

The Esoteric Significance of Holy Communion

T026 The Inner Teachings 28th October 1936 Pembroke Hall, London

Invocation:

We breathe in the essence of God; we become permeated with His life. We are in the heart of His love, and we bow in worship and adoration before His glory. We open wide the channel of our being for the outpouring of His love, His wisdom and His power. May we ever be mindful of our true nature. So mote it be.

The ritual instituted by the Church of Christ, known as the Holy Communion, contains the crux or essence of the spiritual power of that Church, and would raise man* from earthly life into the heavenly and angelic vibrations of the spiritual worlds. The ritual of Communion, or Feast of Remembrance, was instituted in ages past, even before the Temples of Atlantis, in order to teach the inner significance of life on earth. Ritual has been practised throughout the ages in all mystery schools with the object of quickening those vital centres in man's being and thus enabling him to contact the inner, or spiritual, forces of life.

*[*For editorial policy around gender, see the introduction.]*

As we are aware, the inner meaning or essence of the ritual has been lost. It has fallen under a covering of earthiness and materialism, even as today man's real nature has been submerged by the earthy substance of his mind and body and the conditions imposed by those who follow only the impulses of the flesh and the intellect. Thus we might almost refer to these spiritual mysteries as the lost secrets. Yet whichever school you are drawn to in the West or East, of the past, or now instituted by the initiates who live amongst men, you will find the same simple truth at the centre; truth is the same yesterday, today and for ever; as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be: for God is eternal, and man takes from the nature of God, and as in God we behold the Trinity—the threefold Being of Wisdom, Love and Power—so in man exist the same qualities and elements of God's life.

The advent of the Son, Christ, who came as the Redeemer—a word much misunderstood—brought, through the ritual of his birth, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, a new light to the world. Before his crucifixion he called together his disciples (who later became initiates) and at that vital ceremony of the Last Supper with its eternal significance he demonstrated that profound esoteric truth of his life and mission and of the destiny of mankind. After taking the bread, and after giving thanks, he blessed and broke it, saying 'This is my body; take and eat'. He then distributed amongst his disciples the bread. He took the cup of wine—'Drink this in remembrance of me; this is to bear testimony to the new life'.*

*[*White Eagle here paraphrases the familiar words from the Gospels.]*

Have we not learned that the blood contains the vital essence of the spirit? Have we not learned that the vital body of man is actually part of the body of Christ? For through it flows his life, the living essence of the Son, a vital essence coursing through the bloodstream. At the crucifixion the psychic centres of the body of Jesus—the head, the hands, the feet, the side—were pierced and the blood dripped; the vital body was thus released. Do you realise

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what this means, the power at that time distributed to the earth? Even the dead were brought to life!

By the light of your own spirit penetrate the mystery for yourself, and understand the significance of this glorification of man. The side was pierced and from the wound came water and blood. By this mystic symbol the life element of the world became transmuted into the red wine of the Christ-life. Remember that one of the first miracles of our Lord was the changing of water into wine, symbolical of the quickening or changing of man's spirit into the Christ spirit. By the coming of Christ this wonderful change was wrought. From the race spirit, from the concentration on self-consciousness would grow that quickening of the spirit by which man would pass from self-conscious growth into God-consciousness. But this cannot take place in a brief period—time is nothing, even yet the full significance of the baptism of the earth by the vital body of Christ is not understood.

But the form which was introduced, reissued as it were by the Lord at the Last Supper, has continued. Within the Church are certain souls who are initiates of the inner mysteries, for without these such a body as the Christian Church cannot hold its significance and its power; rather must the inner truth be brought into the understanding of the children of the Church—and when we refer to the Church, we do not limit it to any one sect or creed, but we refer to the whole Church of the living Christ which will take possession of all humanity in the New Age which is at hand.

And now for the actual ceremony which takes place in church. Has this any power, any significance? It could have. It depends upon he or she who partakes of the bread and wine, as well as upon the officiant; each is a channel, a servant for the great light. A ceremony can be merely an empty form, dead, but it can be also quickened by the power of the Holy Ghost. Do you understand?

The Holy Ghost which represents the wisdom aspect of God is shown on the altars of masonry by the oil. You asked what was the significance of an anointing with oil: the outward form of an inward and spiritual grace, an anointing with the wisdom of the spirit, with the oil which fills the lamp, the oil which gives the light, the inward light. Again, the parable of the foolish virgins who had not sufficient oil—they had no wisdom, they were foolish, they were unwise.*

*[*White Eagle refers to 'The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins', one of the well-known parables of Jesus, Matthew 25:1-13.]*

Therefore we have the bread representing the body and the wine representing the life; the spirit can act as a focal point for the reception of rays of light and power. Such elements may be partaken of, not merely through the mouth but through the heart as well, and thus received into the inward spirit. Is it possible to partake of Holy Communion such as we describe, on the inner planes, without outward form of bread and wine? This, beloved, is one of the inner mysteries, one of the cosmic mysteries, in which as you pursue the path you will participate.

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Each of the outer symbols bears reference to the growth, to the evolution of the divine life, or spirit, in man. Therefore, seek and ye shall find; knock and the door shall be opened. Such symbolism of mystery teaching is held forth by Masonic lodges, in the Churches; in all the inner schools there are the eternal trinities of body, soul, and spirit; bread, oil and wine; power, wisdom, love; father, mother, son.

Yes, the time draws near when this beautiful and exalting ceremony will take place in such lodges or centres as are ready to receive the wisdom and the power, and to give. The body of man does not live by bread alone. Man is his own corn-crusher, man is his own winepress, and through life labours to produce the bread and to crush from the grapes of life the wine of life. Do you see in the inner significance, the occult significance—of the bread which man grinds by effort of his own spirit, by his urge upward, and of the wine of life—the life of the spirit which results from eternal striving and growth towards the Christ?

Through the partaking of the wine, symbolic of the life force and the love revealed to mankind through Christ, man has had the way opened to greater cosmic initiations. Whereas before he was held by the limitations of the earth man, after the release of the vital body of Christ, the way of initiations was opened freely for all men through the quickening of their own spirit.

Q.You spoke of the growth of self-consciousness. Would you say that before the coming of Christ, self-consciousness amongst the races was not developed?

A.Oh, in some races and civilisations self-consciousness was much developed. But with the coming of Christ, the self-consciousness became turned outwards again into the universal God-consciousness.

Q.Can we find in what you have said tonight an explanation of the words ‘Christ died for us’?

A.Rather say ‘Christ lives for us’. In one sense you can thus interpret it, for by the actual crucifixion of the outer form, the released vital body contacted, permeated the whole earth. Christ’s church is the universal and cosmic truth. In that sense, Christ died for us. But in the wider sense, the universal sense, the crucifixion is that through which all men must pass before the Christ can be liberated in them. Do not forget the drinking of the wine, symbolical of the new testament, the Christ life destined to be the coming life of humanity, the universal brotherhood which you are now striving to understand and to bring about. With the coming of the Christ light, a new cosmic day was born. But as we say so often, you cannot understand time. You think of a thousand years as being a great length of time, you think of the age of your world as being immeasurable. No man yet has arrived anywhere near the truth regarding the actual age of the earth.

Great cycles come and pass, and come and pass—night and day—great cosmic night follows great cosmic day. Get away from the limitation of time, do not think in terms of years. This will help you to gain patience, won’t it? There are those who say to us ‘Oh, I am getting old!’ Bless their hearts—all eternity lies before them! Can you think of life pulsating on ... on ... on

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... get that vibration or realism in the heart of your being and you will know no weariness, and never know death, a transmutation, yes, but never death. This is the secret of the Masters' eternal youth.

Benediction:

The radiance of the Light carried by the beloved Lord shines upon us, and we pray we may carry this radiance of the mountaintop down with us into the valley, that we may give bread and wine to those in hunger and thirst.

And so we thank the eternal Love for His sustenance and all the gifts of life, glorious and beautiful.

Amen.

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