

# WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

## Christian Initiatory Teachings

### *The Calling of the Twelve*

**B**EFORE every important step He took Christ Jesus went for a time into the silence of the desert. He knew that His work was to be accomplished within the short space of three years. He therefore chose the twelve most advanced of His followers to carry on the work of disseminating the new religion when He had gone. Immediately after choosing the Twelve, He delivered the Sermon on the Mount, His most sublime public utterance.

After conflict, trial, and temptation such as no other has ever known before or since, He returned from the wilderness to share with men the divine realization which was His. The physical body of Jesus was as a tool in His hand. Every feeling and emotion was subservient to His dual powers of spiritualized will and dynamic love. He returned to the world to bring to it the new message of redemptive Christianity. Through perfect self-control and an absolute dominion over Himself, Christ Jesus performed works the world calls miracles. The fundamental tenet of His teaching is contained in His words: "The kingdom of God is within you." When we discover this kingdom within ourselves, we shall find it also in others, and in all things about us. *The Path of seeking must be the way of love.*

From the multitudes who surrounded Him, He chose the Twelve Disciples who made up His inner circle, among whom were several who had received esoteric instruction from John the Baptist in preparation for the call from the Messiah. These chosen Disciples were not ignorant fishermen as many have supposed. They were men whose esoteric training and attainments proved them to be ready for receiving and teaching

the deeper truths of the Christian religion.

It was customary in the time of Christ for every rabbi to earn his livelihood at some gainful employment, even manual labor, in order that he might teach spiritual things free of charge. Thus Jesus was taught carpentry and building. He was a practical as well as a spiritual Mason. Paul was a tent maker. In Hebrew eyes there was no indignity connected with common labor. It was the over-intellectual Greeks who despised all manual employment. While revering the beautiful work of the sculptors, painters, and builders, they despised the workers who produced them! Incredible as it seems, the divine Phidias was looked down upon by the Athenian aristocracy. Unfortunately, this blemish upon the otherwise lofty Grecian temperament has been reflected in Greek translations of the Gospels, giving us the impression that Jesus and the Twelve were ignorant laborers. While it well may be that not all were brilliant philosophers in the formal Greek sense, it does not follow that they were not highly cultured in the Hebrew wisdom with its marvelous Kabbala and astronomical theosophy inherited from ancient Chaldea whence came Abraham.

Andrew was the first chosen of the Twelve. He never became one of the innermost circle, but won special recognition through bringing his brother Peter to Christ. It is a wonderful privilege to carry the message of the Spirit to others. Both James and John were quiet and reserved, but possessed an intensity which caused the Teacher Himself to call them sons of thunder. This intensity accounted in part for the martyrdom of James who was the first Disciple to follow the Master to the Cross.

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tionary path. Therefore, we certainly owe it to those of our fellow-men who are placed in our care to see to it that they have the opportunity to retain the sense of usefulness and service which will be of such benefit to them—however long they live.

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## Archeology and the Church

The throne of St. Peter in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome isn't old enough to have been used by the first-century saint, carbon 14 dating shows. Tests on the wood and ivory throne conducted at Rome University indicate that the wood dates from several centuries after the birth of Christ. The amount of carbon 14 in a once-living organism — in this case the wood — indicates when the organism died. Meanwhile, the throne, encased in bronze, remains above the altar in the apse of the Basilica.

—*Science Digest*, 1969.

Relics from early Christian times have always been the object of questioning and criticism. Today the Church is more liberal toward science, less concerned with maintaining fictitious sacred objects. The Shroud in which Christ is thought to have been wrapped in the tomb, found in a garden Tomb in Jerusalem, has fared better than most relics. The Throne of St. Peter, however, as this news item shows, does not pass the carbon-14 dating test. In any case, it seems unimportant that Peter's supposed Throne is not his throne; but no one can help being interested in the ancient history of Christianity, and all that archeology can reveal is more than welcome.

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## Butterfly Makes Friends with Boy

A butterfly has astounded an entomologist by befriending a human.

For the last 20 days the butterfly, believed to be of the red admiral species, has been fluttering around and landing on Gregory Richards, 9, of 21817 Lanark St., Canoga Park, where the boy plays in the evening in the front of his grandparents' home.

Gregory said he first saw the insect, which he dubbed Mr. Flutter, three weeks ago

when he was playing in the yard about 7 p.m.

It flew around him for about 15 minutes before lighting on the boy's hand for about five minutes. The butterfly then flew around his head and landed on it, resting for a few minutes more before flying away.

Since then, Gregory's rendezvous with Mr. Flutter has become a daily occurrence, usually about the same time of evening.

"It's really amazing," remarked G. F. Auguston, manager-entomologist of the Madera County Mosquito Abatement District. "It's not unusual for a small bird to become friends with a human but it's very unusual for an insect."

He said he never heard of such a case.

"I can't understand what attracted the insect to the boy," Auguston said. "He must have been very gentle and they developed a common bond of interest."

—*L.A. Times*, 7-24-59.

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A similar intensity, but softened by divine love, placed John at the head of the Disciples in spiritual attainment.

Philip, being materially minded and spiritually undiscerning, was slow to accept the divinity of our Lord. His inseparable companion, Nathanael, was a mystic and a dreamer. Christ Jesus, at His first meeting with Nathanael, promised that he should see the wonders of heaven; He made it clear, in fact, that Nathanael was to attain through Initiation, an experience that was gloriously fulfilled in his later life. Matthew was the fifth and the last of the Disciples to be chosen separately. The remaining seven were called out just prior to the Sermon on the Mount.

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