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By their fruits ye shall know them.

—Matthew 7:20



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Unreality

**October 1–7,
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Unreality

from the Golden Text

I Corinthians 1:20

Has God not exposed the foolishness of this world's wisdom?

—Amplified® Bible

At this time, many people—both Greeks and Jews—were scandalized by the idea of a crucified Messiah. To associate the most humiliating of punishments with God's chosen messenger was deemed foolish, even outrageous. Yet the cross was central to Christian teaching.

Paul's question about foolishness and wisdom addresses incensed reactions to this doctrine. To him, the importance of the crucifixion is unmistakable: "The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (v. 18). The divine authority manifested by the crucified and resurrected Savior, understood and lived, is not foolishness but true wisdom.

from the Responsive Reading

James 3:16

Where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

Here *strife*, from the Greek *eritheia*, has connotations of the self-seeking rivalry and partisanship sometimes seen in battles for political office. It is one of the nearly twenty "works of the flesh" listed by Paul in his Epistle to the Galatians (see Galatians 5:19–21).

from Section 1

3 | I John 4:1

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

Prophets were known by the content of their messages. This epistle may warn specifically against docetists—those who rejected Jesus' humanity, denying that he appeared in the flesh and overcame it through the crucifixion and resurrection. "Every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh," the writer asserts, "is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist" (v. 3).

5 | Ephesians 6:13

Take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.

"The evil day" referred to either a time of general adversity or a future apocalyptic struggle expected by many people.

The Greek verb translated *withstand* (*anthistēmi*) means to oppose or resist actively, as in the charge "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7).

from Section 3

12 | Luke 13:11, 12

Behold, there was a woman which had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and was bowed together, and could in no wise lift up herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her to him, and said unto her, Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity.

An exploration of Bible citations from the *Christian Science Quarterly*® Bible Lessons

“... a lesson on which the prosperity of Christian Science largely depends.” —Mary Baker Eddy

Jesus sets up a wordplay on the term *loose*, which he uses to refute the synagogue ruler’s objection to healing on the Sabbath. Identifying the woman’s ailment as bondage, he makes the case that just as an animal is loosed from its stall for watering on the Sabbath—a day when even knots were not to be tied or untied—this woman should be freed from her longstanding illness on this very day.

One source notes the theme of shame in this narrative. At the outset, the woman is shamed by her physical condition, and the synagogue official embodies pride and self-confidence. By the end, the publicly honored “daughter of Abraham” is raised in health and dignity, and “all his adversaries were ashamed” (see vv. 14–17).

13 | Romans 12:2

Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

...

Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.

—J. B. Phillips, *The New Testament in Modern English*

Resources quoted in this issue

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Cit. 12: Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Ten Volumes*. Vol. 8, Luke. John. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015.

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from Section 4

15 | Acts 20:7

Upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

The “first day of the week” is believed to have been Sunday—an indication of the gradual movement away from the observation of Jewish Sabbath on Saturday. In the early Christian community, this day had come to be known as “the Lord’s day,” set aside to commemorate Jesus’ resurrection. The breaking of bread, or Eucharist, in remembrance of the last supper was already central to this weekly gathering.

Paul’s preaching was likely a mix of teaching and conversation. *Dialegomai*, the Greek term rendered *preached*, is related to the English word *dialogue*.

from Section 5

16 | II Corinthians 10:7

Do ye look on things after the outward appearance?

Paul’s query recalls God’s guidance to Samuel in his search for a successor to King Saul: “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart” (I Samuel 16:7). Earlier in his letter, the apostle cautioned the Corinthian community, “The things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:18).

What does God know about this?

By Arno Preller

From the October 6, 1986, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

What does God know about this? Do you ever ask yourself that question? It can be very helpful, because there is always an answer. God always communicates to us, and He does it in ways you and I can understand.

A few years ago I was flying in a mountainous area on a commercial airliner. Some time before we reached our destination, we ran into a violent storm. I knew our destination well. It had a small airport surrounded on all sides by high mountains. Landing there was tricky even under the best of weather conditions.

As we were bouncing around in the air, I asked myself, as I often do, “What does God know about this?” My study of Christian Science had taught me that God is good and that He causes good alone.

As I thought about this, I felt secure, literally surrounded by God’s love. I realized God was protecting me at all times, and since I could never be separated from God, I could not be in danger.

Suddenly there was an intense jolt. For a split second fear crowded out any calm thoughts and the ability to pray. Then, almost immediately, I felt God’s presence and was comforted by the thought that only what God causes and knows can be actual in my experience. The plane quickly leveled off and in due time we landed.

When I got off the plane, the pilot happened to depart when I did, and he told me that we had been struck by lightning, which had damaged the plane. He added that it seemed like a miracle to him that he was able to land the plane under those conditions.

Was it, in fact, a miracle? Did God know something about a storm and a plane in trouble, and did He then miraculously

intervene? God knows only Himself and His own creation. Danger cannot be part of His reality, which has to be totally good.

Then, what had happened? Through prayer—and surely there were others on board who were praying earnestly—our experience had been brought into line with what God knew of man’s safety.

Is spiritual reality something we can know? In the textbook of Christian Science, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, Mary Baker Eddy speaks of “spiritual sense,” a sense we all have but must develop in order to listen to God and not be fooled by physical appearances. The unreliable physical senses do not make the proper distinction between fact and fable. To them that storm was very real and frightening.

Through prayer we can gain the most important understanding of all, the understanding of what is real in God’s view. God defines what constitutes reality. If God knows it, it’s a fact, it’s real. If it isn’t included in God’s understanding, it isn’t real; it’s a mistake or a distortion of reality.

To grasp that God not only knows all but that His understanding determines and firmly governs all is deeply reassuring. There is no fear in God, and the real man, who reflects God’s knowing, cannot be afraid. Fear is never part of man’s consciousness.

We are constantly exposed to human suffering, and as Christians we dedicate our lives to its elimination. To do this we must know what is included in God’s understanding; and we *can* know this because as God’s image we reflect God’s knowing.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/what-does-god-know-about-this.