

JESUS AND HIS FRIEND LAZARUS

Lazarus was a great friend of Jesus. So were the sisters of Lazarus, Mary and Martha. Jesus often visited at their home. Profane history tells us that he used to sit on the roof at night with Lazarus and tell him of the Kingdom of Heaven; but evidently he was never able to make Lazarus fully understand or feel that the Kingdom of God was actually *at hand*.

It was because of this that Jesus wept at the grave of his friend. He wept not because Lazarus was dead (because he wasn't dead), and even if this were so, why should Jesus weep when he knew perfectly well that Lazarus in a few moments would be up and about and mingling with them again alive, well, strong and happy?

He wept because having been in such close association with these particular friends, and having taught them so patiently and persistently and constantly of the Kingdom of God (and perhaps had taught them more than he had anyone else) then if they were unable to apprehend what he had taught them, what was to be expected of those others who had only heard the message in a more or less desultory way?

Was his mission to be a failure? It was this thought which caused him to weep. Think of it! Lazarus, his close personal friend, to whom he had talked of the Kingdom of God time and time again, could so lose sight of the teaching of eternal life that when Jesus had gone only a few miles away for some purpose unknown to us, Lazarus should have sickened and died during those few days of Jesus' absence in the adjacent city. How little he had grasped of what Jesus had taught. No wonder he wept!

Jesus loved these people. If then those whom he had so dearly loved could not grasp the facts he had so clearly set before them, was it any wonder that he wept in the face of the evidence that they had not done so?

It is evident that the sickness of his friend, Lazarus, weighed heavily on Jesus. When the news was brought to him first he exclaimed: "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God," meaning thereby that Lazarus would not die, but that the glory of God would be shown forth in life — in his recovery. Even though Jesus made this scientific statement of the Truth, there no doubt was presented to him constantly the opposite contention, for daily reports in all probability came to him of increased danger of the inroads of the disease, until finally word came that Lazarus had died.

Now death is no more real than any other discord, so Jesus kept right on using spiritual sense in the endeavor to perceive the truth of being or act from the standpoint of God, Mind, the only true intelligence. Jesus said: "For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto him," so he must reach that same viewpoint if he would heal Lazarus; and up to this point in this particular instance he had not done so, otherwise Lazarus would not have died.

It is ridiculous to say, as some have said, that Jesus let him die deliberately in order that he might raise him after four days and so destroy the superstition that the soul did not leave the body permanently until after that time.

Jesus was most loving and to thus permit sorrow and grief to settle upon those whom he loved so very dearly would be far beyond comprehension. That then must be dismissed as utterly without foundation, in fact, leaving us with the only possible explanation of Lazarus' death — that until Jesus actually attained the spiritual viewpoint whereby he was able to present Lazarus alive to his friends, he was so overwhelmed by the seeming realities, he was unable to reach that high spiritual altitude which is necessary under all circumstances to do what is set forth as healing the sick or raising the dead; and so, without that complete spiritual help, Lazarus passed away under whatever the disease might have been.

Finally, however, Jesus did attain that spiritual viewpoint, and he knew that Lazarus lived in spite of the testimony of the material senses and all the mass mesmerism to the contrary, and thus filled with the Holy Ghost he returned to Bethany, the home of Lazarus.

We must recollect that Lazarus is not dead, for if it be true that all live unto God, then Lazarus lived unto God, and could there be better authority for believing that Lazarus lived than that of Infinite Intelligence? All that had been buried in the grave was the false belief of a dead Lazarus. It may be asked then: "If that which was buried was but a belief, an illusion, where was the living Lazarus?" A fair question. The answer is that just as the carnal mind conjured up a belief of a body and saw it placed in the grave, so it failed to see the living Lazarus; for the carnal mind, when it believes it sees something in one place, cannot possibly believe that it sees it somewhere else.

Jesus perceived the *living* Lazarus; the others saw the dead Lazarus, the Lazarus they believed had died. Lazarus, however, was near by; he had not gone anywhere; so when Jesus met Martha, a conversation something like this went on (remember that Martha was "dull of hearing" [spiritually dense]): She said, "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." Jesus knowing that Lazarus lived, yet perceiving that Martha and the others believed him to be dead, said, in effect: "You will see Lazarus again." Martha in despair, answered: "Yes, I know I'll see him on the last day at the resurrection," but Jesus said: "That is not what I mean at all. I mean that the Christ-man is already resurrected and is alive, and if you will but listen to me and believe what I say, you will see him alive again, for if one will understand what I tell him, though he had believed himself to be dead, yet would he live again;" to which Martha made another evasive and unbelieving answer. Mary too said about the same thing.

Then Jesus directed that he be shown where they had buried him — the dead Lazarus — and demanded that the stone be rolled away from the grave. At this, Martha, spiritually dull, said: "Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days." Martha couldn't smell the sweet aroma of Spirit which was so evident to Jesus, couldn't smell the sweetness of Life, of Love, of health. Jesus smelled it, saw the Life, felt the presence of God who is Life, heard the quiet throbbings of that same Life; and so he was able to say: "Lazarus, come forth," and Lazarus appeared not only to Jesus himself, but to the others who were looking on in amazement at the scene before them, for under the light of the Christ which was present with Jesus, they saw the things of the Kingdom of God, just as when one enters a dark room and turns on the electric light, there are seen the things which are in the room.

"Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"