone—he *becomes* that luminous, glowing jewel as he purifies and spiritualizes his faculties and bodies by "loving, self-forgetting service" to his fellowmen.

After Christ Jesus had finished with the ceremony of the Last Supper, He performed the mystic rite of the Footwashing. In this act of humble gratitude, He exemplified to His followers the necessity for the golden quality of humility. In spiritual evolution one rises by giving and serving others, and those whom he serves and lifts are actually his stepping-stones to greater heights. They have benefited from his teaching, but at the same time they have provided him with the blessed opportunities for progress through service, and to them he obviously owes a debt of gratitude. Having overcome all hypocrisy and pride, the aspirant has a consciousness so expanded that he naturally expresses the humility symbolized by the Footwashing.