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Behold, God exalteth by his power.

—Job 36:22



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

**God the Only
Cause and
Creator**

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God the Only Cause and Creator

from the Responsive Reading

Job 26:7

He stretcheth out the north over the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing.

Images of empty space and nothingness serve to highlight God's unique and exclusive creative power, dependent on no other substance or form. "Empty place" is translated from the same Hebrew word (*tōhû*) as "without form" in Genesis 1:2. Elsewhere it is rendered *wilderness*, *confusion*, and *vanity* (see examples in Job 12:24; Isaiah 24:10; Isaiah 44:9).

Job 26:14

Lo, these are parts of his ways: but how little a portion is heard of him?

Parts (Hebrew, *qāṣā*) refers to corners and edges, implying that what is visible is the mere outline of God's creation. *Portion* (Hebrew, *dābār*) signifies speech or utterance. What has been heard about God is barely a whisper of what can be known of Him.

from Section 1

3 | Romans 11:34–36

Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever.

With these words Paul closes his discussion of Israel's place in God's plan of salvation

for all people (see chaps. 9–11). His four-verse doxology, beginning with verse 33, builds on Hebrew Bible foundations—verse 34 echoes Isaiah 40:13; verse 35, Job 41:11.

A commentary notes, "In Romans 9–11 Paul belongs in the tradition of the great psalmists. He starts with an urgent problem; he wrestles with it in grief and prayer; he retells the story of Israel, laying out God's acts from of old and in the present. Finally he bursts through to a paean of praise."

from Section 2

5 | I Kings 18:21

Elijah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

After King Ahab's Phoenician wife, Jezebel, introduced Baal worship to the northern kingdom of Israel, many Israelites attempted to worship both Yahweh and this pagan deity. Elijah rebukes their indecision with the Hebrew word *pāsah*, which means hobble, limp, or become lame.

from Section 3

6 | II Kings 4:8–10

Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread.... And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the

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

wall; ... and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither.

Shunem was a village of the Hebrew tribe of Issachar, situated in the Jezreel valley in Galilee. “Great woman” refers to a woman of rank or riches, just as the term *great* is applied to men of wealth in First Samuel 25:2 and Second Samuel 19:32.

Most researchers consider the “chamber ... on the wall” to be a small upper room, probably located on the flat roof of the house.

Scholars note that accounts of Elisha’s works in Second Kings chapters 2–5 show his willingness to help individuals as well as nations. One writes, “The man of God acts on more than just a grand political scale [He] also acts to address the mundane, personal needs of people living life day to day. That is at the heart of the ministry.”

from Section 4

9 | Psalms 8:6

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.

Most researchers read here a reference to Genesis 1:26, the portion of the record of creation in which God confers dominion on man. Hebrews 2:2–8 cites this psalm to describe Christ Jesus, and Paul uses this verse as the basis of his argument in First Corinthians 15:26, 27: “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he hath put all things under his feet.”

Putting things “under feet” is a common image for dominion and supremacy in the Bible. Psalms 47:3 praises God this way:

“He shall subdue the people under us, and the nations under our feet.” Romans 16:20 has, “The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly.” And First Corinthians 15:25 says of Christ, “He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.”

from Section 5

12 | Matthew 15:1, 2

Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

In Mosaic law, handwashing was a requirement only for priests at ceremonial sacrifices (see Leviticus 22:1–6). But rabbinical tradition applied this demand to everyone, and over time it became a regular practice.

Jesus bypasses concern for ritual with the penetrating assertion that uncleanness isn’t physical but mental. His image of planting (see Matthew 15:13) refers to the instilling of doctrine—and in verses 8 and 9 he cites Isaiah 29:13 in his caution against “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

With his focus on genuine purity, the Master decisively dismisses the Pharisees’ concerns: “To eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man” (Matthew 15:20).

Resources quoted in this issue

Cit. 3: Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*. Vol. 9, *Acts. Introduction to Epistolary Literature, Romans, 1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015.

Cit. 6: Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible Commentary*. Vol. 2, *Introduction to Narrative Literature, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1 & 2 Samuel, 1 & 2 Kings, 1 & 2 Chronicles*. Nashville: Abingdon, 2015.

The Word

The Word
is expressed everywhere—
in the beginning
in the only
forever
now.

Hearing the Word
is very different
from scrabbling
over the rocks
and shoals, collecting words
and more words....

The Word
is beyond speech,
yet closer than thought.
It is often heard when
after an exhausting time
of seeking the perfect words,
we sit quietly—hands open—
and simply
thankfully
listen.

By Kathryn A. Knox
From the May 26, 1986, issue of the
Christian Science Sentinel

The master weaver

To trust the end from the beginning,
the shining, ordered end,
is not to know what shades or shapes
the threads of tapestry will wind to, only
that a masterpiece is in the making.

To forge the colors of my thought
to purest tones—to peaceflame blue,
ascension yellow—is all my part,
since hands more capable are molding,
stitch by Spirit, the pattern of my life.

God's artistry is matchless, and I keep
the colors coming—stainless ivory,
jubilation green—thrilled as the light
begins to sparkle in its depths, trusting,
trusting, trusting the perfect end.

By Christine Marshall
From the October 1983 issue
of *The Christian Science Journal*

From the writings of Mary Baker Eddy

That there is but one God or Life, one
cause and one effect, is the *multum in
parvo* of Christian Science; and to my
understanding it is the heart of Christi-
anity, the religion that Jesus taught and
demonstrated.

Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, p. 25