

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## Crowning Works of the Ministry

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### *The Rite of the Anointing*

Then Jesus six days before the passover, came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead.

There they made him a supper; and Martha served; but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him.

Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair; and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Then said Jesus, Let her alone; against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

For the poor always ye have with you; but me ye have not always.—*John 12:1-8.*

This incident in the life of Christ Jesus is intensely interesting when studied esoterically. Some Bible commentators conclude that the reference in each of the three Gospels is made to the same person, whereas the Mary referred to by John is the sister of Lazarus, and not Mary Magdalene, the woman of sin who was redeemed. Mary, the sister of Lazarus, was one of the foremost of the women disciples. The alabaster vase of ointment symbolizes the dazzling whiteness of the soul body of the mystic, built through love and service and offered in supreme dedication at the feet of the Master. This soul body is formed of the higher ethers which are attracted through love, purity, idealism, and selfless service. The hair is the product of the vital body and the understanding reader will recognize that its use by Mary as recorded in the above passage is an allusion to the ethers of the body, or the soul body. It was an Oriental custom thus to bathe and anoint the feet of an honored guest. The

soul body of a saint emits a fragrance; and when we read that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment, we may know that Mary had reached a high spiritual attainment that was recognized even in the fragrance that emanated from her.

Judas Iscariot, the lower self, always objects to the higher nature dedicating itself to the works of the Christ. "The poor" (those who are not yet ready for this high place in the spiritual life) "ye have always with you, but me ye have not always" (upon the Earth functioning in a physical body).

This incident, which is recorded in the Gospels of Mark (14:3-9) and Luke (7:36-50), outlines the path of supreme dedication for the aspirant. Every event in the life of Christ Jesus portrays a step on the disciple's path as the Christ is awakened *within* him. In Mark and Luke the woman who performs this service is a sinful or erring one. Esoterically this signifies the feminine pole which is fallen in all mankind. In the Gospel of John, which outlines the pathway to the highest attainment, Mary, who was one of the foremost disciples of the Christ, does the anointing, thus showing that the great transmutation had taken place. Mary is now a high Initiate. The anointing occurs after the raising, or Initiation, of Lazarus, the supreme work done by the Christ upon the Earth. It is also significant that this event immediately precedes the Triumphant Entry which is another step in the life of the highly Illumined One.

The anointing with perfumed oil was practiced in Greece as a mark of hospitality. This service was always performed as a token of honor to some highly favored guest. Throughout both the Old and the New Testaments it was used to consecrate priests, prophets, and kings, also sacred

places and articles of worship. The oil of anointing symbolizes divine wisdom.

It was the custom of the early Christians to anoint the sick with consecrated oil as evidenced in the words of Mark: "And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of ointment made?" Also, in the words of James: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord." (James 5:14.)

Christ's ministry was now practically completed. There remained only the Passion Week with its deepest esoteric in-



struction for the Disciples who had qualified themselves to receive it, and the final great work of cleaning and redeeming the Earth for the benefit of all mankind.

John was the youngest of the original Twelve, and aside from Judas was possibly the only one to escape martyrdom. After the Crucifixion he lived chiefly in Ephesus and there presided over seven churches. Under the Roman Emperor, Domitian, he was accused of using evil magic in his wonderful healings, and for this he was banished to Patmos where he received the sublime vision transcribed for us in Revelation.

We discover frequently in early frag-ments that primitive Christianity was as-

sociated with magic and sorcery in the popular mind. This was partially — but not wholly — due to the fact that in the beginning it was almost entirely a Jewish sect. Most of the first Christians were Jews by birth or by adoption. That the popular attitude had some basis in fact is shown in relics discovered in the catacombs of Rome: small golden caskets containing portions of the first chapter of John's Gospel, to be worn as amulets. The circumstance that it is John's chapter on the Logos (Word) which is used as a magic talisman is significant. It indicates that these early Christians understood the tremendous mantram power contained in John's great song of planetary rhythm. The Tetragrammaton has also been used in magical ceremonies by both Jews and Christians until modern times. It is still important to initiatory work and it is not wholly unknown to the mystic Mason.

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## HUMILITY

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and faithful in spiritual matters, we can change the whole order of things in our outer life. Truth, enlightenment, wisdom, and, eventually, omniscience, come to those who have learned humility. Let us, then, become more acutely conscious of the many blessings which are being showered upon us as spiritual aspirants, and let us make every effort to cultivate that humility through which our inner growth, our ability to serve, and our usefulness as helpers in God's work, will increase to an unimagined extent.

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Humility leads to the highest distinction, because it leads to self-improvement. —*Brodie.*

It is vain to gather virtues without humility; for the Spirit of God delighteth to dwell in the hearts of the humble. —*Erasmus.*