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Thy word is a lamp
unto my feet, and
a light unto my path.

—Psalms 119:105



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from the Responsive Reading

Psalms 119:89

For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.

God's Word is understood to be both divine utterance and the creative force that brings things into being—portrayed in the Genesis 1 creation account by the refrain “and God said.” One scholar offers this paraphrase: “What you say goes, God, and stays, as permanent as the heavens.”

Romans 1:16

I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.

Paul's refusal to apologize for preaching the good news of the risen Christ, according to one Bible authority, isn't mere pride or optimism: “Paul has discovered in practice, in city after city, that announcing the good news ... is in itself powerful and that the power is all God's.”

from Section 1

3 | I Corinthians 2:10

The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God.

Commentators agree that *searcheth* here implies omniscience, not ignorance. One describes it as “the ever active, accurate, careful sounding of the depths of God by the Spirit.” God's active knowing of His creation is recorded by Jeremiah: “I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to

give every man according to his ways” (Jeremiah 17:10). And Romans 8:27 explains, “He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit.”

from Section 3

10 | John 14:6

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

“The way, the truth, and the life” represents three concepts central to Jewish theology. *Way* appears repeatedly in Hebrew Bible texts—for instance, in the Psalmist's plea “Teach me thy way, O Lord” (Psalms 27:11) and Isaiah's words “Thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it” (Isaiah 30:21). Yet one scholar notes that Jesus “does not tell us about the way; he is the Way.”

Truth is found in many early texts about God as well. The psalms include such affirmations as “I have walked in thy truth” and “The word of the Lord is right; and all his works are done in truth” (Psalms 26:3; 33:4). Jeremiah writes, “The Lord liveth, in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness” (Jeremiah 4:2). The scholar adds that while many people could claim to have taught the truth, “only Jesus could say: ‘I am the Truth.’”

Life is associated with God from the first record of creation (see Genesis, chap. 1). Job asserts, “The spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life” (Job 33:4), and Psalms 27:1 calls God “the strength of my life.”

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

10 | John 14:16, 17

I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth.

Paraklētos, the Greek word rendered *Comforter*, means advocate or intercessor. In some translations it appears as *Helper*—one who aids, counsels, or defends. Jesus’ promise is for spiritual advocacy and enlightenment through all time. Later, First John asserts, “If any man sin, we have an advocate [*paraklētos*] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous” (2:1).

from Section 4

12 | Romans 6:16

Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?

Servant (Greek, *doulos*) commonly referred to slaves in ancient times. Believers would have understood the slavery image as one that described absolute subjection. “Freedom from sin,” notes a scriptural authority, “is to be found only in a ‘slavery’ to righteousness and to God.”

14 | Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.

Sacred songs found in the Bible were written over hundreds of years, and many were part of oral tradition for centuries before that. Psalms and hymns were sung to praise God, to seek forgiveness, to ask for wisdom—and, just as we teach our children

through singing, to convey basic religious precepts.

Paul includes psalms in a list of teaching tools: “Every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying” (I Corinthians 14:26).

from Section 6

17 | Revelation 21:2

I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

New Jerusalem is celebrated not as a national shrine but as the spiritual representation of God’s presence. Its bridal imagery stands in stark contrast to the writer’s earlier metaphor of Babylon as a harlot (see Revelation 17:1–5, for instance)—just as the actual cities of Jerusalem and Babylon represented contrasting characteristics to the Hebrew people.

Centuries earlier, the author of Isaiah 52 wrote, “Put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the holy city: for henceforth there shall no more come into thee the uncircumcised and the unclean” (v. 1).

Resources quoted in this issue

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The ultimate comfort

By Jenny Sawyer

From the November 10, 2016, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*



As I lay on my bed in despair, there was one thing I wanted more than anything: comfort. I felt sad, lost, hopeless. I needed someone to tell me that everything was going to be OK.

Then, to my surprise, I felt something within me rise up and turn on those despairing feelings. Through a power that didn't feel like my own, I suddenly realized that what I really wanted was the strength to face these suggestions of darkness and to face them down.

A few days before this incident, I'd had a conversation with a friend in which she reminded me that the word *comfort* has Latin roots which mean "with strength." I'd smiled at the time and half-jokingly told her that that wasn't really the comfort I was looking for.

But I was wrong. As I lay on my bed, it clicked with me that in spite of the hopelessness I was feeling, I didn't actually want to shove my head under my pillow and pretend that the bad stuff that was upsetting me wasn't really happening. I wanted the strength to think differently—to stand up to the crashing emotions, to the clamor of the world around me, to everything that pointed to darkness, fear, and loss, and to say, "I refuse to believe it."

Now some people might say that's the same thing as putting your head under your pillow or plugging your ears with your fingers while you sing, "La la la!" But there's a big difference between pretending something isn't going on and the kind of denial I'm talking about. To be effective, to heal, the strength to face down darkness has to spring from an understanding of what's true, based on what we know about God.

Depending on the circumstances you're facing, the spiritual facts about God that will be most helpful may be different from the ideas that occurred to me. But two basic ideas that apply to almost every circumstance are that God is good, and that God is all because He is infinite. Think about what that actually means! If supreme good is all, then that must mean that good is law, that it governs, supports, and defines everything about us and our lives. It means good is substance. Power. It means good is unchanging and operates unopposed at every moment. It means that we actually live in the good that is God—cared for, lacking nothing, safe.

This truth is actually the Comforter that Jesus promised to us when he said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16, 17).

Lying there on my bed, I felt despair begin to give way to hope as I realized the Comforter was operating on my behalf, strengthening me to feel more of God's presence and power. And as my own feelings of hopelessness and helplessness receded, I was even able to help a friend who was feeling the same way.

When you stop and think about it, isn't that the comfort we all really yearn for? The comfort of knowing so clearly what's true that we can comfort and strengthen others? It's called being a healer. And I'm comforted to think that I have the strength to be a healer in any situation—and so do you.

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to jsh.christianscience.com/the-ultimate-comfort.