

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Culmination of the Ministry

First Three Days of the Passiontide

L AZARUS and his sisters, Mary and Martha, were among the innermost circles of Christ Jesus. The first three days of the Passiontide were spent in their home. Here His closest followers were assembled for a few final, precious days of instruction and communion with their beloved Teacher.

To the disciples who were ready to receive it, Christ revealed the processes of mystic transmutation whereby the Mother Mary would become a part of His suffering and travail, and also something of the recompense of glory to be hers in the heights of the Easter Vigil.

The deeper teachings given during these days to Mary and Martha are beautifully portrayed in the allegory of the supper prepared for the Master in the home of Lazarus as described by John in the twelfth chapter of his Gospel. Although Martha was being prepared through service for the higher exaltation of consciousness termed Initiation, the text makes plain that she was not ready to partake fully of the great spiritual feast. Lazarus, the recently initiated one, sat at the Master's table and partook freely with Him of the Waters of Eternal Life and of the Bread which man shall free from ever hungering again.

Mary, farther advanced than Martha, stood at the very entrance to the Temple of Light, evidenced by her ceremonial of anointing the feet of the Master.

On the second day of the Passiontide the Master instructed other men and women disciples in advanced work preparatory to the glorious Resurrection Rite.

On the third day Judas succumbed to the temptation of the priests. Judas typifies the lower, instinctive nature; the priests, the human or mortal. When these two forces are paramount, the Christ or spiritual nature is always betrayed and, in turn, their own self-destruction is inev-

itable, as instanced by Judas' tragic end.

The Sublime Rite of the Eucharist

The origin of the ceremonial of the Last Supper is lost in antiquity. Its observance may be traced through the earliest of the Mystery Schools. The Persians celebrated the Festival of the Eucharist, a Greek word meaning "thanksgiving" or Love Feast. Upon receiving the initiatory Mithraic rites, certain words were spoken and the neophyte partook of bread and water. This was also one of the important customs connected with the Eleusinian Mysteries in Greece. These Mysteries were built around Ceres, the goddess of grain, and Bacchus, the god of wine. Wheat was considered the most valuable of all plants given to man; it was a love gift from the gods of Venus. Bacchus was the god of true spiritual ecstasy obtainable only through direct communion with the Divine Lover.

The Mithraic sacrament included three large vases filled with white wine. Before the enchanted gaze of the candidate these changed into blood-red, purple, and azure blue. One who has touched the inner Mysteries knows that this transformation belongs to the work of the high Initiate. Bread and wine signify that spirit must enter in and transform matter; that divinity is awakened within through the quickening processes of Initiation.

The Old Testament conceals the secrets of the New while the New Testament reveals the inner teachings of the Old. Melchizedek, the mysterious priest of Salem, in his consecration of Abraham, gave to the new Aryan peoples the ideal symbolized by the Feast of Bread and Wine. The Christ consecrated His Disciples through the conjoined powers signified by the bread and wine, the Christ Himself being a *priest forever after the Order of Melchizedek*.