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The Lord is my strength
and song, and is
become my salvation.

—Psalms 118:14



Christian Science Sentinel
Bible Lens

Life

**July 13–19,
2020**

from the Golden Text

II Corinthians 3:5

Our sufficiency is of God.

Some Corinthian Christians deemed Paul's ministry to the Gentiles inferior to the work of rival preachers—and they had gone so far as to request letters of commendation for Paul (see verse 1). His assertion is part of an entreaty that his readers accept his apostleship. Only God, he affirms, can qualify His children for service to Him.

Sufficiency (Greek, *hikanotēs*) signifies ability and competency. Using a related word, Colossians 1:12 confirms this point: “The Father ... hath made us meet [*hikanoō*] to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

from Section 2

5 | II Peter 3:8

Beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

In this appeal, Second Peter alludes to Psalms 90:4, “A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.”

The author is addressing doubters who have become impatient with the apparent delay of Christ's second coming. He corrects their limited expectations with a reminder of the infinite scope of God's presence and power.

7 | Joshua 14:7, 10, 11

Forty years old was I when Moses the servant of the Lord sent me from Kadesh-barnea to espy out the land;... and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me.

Caleb is describing the events leading up to the Israelites' entry into the Promised Land. Twelve tribal leaders assessed the strength of the inhabitants, but only Caleb and Joshua brought back an encouraging report (see Numbers, chaps. 13, 14).

Although some biblical characters are reported as living several hundred years, and Moses lived to a hundred and twenty (see Genesis 5:5–32; Deuteronomy 34:7), the average life span at this time is believed to have been forty to sixty years. Caleb's undiminished strength at the age of eighty-five would have been considered remarkable by his peers.

8 | II Corinthians 3:18

We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Here Paul contrasts an “open face” with Moses' face, which was veiled when he returned from Mount Sinai with the Commandments (see Exodus 34:31–35). As the Israelites were unable to look on Moses' radiant face, so nonbelievers are blind to the gospel of Christ. To receive the gospel is to remove the veil that obscures understanding.

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

“Beholding as in a glass” portrays the concept of reflection—an idea that, as a Bible authority writes, “was a source of fascination and debate in domestic, philosophical, and scientific circles of the ancient Mediterranean world.” *Reflection* alluded to a range of thought, “from self-examination to spiritual transformation.” To the Christian, spiritual transformation—being “changed into the same image from glory to glory”—takes place as God’s glory is seen.

from Section 5

16 | Luke 12:13

One of the company said unto him, Master, speak to my brother, that he divide the inheritance with me.

This man is asking Jesus to take on the role of a judge who could settle inheritance disputes in Jewish law by using the authority of Hebrew Bible examples. Jesus uses this complaint to emphasize the importance of spiritual treasure over material actions or goods (see v. 15).

17 | Mark 10:23, 26

Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!... And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

The disciples’ amazement likely grew from Jewish assumption that the godly were blessed with riches (see examples in Job 1:10; 42:10; Psalms 128:2; Isaiah 3:10). Abundant material goods were seen as an indicator of piety—a viewpoint upended by Jesus’ declaration. Yet the Master’s re-

sponse promises present blessings (see Mark 10:29, 30).

Jesus’ words represented no mere figure of speech, according to one source: “Early Christians, whose conversions often involved a break with their natural families, experienced new familial bonds (Acts 4:32; I Cor 4:15; Rom 16:13–17). Hospitality and mutual acceptance gave them new homes, mothers, brothers, and sisters.”

from Section 6

18 | Acts 28:4

When the barbarians saw the venomous beast hang on [Paul’s] hand, they said among themselves, No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live.

Barbarians and *barbarous people* (v. 2) were terms used to describe those who spoke “incomprehensible” languages—in this case, those who didn’t speak Greek. Today they might be called foreigners.

The word *barbarian* did sometimes refer to ignorance or crudeness. But the people of Melita (believed to be the modern island of Malta) were thoroughly civilized—and like many civilized people of the time, were superstitious and polytheistic. Locals’ conviction that Paul was doomed probably reflected the belief in a goddess of justice who exacted punishment from the guilty.

Resources quoted in this issue

Cit. 8: *Contexticon of New Testament Language*. Copyright © 2009 by Contexticon Learning and Research, Inc., Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA. All rights reserved.

Cit. 17: Mays, James L., Joseph Blenkinsopp, et al., eds. *Harper’s Bible Commentary*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988.

Our lifeblood

By Carolyn B. Swan

From the May 9, 1983, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

Figuratively, lifeblood means vitalizing force; and literally, God is the life-giving, life-sustaining power of all His creation. Mary Baker Eddy writes, “Man’s individual being must reflect the supreme individual Being, to be His image and likeness; and this individuality never originated in molecule, corpuscle, materiality, or mortality” (*No and Yes*, p. 26). The capacity to live fully and develop productively inheres in the true individuality of each of us.

Jesus’ entire healing ministry shows that divine Life—the same Life that impelled the Master’s unparalleled resurrection—powerfully supports our efforts to prove that man is the spiritual child of God. In every age, deific law supplies Christian disciples with renewal of the stamina and endurance essential to spiritual progress and divine service.

On the human scene today, Christ, Truth, which Jesus taught and practiced, is the vitalizer of purposeful, efficacious living.

The eternal Christ, Truth, reaches us here and now, awakening our faith. To be alive with spiritual faith is to be revitalized, to be whole in a sense deeper than the physical. Shouldn’t our faith unfold, then, from a more solid base than material transfusions, bed rest, drugs, and dietary supplements?

Throughout her girlhood and in her early twenties, a young woman had combated with material remedies a chronic condition of anemia. Whenever she would run out of pills or fail to get specified rest or food, her get-up-and-go would sag. After she began to study Christian Science, she took deep interest in gaining a better understanding of God as Life, the substance of all spiritual

reality. She began to acquaint herself with all the vital properties that issue from what the Bible describes as “the fountain of life” (Psalms 36:9). It came to her that as a spiritual attribute of Life, vitality is immutably intact, never lacking in any way. She daily endeavored to draw into accord with this true vitality, enthusiastically putting her newfound understanding into practice.

Then one day she realized that it had been many months since she had taken the tablets or regimented her rest or diet. Yet she felt strong and energetic. She knew she had been healed. The spiritual rebirth that had turned her from reliance on matter had freed her from mental and physical lethargy.

Many years later, when she met some longtime friends who darkly remarked that they certainly didn’t feel as they did when they were teen-agers, she delighted in saying, “Neither do I. I feel *better*.”

Christ, Truth, revealed through faith and understanding, more than restores our health and vitality. It awakens our spiritual sense—restores our soul. In the continuing baptism of spiritual purification and refreshment that comes through active practice of Christian Science, we experience a renaissance of life. When we are aroused from the lethargic belief that we are dependent on matter for life and vigor, we are ready to prove that God, divine Life, cares for His children. He provides all we will ever need in order to enjoy irrepressible, eternal life. He is the source of our vitality.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to [jsh.christianscience.com/our-lifeblood](https://www.jsh.christianscience.com/our-lifeblood).