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Thou sendest forth thy spirit,  
they are created: and thou  
renewest the face of the earth.

—Psalms 104:30



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**Bible Lens**

**Soul**

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## from the Golden Text

### Jeremiah 32:41

*I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul.*

A vital concept in ancient Israel, land is referred to hundreds of times in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the book of Jeremiah.

Land was considered the gift of God to His people, to be forfeited in times of disobedience to Him. Jeremiah had long warned Israel of the dire consequences of unfaithfulness, to the point that he was imprisoned as a traitor. A commentator describes this bleak time in Jewish history: “In a matter of weeks, maybe only days, the city [Jerusalem] would be plundered and everyone marched off to exile.”

Now God changes Jeremiah’s message to one of hope: God will replant His people in their homeland. The prophet is also directed to buy a piece of land—an act of confidence affirming that the exiles would return (see vv. 6–15).

## from the Responsive Reading

### Deuteronomy 11:8, 14

*Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command you this day, that ye may be strong, and go in and possess the land .... I will give you the rain of your land in his due season.*

Beginning with a restatement of the Ten Commandments, this section of Deuteronomy (chaps. 5–11) correlates possession of

the land with fidelity to God’s Word. Unlike Egypt’s agricultural dependence upon irrigation from the Nile River, the land promised to the Israelites “drinketh water of the rain of heaven” (11:11). When the people commit to worshipping Yahweh, rain will be abundant.

### Deuteronomy 11:18

*Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes.*

Frontlets were strips of parchment containing verses from the Hebrew Scriptures, which were worn on the arm or forehead to keep God’s law before thought. Elsewhere in the Bible they are called phylacteries (see Matthew 23:5). In this verse they symbolize steadfast trust in God.

## from Section 1

### 3 | Psalms 84:11

*The Lord God is a sun and shield:... no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.*

As the central power of the physical universe, the sun is a natural metaphor for God. Scriptural authorities point out that the image is uncommon in Hebrew Scripture, however—perhaps so that no comparison could be made to pagan sun worship. God is more often depicted in terms of light and glory. Isaiah 60:19 says, for instance, “The sun shall be no more thy light

# 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

by day;... but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory.”

from **Section 2**

## 6 | Genesis 28:12

*[Jacob] dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it.*

In this account, Jacob is fleeing from his brother’s anger after cheating Esau out of his birthright (see chap. 27). It is at this vulnerable point that God confirms Jacob’s place in the line of Hebrew patriarchs (see 28:13–15). One source writes, “At the very moment in which he leaves the land promised to his posterity, he is assured of his return under divine protection, and of the fulfillment of the will of God through him.” Another paraphrases God’s message this way: “Jacob, you are blessed and will be a blessing. I have a purpose for your life, and I’m going to complete it.”

Jacob’s vision takes place about 60 miles (100 km) into his 450-mile (720-km) journey from the southern to the northern border of Canaan. Jacob names the location Bethel, meaning “house of God” (see 28:19). Years after his reconciliation with

Esau he returns to Bethel to build another altar (see Genesis 35:1–7). In the time of Elijah and Elisha, a prophetic community is located at Bethel (see II Kings 2:3).

from **Section 3**

## 9 | Matthew 7:21

*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.*

With the phrase “every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord” Jesus describes those who profess to follow him. Like the Master’s metaphors about a tree and its fruit (see Matthew 3:8–10; 12:33), this assertion confirms that action rather than words reveal a person’s fitness for heaven. The Gospel of Luke records these words of Jesus: “Why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?” (6:46).

## 10 | Matthew 25:29

*Unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.*

The parable of the talents sometimes raises questions about the master’s harshness. Yet it points to an indispensable quality of God’s servants—willingness to use whatever assets they have in His service. “Being ‘good and faithful’ is not mere theological correctness, passive waiting, or strict obedience to clear instructions,” suggests a Bible authority, “but active responsibility that takes initiative.”

### Resources quoted in this issue

**GT:** Peterson, Eugene H., and Eric E. Peterson. *Run with the Horses: The Quest for Life at Its Best*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP Books, 2019.

**Cit. 6:** Eiselen, Frederick Carl, Edwin Lewis, and David G. Downey, eds. *The Abingdon Bible Commentary*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1929; Peterson, Eugene H. *Conversations: The Message with Its Translator*. Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress Publishing Group, 2007.

**Cit. 10:** Keck, Leander E., et al., eds. *The New Interpreter’s Bible: A Commentary in Twelve Volumes*. Vol. 8, *General and New Testament Articles, Matthew, Mark*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1996–2001

# Giving what we have

By Edna B. Williams

From the January 16, 1932, issue of the *Christian Science Sentinel*

A tropical storm had swept over a beautiful garden, leaving destruction and disorder in its wake. When it had passed, the keeper of the garden sought lovingly to render aid to the drooping plants and tangled vines. However, a heavy trellis which had fallen upon a beautiful hibiscus bush resisted her best effort to remove it. A week passed, and still the bush lay prone upon the ground beneath the heavy load.

One morning the keeper of the garden walked among her now rapidly awakening shrubs with a heavy heart, weighed down with a problem to the solution of which she had for a long time unsuccessfully given her best efforts. In an unguarded moment discouragement had been allowed to enter her consciousness, and in its train came self-pity, hurt pride, and resentment, which irritated and tormented her. At this point a turn in the garden path brought her directly to the disabled hibiscus bush—and, wondrous sight, the bush had reached out a branch from beneath the encumbering trellis, and this branch was holding aloft two gorgeous blossoms!

The lesson went straight home. It was seen that the bush was doing what it could in spite of its handicap: it was giving to the garden what it had of beauty at a time when beauty was greatly needed. The clouds lifted, and gratitude and thanksgiving took the place of complaining.

A few days later the necessary strength was applied to the heavy beams of the trellis, and the bush was left free to lift itself from the ground. It stretched out into the glad sunshine, free to do its full share of blossom-bearing.

Like the tender of the garden, someone may be bearing the burden of an unsolved

problem, physical or otherwise, which has defied his best efforts. It is encouraging to remember that, as Jesus showed in the parable of the talents, the servants to whom had respectively been given one talent and two talents were not expected to return to their master an amount equal to that of the one to whom had been given five talents; but all were expected to make the most of what they had received.

On page 195 of *The First Church of Christ, Scientist, and Miscellany* Mary Baker Eddy has written: “We must resign with good grace what we are denied, and press on with what we are, for we cannot do more than we are nor understand what is not ripening in us. To do good to all because we love all, and to use in God’s service the one talent that we all have, is our only means of adding to that talent and the best way to silence a deep discontent with our shortcomings.”

As one practices all that one knows of Truth, giving all that one has of loving service, regardless of the fact that someone else may be able to give more, greater understanding will be unfolded; and the power thus gained may be all that is needed to bring about the complete solution of the problem; for as Mrs. Eddy tells us in *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (p. 162), “... it requires only a fuller understanding of the divine Principle of Christian Science to demonstrate the higher rule.”

To read the entire article, which has been shortened to fit this page, go to **[jsh.christianscience.com/giving-what-we-have](http://jsh.christianscience.com/giving-what-we-have)**.