

gone entirely now. Can you see him?"

"I can see him," replied Minnie and Mrs. Van Niekerk simultaneously. But Mabel gazed perplexedly at Peter as she said, "He does seem to be fading, doesn't he?"

"Yes, my dear," said Mrs. Van Niekerk, putting her arm around the young woman. "He is fading, as you say. Don't you realize that our intense love for him and our concentration on high ideals raised our consciousness to the point where it took only a little effort on his part to materialize enough for us

to see him? If there had been an ordinary person here, he would have seen nothing—absolutely nothing."

The four friends gazed at each other silently for several moments before they again resumed their seats in the arbor.

"This has been a most wonderful day," said Mrs. Van Niekerk. "It is too beautiful to spoil with idle gossip."

"Yes," said Mabel, "we have been promised the good things to come—through true and perfect service to humanity."

(*The End.*)

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## Esoteric Bible Studies

BY CORINNE S. DUNKLEE

STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST JESUS

### X—*The Trials.*

#### *First Trial, Before Annas.*

As the Master suffered in Gethsemane, there was heard the uproar and cries of an approaching throng which broke the awed stillness of the Garden wherein had occurred the great conflict with sorrow. The glimmering of many lights threw strange and weird shadows upon those olive trees which had witnessed the last mighty ordeal and the final submission. The soldiers of the Sanhedrin approached, accompanied by Judas, who gave the traitorous kiss. This was met with that infinite compassion and love which transcend anything the world has ever known, as He gently spoke to Judas and called him "friend." Here is given the supreme ideal for humanity to follow. Long before on a certain midsummer day they were not idle words which He gave to those gathered about Him on the Mount. He was teaching them the secret of a great vibratory power which they must learn to build within themselves, the power of a love which is supreme and which triumphs

over all enmity, when He said: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you."

While the Sanhedrin was being assembled at midnight, Annas endeavored by subtle questioning to cause Christ to convict Himself. The only charges which they held against Him were first, His words concerning the destruction of the Temple, which in their materialistic understanding they interpreted to mean the Temple in Jerusalem, and second, His affirmation that He was the Messiah. Though Annas found no reason for His condemnation, he bound Him and sent Him to the high priest, Caiaphas.

#### *Second Trial, Before Caiaphas.*

Caiaphas, high priest in the time of Christ Jesus, was a son-in-law of Annas. Annas was a Sadducean aristocrat. His immense wealth was derived in part from the Temple traffic. He it was who was chiefly responsible for the Temple becoming a "den of robbers." This accounted for his intense animosity against Christ Jesus and his determination to make every effort to bring about His destruction.

Caiaphas was appointed high priest by

Valerius Gratus, predecessor of Pilate in A. D. 25, and was deposed about A. D. 36. Caiaphas as ruling high priest was president of the Sanhedrin at the trial of the Great Master.

A legal meeting could not be held before sunrise, but as many had assembled through curiosity, it was decided to hold an informal meeting immediately. Many witnesses gave conflicting testimony, but finally two were found who swore that they had heard Christ's words concerning the destruction of the Temple. Caiaphas asked, "Art thou the Christ?" When the latter replied, "I am," Caiaphas rent his fine linen vestment in token of blasphemy, and the Sanhedrin condemned Christ to a blasphemer's death. The judges then departed for a few hours rest and refreshment, and He was left in care of the Temple guards.

At that time anyone under sentence of death was always subject to the sport and mockery of the soldiers, so the gentle Nazarene was left to their tender mercies. To pass the time between the trials they blindfolded Him and beat Him, they struck Him in the face, and as a crowning indignity they spat upon Him. They wounded those blessed hands which had been used only for help and healing. They bruised that tender face which had shone with the reflected light of heaven upon the earth. With one word, one gesture, He could have been free with His torturers helpless at His feet. There was never such a lesson of calmness in adversity, such poise and peace in a hostile environment, or such self-restraint and self-control under terrific conditions.

The regular trial after sunrise was but mere form, and the sentence of death for blasphemy was soon pronounced. The Sanhedrin was composed of seventy members and the high priest. A verdict required a unanimous vote. Both Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea were private disciples of the Master and protested the verdict. It is said that twenty-seven irregularities have been found in

the trial, any one of which could have annulled the sentence of death.

From the esoteric viewpoint we understand how and why the death sentence was not refuted and why the Crucifixion had to take place, namely, in order that the Christ might become the *indwelling* Planetary Spirit of the earth.

#### *Third Trial, Before Pilate.*

The Sanhedrin voted for the death of Christ Jesus, but it had no power to carry out its decree unless this was sanctioned by the Roman government. Pilate was the fifth of seven procurators or governors in the Roman province of Judea, and ruled from 26 to 36 A. D. A man of inferior birth and culture, hostile to and suspicious of the Jews, he regarded their manners and customs with great contempt. After ten years he was recalled for inefficient rulership and died miserably and abjectly.

The Jews knew that the Roman governor would condemn no man to death for blasphemy, so they charged Him with sedition and the claiming of royal power, which was considered treason against Rome. Their gross materialism could not comprehend that His was not a physical kingdom and that He desired no earthly throne.

Pilate to excuse himself sent Christ Jesus to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time. Disappointed and chagrined because the great Teacher refused to answer his questions or perform any miracles for him, Herod mocked the prisoner and returned him to Pilate.

Pilate's sin was that which causes so many of us to fall, indecision, a cowardly fear which prevents us from taking a stand for right against the majority. When he saw that a mob was forming, fearing violence and that its report in Rome would brand him with inefficiency, "he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude," a symbolic act and one which many a Christian neophyte is performing every day. Everyone who does this today under similar cir-

cumstances is leaving the Christ within himself to be scourged and crucified by his own lower nature. Each one of the events outlined in the life of Christ Jesus finds its perfect analogy in our own lives as we endeavor to awaken the potentially divine powers within ourselves which shall one day make of us Christed men and women who will inherit the new heaven and the new earth.

Trials must constantly beset the path of the neophyte, for it is only as he is tested and tried that his strength is de-

termined. (To digress, note that the book of Job is universal in its meaning and application to our present-day lives.) Many times and in many lives we must stand trial before we prove our worthiness for Initiation. How do we face the trials which should become stepping-stones toward a higher goal? Do we meet them with the hypocrisy and treachery of a Judas, with the indecision and cowardice of a Pilate, or with the infinite compassion and forgiveness of the Christ?

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## The Blind Men and the Elephant

BY JOHN G. SAXE

It was six men of Indostan,  
To learning much inclined,  
Who went to see the Elephant  
(Though all of them were blind),  
That each by observation  
Might satisfy his mind.

The *First* approached the Elephant,  
And happening to fall  
Against his broad and sturdy side,  
At once began to bawl:  
"God bless me! but the Elephant  
Is very like a wall!"

The *Second*, feeling of the tusk,  
Cried, "Ho! what have we here,  
So very round and smooth and sharp?  
To me 'tis mighty clear  
This wonder of an Elephant  
Is very like a spear!"

The *Third* approached the animal,  
And happening to take  
The squirming trunk within his hands,  
Thus boldly up and spake:  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a snake!"

The *Fourth* reached out his eager hand,  
And felt about the knee.  
"What most this wondrous beast is like  
Is mighty plain," quoth he;

"'Tis clear enough the Elephant  
Is very like a tree!"

The *Fifth*, who chanced to touch the ear,  
Said: "E'en the blindest man  
Can tell what this resembles most;  
Deny the fact who can,  
This marvel of an Elephant  
Is very like a fan!"

The *Sixth* no sooner had begun  
About the beast to grope,  
Than, seizing on the swinging tail  
That fell within his scope,  
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant  
Is very like a rope!"

And so these men of Indostan  
Disputed loud and long,  
Each in his own opinion  
Exceeding stiff and strong,  
Though each was partly in the right,  
And all were in the wrong!

So oft in theologic wars,  
The disputants, I ween,  
Rail on in utter ignorance  
Of what the others mean,  
And prate about an Elephant  
Not one of them has seen!

—Selected.