

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

THE BOOK OF ACTS

Fruitage of the Ministry

CORINNE HELINE

Acts 5:21-25, 27, 28

And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught. But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought.

But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,

Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.

Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple, and the chief priest heard these things they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.

Then came one and told them, saying, Behold the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.

And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,

Saying, Did we not straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

Peter, the leader and spokesman as usual, answered and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Caesar or Christ, God or man — this is the choice that tests the disciple's inner power and guidance. The majority drift with the tide of mass thought. This is the easy way. The harder but more glorious path is found in

standing alone, if necessary, being true to the highest within. "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."

Acts 5:30-32

The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree.

Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins.

And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

The all-encompassing love of the Christ brought a remission of sins to all mankind; man is no longer bound, unless he wills to be so, by the law of consequence. Repentance, reform and restitution are the component parts of this remission. All men have the opportunity of growing into a new life because of the new impetus with which the Christ has charged the finer envelopes of the earth.

Acts 5:34, 35, 38-40

Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, having a reputation among the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space:

And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.

And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone; for if this

counsel or this work be of men, it will come to naught:

But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.

And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

Gamaliel was famous for his learning and his purity of character. Paul, who became one of the foremost exponents of the new faith, was his pupil. Gamaliel was one of the seven Jewish doctors who was honored with the title of Rabboni. During that historical period with which we are here dealing, there were many leaders who claimed to be the Messiah and who attracted to themselves scores of disciples. Soon, however, through an uprising of the people and the general tumult of the time, they passed into oblivion. That this would also prove true of Christ and His Disciples was Gamaliel's conviction.

In less than three centuries, despite the terrible persecutions, imprisonments and martyrdoms of the holy men and women of God who had been chosen to bear aloft the banner of the new religion, the proud and arrogant Roman Empire bowed beneath Christian rule. Evolution is God's handwriting on the wall of time. Its progress cannot be stayed. The elect, the chosen of God, those who are alert to catch the echo of His greater wisdom and to see new and ever-increasing revelations, are always the ones that go marching on.

The Book of Acts is a product of high Initiateship. It is concerned only with events and happenings in the lives of those who had become supermen. Its inspirational message consists in emphasizing the truth that the way of Initiation is open to all.

Acts 5:41-42

And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

These men made glorious answer to the question once asked of their Teacher as to who should occupy the most prominent seats in the new kingdom. In reply the Master countered with another question: "Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of?" The Disciples demonstrated the ancient occult maxim that only those who are ready to lose themselves shall ever find eternal life.

The Deacons are Chosen: Martyrdom of Stephen

Acts 6:1-6

And in those days when the number of disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.

Then the twelve called the multitude of disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.

Whereupon, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.

But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte of Antioch:

Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.

Stephen was foremost in spiritual attainment of the newly chosen neophytes, termed deacons, that made up the inner group of disciples of the original Twelve. The name Stephen means "a crown." These new disciples had other offices that were of more importance than that of dispensing physical food. Stephen's spiritual power was especially resented by the orthodox thought of the day and was strongly resisted by the Sanhedrin.

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you I'll tell all the people I know about the right way and the wrong way of taking plants from the woods."

"I'm sure he will," the mushroom reassured the violets, who felt just a little better and smiled faintly at Jeremy as the mushroom led him away.

(to be continued)

CAUTION

(Continued from page 103)

Caution, then, is an essential adjunct to our conduct if we expect to make optimum evolutionary progress now and insure for ourselves the most promising conditions possible in future lifetimes. ☆

WESTERN WISDOM BIBLE STUDY

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The seven men enumerated above were chosen, not arbitrarily, but for their spiritual qualifications. Their worthiness had been thoroughly tested and well proven in the course of a certain preparatory period. Stephen was chief among the seven. The "miracles" which he performed in controlling the elements by means of his Initiate-powers and his outstanding healing ministrations were so remarkable that they stirred up the antagonisms that led to his early martyrdom. ☆

BOOK REVIEW

(Continued from page 136)

appeal to the animal lover and give even the most hardened skeptic pause for thought. The cumulative evidence of animal accomplishments here presented gives us added reason to regard members of the animal kingdom with the respect, as well as the affection, that they deserve. To consider them our "younger brothers" is more than the condescending gesture on our part that it sometimes is made out to be. It is, indeed, a privilege to recognize anew that their spiritual origins, to which they still are so receptive, parallel our own. ☆

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

(Continued from page 109)

There are two paths, one of the senses and one of the spirit. Man possesses free will and so can choose the way he will go, nevertheless, every activity of man sets its impress upon the psychic envelope of the Earth. This applies to thought, the spoken word, and the physical deed. If these activities are constructive, their emanations are absorbed by, and become a component part of, the world soul. If, on the contrary, these activities are negative and destructive, their emanations become dark and sinister currents that remain in the astral realms until the Ego responsible for their creation assumes the task of liquidation.

It is only as we realize the full import of the preceding statement that we begin to understand the real meaning of transmutation and its far-reaching significance in relation to our well-being. We are individually responsible for the reaction upon Earth of our every thought, word, and deed. Biblically, this truth is given in Matthew's Gospels: "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."

The transmutative power within man centers in the forces previously referred to as Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition. It is by the constructive use of the image-building faculty united with the breath (currents) and the voice (power) of Spirit that the miracle of transmutation may be effected, a miracle which clears our seed atom and thus immeasurably accelerates our spiritual evolution.

Endowed with these powers, we learn to transform evil into good, hatred into love, darkness into light. Transmutation is the wonder key that opens the door to at-onement with that Light which is the Light of the World. By the magic of transmutation we reach the height that is the supreme goal of earthly life: to "walk in the light as He is in the light, and have fellowship one with another." ☆