

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

Culmination of the Ministry

The Initiation of Lazarus

THE exalted initiatory work undertaken through the week of the Passion was inaugurated on the Saturday preceding the Triumphal Entry with the Initiation Rite of Lazarus. Due to the upward course of man's evolution, the ancient phases of Initiation, together with certain aspects of the Jehovistic religion, were passing away. The Christ came "to make all things new." The forces which He released with His coming were necessary to save humanity from losing its way in a materialism which was destined to become darker and denser for many centuries that lay ahead. But in the orderly processes of growth, the new takes over and incorporates the values that have been created in the old. Thus, in the initiatory Rite of Lazarus both the processes that prevailed in the old rituals and those that were now being instigated in the new were combined, the result being the birth of the new Christian Mysteries.

The great power possessed by the early Church — power to heal and to perform miracles — was derived from its knowledge of these Mysteries. Later, as worldly interests encroached more and more upon the Church and materialistic thinking darkened increasingly the consciousness of man, the Church lost contact with its original source of power and fell into relative impotency Not until the truths of Initiation are recovered by the Church can it again come into the power that will enable it to lead mankind in effecting the regeneration required to qualify it for establishing a Christed order on this Earth. There have always been some, both in and out of the Church, who have retained the inner light and conserved for humanity the wisdom of the initiatory teachings.

For example, in the ancient rites of

Egypt and Babylon, rites derived originally from Atlantis, the candidate for Initiation was taken out of his physical body by the supervising Teacher. During a three and a half day period on the inner planes the active desire centers of the applicant made their impress on the centers of his etheric body, these two vehicles having been withdrawn simultaneously for this purpose. Thus a supernormal condition induced by an Initiate Teacher was necessary to achieve this result. With the coming of the Christ this condition was altered, making it possible for man to attain to this development in normal waking conditions which had hitherto been possible only in an abnormal state and with specially supervised conditions under higher guidance.

Materialistic thinking and sensual living tend to interlock the etheric and desire bodies so closely as to make Initiation extremely difficult, if not impossible. Such was the general condition of humanity at the time of the coming of Christ. His work was to set man free from this barrier to higher spiritual attainment. The beginning of this accomplishment is produced by means of concentration and meditation, to which is added the nightly exercise of retrospection, all of which formed a part of the teachings of the Early Church. In concentration the masculine pole of spirit, or the will, is primarily active; in meditation, the feminine pole, or imagination, is the dominant factor. By means of such exercises the centers of the desire body can be impressed upon the etheric without dissociating the latter from the physical body. At the present time, due to the prevailing materiality, the difficulty in severing the two vehicles in the way of pre-Christian times is so great as to be likely to prove disastrous.

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