



The steps of a good man
are ordered by the Lord:
and he delighteth in his way.

—Psalms 37:23



Christian Science Sentinel

Bible Lens

Man

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from the Golden Text

Isaiah 43:1

Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

In ancient Near Eastern culture, names were significant not only as identification but as *identity*—as a person’s fundamental character and essence. A scholar notes that a name could signify “authority, character, rank, majesty, power, excellence, etc.”

As another source explains, God’s calling us by name affirms that He possesses and protects us, that we are members of His household, and that we bear His likeness.

from the Responsive Reading

Ephesians 4:22–24

That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.

Three instructions are given here—put off, be renewed, and put on. Putting off the corrupt nature was exemplified in the tradition of early Christian baptisms, where an old garment was discarded for a new one. Renewal “in the spirit of your mind” refers to the ongoing spiritual process of inner purification. And putting on a new nature alludes to embracing God’s likeness, “the image of him that created him” (Colossians 3:10).

from Section 1

2 | Isaiah 45:18

For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else.

God’s creation, the writer declares, is designed intentionally according to His will—it is not random or chaotic.

This point is emphasized with four Hebrew verbs: *create* (*bārā*); *form* (*yāsar*); *make* (*āsā*); and *establish* (*kûn*). Each one appears throughout the Hebrew Bible to describe God’s decisive creative activity.

from Section 3

9 | Psalms 33:13

The Lord looketh from heaven; he beholdeth all the sons of men.

God’s watchful care is not a far-off, anthropomorphic viewpoint. Rather, it is His loving regard for His creation, compared by one commentary to the love of a parent supervising a child at play. “As creator and fashioner of every heart formed ...,” writes another Bible authority, “God knows each person.”

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

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 4

15 | James 3:2

If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

In this section of his epistle, the author urges mastery over the words we speak. As a bridle controls a horse, so control of the tongue leads to dominion over the entire body—and to the spiritual completeness and maturity represented by the phrase “perfect man.”

18 | II Corinthians 5:6, 8

Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord:... We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

One source portrays being “at home in the body” as “bearing the burdens of mortal existence.” Two Greek words illustrate the spiritual commitment needed to relinquish this state. *To be confident* (*tharreō*) elsewhere refers to boldness (see Hebrews 13:6). *Willing* (*eudokeō*) is also rendered *well-pleased* (the term God uses to introduce His Son at Jesus’ baptism; see Matthew 3:17).

To be absent (Greek, *ekdēmeō*) can mean not only leaving a home but also emigrating from one’s country or going on a long journey—further evidence of the call for courage and willingness.

from Section 5

21 | Mark 16:9

Now when Jesus was risen early the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils.

Christ Jesus’ appearances after his resurrection are described by two similar but distinct words. Verses 12 and 14 employ the Greek verb *phaneroō*, meaning to be manifested or made visible. His appearance to Mary, however, is depicted as *radiance* (Greek, *phainō*)—the term used by Second Peter for the “light that shineth in a dark place” (1:19) and by the Revelator in his vision of the holy city (see Revelation 21:23).

22 | Romans 8:11

If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

A commentary notes, “The Spirit is not the possession of some elite group within the church. It is another word for God’s life-giving power present through Jesus to all that belong to him” As the indwelling divine Spirit is recognized and welcomed, its power brings vitality to the body, as Jesus’ resurrection demonstrated.

Resources quoted in this issue

GT: Vine, William Edwy. *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words: With Their Precise Meanings for English Readers*. 4 vols. New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1940; MacLaren, Alexander. *Expositions of Holy Scripture*. London, 1842–1905. Also available at biblehub.com/commentaries.

Cit. 9: Limburg, James. *Psalms*. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2000; Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*. Vol. 3, *Introduction to Hebrew Poetry, Job, Psalms, Introduction to Wisdom Literature, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes. Song of Songs*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015.

Cits. 18 and 22: Mays, James L., Joseph Blenkinsopp, et al., eds. *Harper’s Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

What about that word *man*?

By Barbara M. Vining

From the February 23, 1998, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Regular readers of this magazine cannot have failed to note the prominent and consistent use of the word *man* to describe all of God's children. What is the basis for this? In the King James translation of the Bible, in the first chapter, *man* is the term that specifically identifies who each of us truly is as God's, Spirit's, image: "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Genesis 1:27). Yet, some recent Bible translations have attempted to explain who we are by substituting language that suggests a human form is God's image. This would also assume that God Himself is like *humans*. How can we resolve this apparent contradiction?

In answer to the question "What is man?" Mary Baker Eddy, the Discoverer of Christian Science, states in part: "The Scriptures inform us that man is made in the image and likeness of God. Matter is not that likeness. The likeness of Spirit cannot be so unlike Spirit. Man is spiritual and perfect; and because he is spiritual and perfect, he must be so understood in Christian Science. Man is idea, the image, of Love; he is not physique. He is the compound idea of God, including all right ideas; the generic term for all that reflects God's image and likeness;..." (*Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, p. 475).

Man, then, is an inclusive term used to identify each man, woman, and child as the spiritual likeness of God, and not as a limited, frail, vulnerable mortal. Understanding that God's image is not a mortal awakens us to who we actually are—the sons and daughters of God. This frees us from any view of ourselves or others that would drag us down, and enables us to demonstrate in

practical, immediate ways our divine heritage of health, holiness, and life in God.

Man as God's image needs to be understood more clearly by every thinker. Identifying ourselves correctly as God's spiritual reflection, we can break free from the limitations and inharmonies imposed through misidentifying ourselves as flesh-bound mortals. Christ Jesus leads the way for us.

When people have restricted views of themselves, it doesn't allow them to see beyond imperfection, sin, and disease. Jesus lifted thought to a new model—perfect man as the expression of perfect God. And the acceptance of this *real* identity brought transformation to character and healing to the body.

Man as God's image has a permanent heritage of perfection, reflecting all the goodness, unlimited ability, health, and abundance of God Himself. But this perfect man is not a material, human personality clothed in flesh. Man is neither a male nor a female *mortal*. Man—your and my true being—is the immortal, spiritual reflection of the one perfect, divine Spirit, which includes every individual in that one spiritual heritage of life in God.

Realizing the truth of who we are as God's perfect man enriches the daily experience of every one of us—it regenerates and heals. *Man*, then, is a term we should all welcome, and one that should be retained in the language of spiritual discourse and of the Bible.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/what-about-that-word-man.