



Purified by the Spirit of the Christ

For the lesson titled "Sacrament" from January 3–9, 2011

By Janet Clements

The Golden Text of this week's Bible Lesson, titled "Sacrament," invites us to consider the "now" and "how" of worshipping God—giving ourselves wholly, even our very breath, to the vital Principle and reality of our being. In every section, we are offered Christly instruction in ways of honoring God. Our devotion to living these precepts forwards our spiritual journey in accepting and worshipping God.

First on our journey is baptism. In Section I, John's baptism with water is an outward sign of an individual's inward purification of thought. It's interesting that John saw a distinction between his baptism with water and Jesus' baptism with the Holy Ghost. In my research on this, I found that one meaning of the original Greek word for "ghost" is "vital principle." So, one way of looking at Jesus' baptism with the Holy Ghost is that it opens thought to purification by divine Principle, which envelops and washes the very fabric of our being, revealing and sustaining our sound, flawless, holy nature.

This all-encompassing baptism produced practical results with Jesus' healing of ten lepers (see [Luke 17:12–14](#), citation 3). It showed that not even the incurable could be left out of the impartial, baptismal activity of the Holy Ghost. Living this Christly precept of baptism uplifts thought to experience the holy presence of God, the kingdom of heaven right here.

In Section III, we see that purification and washing are not only individual but also collective, as Jesus illustrated to his disciples in washing their feet (see [John, chap. 13](#), cit. 7). Jesus then asked the disciples to humbly and graciously wash one another's feet. Foot washing is another

“how” in worshipping God. It’s full of meaning, and for me includes cherishing in thought the purity of each of God’s children.

Jesus also gave a new command to “love one another.” He further said that everyone will know who his disciples are because of the way they express love—a dear love, even a love feast. *Science and Health* speaks of “growth in grace, expressed in patience, meekness, love, and good deeds” ([p.4](#), cit.11).

Jesus further illumined the meaning of that commandment to love one another in the garden of Gethsemane, when he completely surrendered to the will of God, giving up all belief in evil, “for Christ, or Truth” ([Science and Health, p. 33](#), cit. 17). Jesus’ expression of divine Love continued and expanded as he was being arrested, to be brought before the Sanhedrin, and one of his disciples cut off the right ear of the high priest’s servant. Here, Jesus expressed the Christly love that ameliorated the hate and restored the servant’s ear.

This week’s Lesson keeps inviting us to examine ourselves along our spiritual journey and measure our devotion to God and His Christ, to see if we are willing *now* to follow the divine precepts and Jesus’ example—including drinking his cup and partaking of his bread. Indeed, to leave all materiality for the Christ ideal (see [I Cor. 11:26, 28](#), cit. 4; [Science and Health, pp. 33=34](#), cit. 17).

Jesus’ resurrection—his complete victory over all evil—reveals his unbroken, conscious union with Life, God. After the resurrection, Jesus’ disciples went back to fishing. The next morning, standing on the shore, Jesus asked them if they’d caught anything that night, and they said, “No.” Jesus told them to cast the net “on the right side” of the ship and that they would find fish ([John 21:6](#), cit. 12). Indeed, they found a “multitude” of fish!

In the Greek, the “right side” of the ship is the “feminine” side, and that side evidently reveals the superabundance and immeasurable outpouring of God’s Mother-love. Celebrating the morning meal Jesus had with his disciples, we are encouraged to feed upon divine Love’s eternal, boundless, tender care for each of us, and to graciously commune with divine Love, letting our active involvement in the “now” and “how” of worshipping God come forth in spiritual living.

The culmination of Jesus' worship of God is shown in his ascension, where he sat "on the right hand of God" ([Mark 16:19](#), cit. 14). Again the "right" is the "feminine" side, revealing the idea that Jesus rested—saw the foundation of his being as established—in eternal Love. Indeed, Jesus showed that the "now" and "how" of worshipping God are to live divine Love, which purifies, heals, uplifts, and unites us all with Church, "the structure of Truth and Love," where all true worship is fulfilled ([Science and Health, p. 583](#), cit. 23).

About the author

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