



We are his workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus
unto good works.

—Ephesians 2:10



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**God the
Only Cause
and Creator**

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God the Only Cause and Creator

from the **Golden Text**

I Corinthians 3:9

You are God's garden.

—Contemporary English Version

Paul uses a familiar agricultural metaphor in his message to the Corinthian Christians. As land and crops do not cultivate themselves but are cared for by farmers to produce plentiful harvests, so God's care for His children brings forth fruitful and productive lives.

from the **Responsive Reading**

Isaiah 65:25

Dust shall be the serpent's meat.

In alluding to Yahweh's curse of the serpent (see Genesis 3:14), this prophecy is seen as affirmation that evil has nothing to sustain it but dust—often a symbol of degradation and death. Immediately following these words is the assurance that there will be no destructive or harmful influence “in all my holy mountain,” a reference to God's dwelling place.

from **Section 1**

2 | Isaiah 45:9

*Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!
Let the potsherd strive with the potsherds of
the earth.*

A potsherd is a piece of broken pottery. In biblical times, pottery was used for such household items as dishes, cooking pots,

jars, pitchers, lamps, buttons, and toys. Some broken objects were repaired; others were repurposed as surfaces for writing messages, implements for scraping animal skins, braziers for carrying fire, and so on. Many, however, were simply thrown away. To this writer, one who argues with God is as ineffective as a useless shard of pottery.

from **Section 2**

6 | Genesis 17:2, 5, 15

*I will make my covenant between me and thee,
and will multiply thee exceedingly.... Neither
shall thy name any more be called Abram,
but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father
of many nations have I made thee.... And God
said unto Abraham, As for Sarai thy wife, thou
shalt not call her name Sarai, but Sarah shall
her name be.*

Biblical names were frequently symbolic. A divinely directed change in someone's name indicated a purifying of character, a commission, or a special purpose for that person.

The distinction between the names *Abram* and *Abraham* is slight, the first believed to mean “exalted father” and the second “father of a multitude.” At this time, the patriarch's role as a human father was limited to his son Ishmael by his wife's maid Hagar. Yet God reconfirms his role as father of many descendants with the more expansive name of *Abraham*.

Although *Sarai* and *Sarah* both mean *princess*, her new name is seen to signify a greater purpose or destiny (see v. 16).

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

from Section 3

9 | John 5:19

The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.

By describing his obedience to God, Jesus is countering the Jewish charge that he presented himself as equal to God (see v. 18). “This obedience,” notes a scholar, “is not based on submission to power; it is based on *love*. This unity between Jesus and God is a unity of love.”

from Section 5

15 | Acts 5:15

They brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.

Superstition may have impelled some people to hope for benefit from Peter’s shadow. But one researcher compares their actions to the faith of the woman who reached out to the hem of Christ Jesus’ garment for healing. Others view this scene as recognition of the apostle’s Christliness: “This sentence tells something about the unconscious and far-reaching influence of a man who is filled with the power of God.”

The Greek word rendered *overshadow* (*episkiazō*) also appears in accounts of the angel’s message to the Virgin Mary and of Jesus’ transfiguration (see Luke 1:35, 9:34).

15 | Acts 5:34, 35

Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had

in reputation among all 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.

Gamaliel was a well-respected member of the Sanhedrin, and is traditionally identified as the grandson of the famous liberal rabbi Hillel. In Acts 22:3 he is named as Paul’s early teacher in Jerusalem. Sources describe Gamaliel as his time’s greatest living authority on Hebrew law, and as a judge known for consistently interpreting the law in favor of the common good.

In the case of Peter and his fellow apostles, Gamaliel’s well-reasoned argument and moderating influence undoubtedly saved their lives.

from Section 6

17 | II Corinthians 3:5

Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God.

...

We don’t have the right to claim that we have done anything on our own. God gives us what it takes to do all that we do.

—Contemporary English Version

Resources quoted in this issue

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Cit. 9: Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of John*, Vol. 1. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

Cit. 15: Buttrick, George Arthur, Nolan B. Harmon, et al., eds. *The Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 9, Acts, Romans. Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57.

God's building

By Alan A. Aylwin

From the April 19, 1969, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Writing to the Corinthian church, Paul makes this provocative statement: “Ye are God’s building” (I Corinthians 3:9). If this is so, what, then, are God’s building blocks? Are they atoms or thoughts? Did infinite Spirit create His universe of matter-stuff or of spiritual thought-qualities and ideas?

To the five physical senses matter seems obviously substantive. Every waking moment one is conscious of its presence as his own body, the visible identity of others, and the objects and conditions in one’s environment.

But in the face of all this Christian Science asserts that real substance is spiritual. It affirms that matter in all its forms is a misapprehension of reality, a mesmeric mirage that counterfeits the real universe of spiritual ideas, which God, infinite Spirit or Mind, created to express Himself. With unassailable logic Mary Baker Eddy writes in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*: “Spirit, God, has created all in and of Himself. Spirit never created matter. There is nothing in Spirit out of which matter could be made, for as the Bible declares, without the Logos, the Æon or Word of God, ‘was not anything made that was made’” (p. 335).

Regardless of its obvious logic, is this view of the universe realistic? Can it be substantiated by actual proof? Yes, it underlies all genuine spiritual healing, and was clearly understood and utilized by Christ Jesus and his disciples.

The Master said, “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing” (John 6:63), and he proved the scientific basis of this statement by his control of material conditions. His many instantaneous healings of serious illness were not the setting aside of God’s universal law. They

were demonstrations of a higher law that nullified the effects of an ignorant material sense of law and substance. Jesus knew “the flesh profiteth nothing”—that matter is but a figment of the human mind and neither constitutes man nor affects his health.

Mrs. Eddy’s discovery of the Science underlying Jesus’ words and works has resulted in a resurgence of spiritual healing firmly based on an understanding of the nature of God and of man’s oneness, or unity, with Him. She teaches that God is substance, the divine *Esse*, the essence or nature of real being. He is Mind, the eternal Ego, and His subjective phenomena constitute His creation, man and the universe. Man, then, lives in God as a compound idea comprised of God’s building blocks; and because this idea has unbroken unity with the creative Principle, not a vestige of evil can touch it.

As the light of Truth dawns in thought, and progressively grows brighter, we lose all doubt as to its substantive reality. We find that it satisfies our deepest needs. We discover its healing efficacy. This inspires us to press on to a still higher, clearer vision of the real universe and real man, where substance is seen as the all-pervasive intelligence of God, Mind, and all creation is found to be joyously complete in Him. When this point is reached, we will be able to say with Paul, “For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens” (II Corinthians 5:1).

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/god-s-building.