

Be ye ... followers
of God, as dear children.

—Ephesians 5:1



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**Are Sin,
Disease, and
Death Real?**

**October 7–13,
2019**

Are Sin, Disease, and Death Real?

from the Responsive Reading

Ephesians 5:1

Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children.

Follower, translated from the Greek noun *mimētēs*, means imitator or one who emulates. This exhortation calls for imitating the love and forgiveness of God. A scholar explains: “The imitation of God is the natural consequence of our knowledge of him as Father. So Jesus again and again moves us to the love of all men by the example of God.”

Ephesians 5:8, 10

Ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: ... proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.

Christ Jesus used the phrase “children of light” near the end of his ministry: “While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light” (John 12:36). The Apostle Paul continues this image in a letter to the church in Thessalonica: “Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day” (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

Euairestos, the Greek word translated *acceptable* here, is rendered *well-pleasing* in Hebrews 13:21. In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul uses the same word in teaching how to demonstrate what is acceptable: “Be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God” (12:2).

from Section 1

3 | Jeremiah 29:8, 9

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel: Let not your prophets and your diviners, that be in the midst of you, deceive you, neither hearken to your dreams which ye cause to be dreamed. For they prophesy falsely unto you in my name.

Divination was an ancient practice, an attempt to discern hidden knowledge or predict the future, usually by observing material phenomena. One source lists multiple kinds of divining: “By water, fire, earth, air; by the flight of birds, and their singing; by lots, by dreams, by the staff, or by cups.” It continues, “The custom has been universal in all ages and all nations.... In the Bible the word is used of false systems of ascertaining the Divine will.”

4 | Proverbs 23:23

Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding.

Researchers compare this counsel with Jesus’ teaching that the kingdom of God is of greater value than anything else, as in his parables of the hidden treasure and the pearl of great price (see Matthew 13:44–46). One translation has, “Though it cost you all you have, get understanding.”

from Section 2

9 | Matthew 24:2, 13

Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be

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

left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.... But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

“True Christians,” writes a scholar, “are men and women who hold to their beliefs, when belief is at its most difficult; and who, in the most discouraging circumstances, refuse to believe that God’s arm is shortened or his power grown less.”

11 | Romans 5:20

Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.

At this time, most people considered sin unavoidable. But Paul urges the Christly teaching of grace—God’s gift of freedom from sin. An early commentary describes this gift: “Grace was poured so plentifully from heaven that it did not only counterbalance sin, but ... surpassed it.”

from Section 3

14 | Matthew 15:21, 22

Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

This is the first instance of a woman’s direct speech to Jesus recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Some sources explain that the disciples’ appeal to “send her away” (v. 23)—translated from the Greek word *apolyō*—could also mean free or loose her, a possible reference to the request to heal her daughter. It is the verb used in Jesus’

healing of the woman bowed together (see Luke 13:12).

As a Gentile, the Canaanite woman would have been disdained among Jews as a heathen. Yet she appealed to Jesus as the Hebrew Messiah, calling him the son of David. Her persistence and humility prompted Jesus to commend her great faith—a commendation recorded only one other time, in the Master’s healing of the centurion’s servant (see Matthew 8:10)—and won healing for her daughter.

One writer summarizes: “This woman brought to Christ a gallant and an audacious love, a faith which grew until it worshipped at the feet of the divine, an indomitable persistence springing from an unconquerable hope, a cheerfulness which could not be dismayed. That is the approach which cannot help finding an answer to its prayers.”

To learn more about the *Christian Science Quarterly* Bible Lessons, go to biblelesson.com.

Resources quoted in this issue

RR: Buttrick, George Arthur, Nolan B. Harmon, et al., eds. *The Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 10, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians. Nashville: Abingdon, 1951–57.

Cit. 3: Cruden, Alexander. *Cruden’s Complete Concordance to the Old and New Testaments*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2012.

Cit. 4: Barker, Kenneth, et al., eds. *The NIV Study Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995.

Cits. 9, 14: Barclay, William. *The Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 2. Edinburgh: Saint Andrew, 1955. Revised and updated by Saint Andrew, 2001. Reprinted as *The New Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Matthew*, Vol. 2. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001–04.

Cit. 11: 1599 *Geneva Bible: The Holy Scriptures Contained in the Old and New Testaments*. London, 1599. Reprint, White Hall, WV: Tolle Lege, 2006. Also available at biblehub.com/commentaries.

Seeing through the illusion

By Christie Hanzlik-Green

From the October 15, 2007, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

In the early 1980s, magician David Copperfield performed an illusion that made the Statue of Liberty “disappear.” Thousands of people witnessed the event either as part of the audience or in front of their television sets, and many were astounded to see this symbolic US landmark supposedly vanish.

I first learned about this magic trick as a child from a counselor at a Christian Science summer camp. I’d been spending the summer learning more about my inseparable, relationship with God, and was beginning to make distinctions in my own thoughts between the substantiality of good and the illusive nature of evil.

As I spent the summer living and practicing the truths I was learning in Christian Science, I was able to recognize that pain and fear were basic lies about my spiritual identity. A favorite passage in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* by Mary Baker Eddy consistently encouraged me to affirm God’s goodness and power: “When the illusion of sickness or sin tempts you, cling steadfastly to God and His idea. Allow nothing but His likeness to abide in your thought” (p. 495).

One day at camp, flu-like symptoms left me spending the day indoors while my friends were playing outside. One of my counselors came to check on me, and, being a good storyteller who liked to make people think, he told me about Copperfield’s famous illusion and the secrets behind the well-known trick. I listened attentively as he explained exactly how the magician made the statue “vanish,” and connected it with what I’d been learning in Christian Science. By the time the counselor had fin-

ished, I felt completely well and quickly joined my friends outside.

As I reflected on this experience years later, I realized that what had happened was the result of my understanding the *concept* of an illusion. I simply identified the illness as a mistaken view of my spiritual identity—just as I recognized that the famous stunt had never altered the statue itself.

If we were trying to discover the truth about Copperfield’s illusion, and started from the premise that the statue actually had vanished, we could spend hours trying to account for its loss. Maybe we’d even relive the moment of its disappearance over and over, and become fearful that something like it could happen again.

Armed with the truth behind the magic, however, these concerns become baseless. And likewise, in our own lives, if we correctly start from the premise that God’s love is permanent and cannot disappear even for a moment, we don’t need to spend time fretting about where evil comes from or why it presents itself. Instead, we can effectively prove the all-power of God in our lives through healing.

Since our connection to our creator is a permanent spiritual fact—like the freedom symbolized by the Statue of Liberty—it cannot vanish or be destroyed. As we start from this premise, spiritual healing happens naturally.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to **jsh.christianscience.com/seeing-through-the-illusion**.