To be spiritually minded is life and peace.

—Romans 8:6
Like Jews, Samaritans were waiting for the arrival of the great prophet Moses had promised (see Deuteronomy 18:15). But because Samaritans didn’t accept Jewish Scriptures other than the Pentateuch (the five books of Genesis through Deuteronomy), they had little idea what to expect. Jesus’ answer convinces the woman of his status as the long-awaited Messiah (see John 4:29).

To the Christians at Philippi, the apostle writes, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5, Responsive Reading).

Water from rivers, springs, and rainfall—fresh or “living” water that constantly replenishes itself—was scarce in Judea. Wells and cisterns were necessary alternatives, but standing water from these sources could become bitter and brackish. For that reason, “a well of water springing up into everlasting life” may have sounded inconceivable. But its spiritual sense speaks of the Christ to the Samaritan woman.

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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

Classified as part of a “servant song” in Second Isaiah (chapters 40–55), this verse shows God to be the source of wisdom for God’s servants. “Attending to God’s instruction,” a Bible authority notes, “prepares the speaker to stand strong in the midst of interpersonal conflict and harassment.”

12 | Matthew 16:1

*The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven.*

Why did the Pharisees and Sadducees ask for a sign from heaven? Jesus had just fed thousands of people with a small amount of bread and fish (see 15:32–38)—surely a sign of his divine status. The Jewish leaders likely hoped to downplay that display of spiritual authority by demanding a cosmic event like the miracles of their prophets. God’s might was revealed through Moses, Samuel, and Isaiah, for example—with manna from heaven; thunder and rain; and the backward movement of the sun (see Exodus 16:4; I Samuel 12:16–18; Isaiah 38:8).

Jesus responds with a play on the reference to heaven. They are able to read the sky, he points out, but don’t understand the “signs of the times” (v. 3)—the many healing works that confirm him to be the promised Savior.

14 | I Corinthians 2:14

*The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

Some ancient philosophers divided identity into three parts—physical, intellectual, and spiritual. While the three were believed to coexist in humans, one or another was thought to predominate. Where the physical or intellectual was strongest, the spiritual was lacking.

One commentator suggests, “Unbelievers, whose minds are blinded, function in the natural world and see life only through physical eyes (see 2 Cor 4:4). They cannot appreciate the significance of the Good News, for it is essentially a spiritual message.”

17 | Romans 8:6

*To be spiritually minded is life and peace.*

Thinkers of the time drew connections between sound thinking and peace. Here Paul defines spirituality as the true source of peace, echoing Isaiah: “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee” (Isaiah 26:3).

A scholar interprets this spiritual-mindedness to mean “making it the object of the mind, the end and aim of the actions, to cultivate the graces of the Spirit, and to submit to his influence... to seek those feelings and views which the Holy Spirit produces, and to follow his leadings.”

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*Resources quoted in this issue*

**GT, Cit. 14:** NLT Study Bible. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2017.

**Cit. 10:** Green, Joel B., et al., eds. The CEB Study Bible. Nashville, TN: Common English Bible, 2013.

**Cit. 17:** Barnes, Albert. Albert Barnes’ Notes on the Whole Bible. New York, 1834–85. Also available at biblehub.com/commentaries.
At Jacob’s well
(John 4:1–30)

Here, at this humble water source
a woman of Samaria
encountered a man
from Nazareth

Where she saw him
a travel-weary Jew
thirsty, foreign
he saw himself
the blessed bearer
of a gift eternally fulfilling

Where she saw herself
a scorned outcast
mired in a shameful past
He saw her
the beloved heir
of a fathomless wellspring of blessing

And in the end, of course
his view prevailed,
and she set out, rejoicing—
her waterpot abandoned—
to lead even those who’d scorned her
to that wellspring of the Christ

By Joanne Otto
From the October 2017 issue of
The Christian Science Journal

Who is this man?

Who is this man
asking for a cup of cold water?
Can’t he see the well is deep
and the day unbearably hot?
Doesn’t he see this is not his neighborhood
and we his kinsmen not?

Who is this man
who brings so little to the well,
effecting me to share my dipper?
And now he says if I had asked for his “water”
I could have
a supply forever.

Who is this man
who lifts my thought of water
as not sustaining life but
as Life sustaining me?
His words flow past my resistance,
purging, enabling me to see.

Who is this man
who in quenching “thirst” cleanses a murky heart?
He knows my past, but implies it’s not my future.
Dare I drink from his well, accept his infinite plan,
and find out just
who is this man?

* See John 4:1–29.

By William L. Oakes
From the January 18, 1999, issue of the
Christian Science Sentinel