

Stone Tower Week of Prayer 2023

December 18-23, 2023

December 23, Sabbath Afternoon

Abiding In HIS Presence

Psa 16:11 Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore.

([NKJV](#)) You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

([NLT](#)) You will show me the way of life, granting me the joy of your presence and the pleasures of living with you forever.

([TLB](#)) You have let me experience the joys of life and the exquisite pleasures of your own eternal presence.

([NIV](#)) You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

([ERV](#)) You will teach me the right way to live. Just being with you will bring complete happiness. Being at your right side will make me happy forever.

There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin

to holiness. **That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.** SC 18, 19

“When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. *No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God.*” DA 173

***Spirit of God* takes possession of the heart...**

...the enemy dare not go one hairbreadth beyond his appointed sphere. There is no power in the whole satanic force that can disable the soul that trusts, in simple confidence, in the wisdom that comes from God. – {ML 316.3}

The enemy cannot overcome the **humble** learner of Christ, the one who walks prayerfully before the Lord. Christ **interposes** Himself as a

shelter, a retreat, from the assaults of the wicked one. The promise is given, “**When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him.**”
Isaiah 59:19 ... – {ML 316.2}

"How willing is Christ to take possession of the soul temple if we will let Him! He is represented as waiting and knocking at the door of the heart. Then why does He not enter? It is because the love of sin has closed the door of the heart. As soon as we consent to give sin up, to acknowledge our guilt, the barrier is removed between the soul and the Saviour." 1SM 325.3

Rev 3:20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

Revelation 3:20 (SDABC7): I stand. The form of the Greek verb implies that Christ has taken His stand at the door and remains there. **He never tires of offering His blessed presence to all who will receive Him.**

The door. Not the door of proffered opportunity in v. 8, nor the door of salvation (cf. Matt. 25:10; Luke 13:25). These doors God shuts and opens. The door here referred to is under the control of man, and each person may open or shut it at will. Christ awaits each man's decision. This is the door to a man's soul. **By His love, through His word, and through His providences, Christ knocks at the door of the emotions; by His wisdom, at the door of the mind; by His lordship, at the door of the conscience; and by His promises, at the door of man's hopes.**

The one absorbing aim of the life of Christ was to do the will of his heavenly Father. {ST, October 29, 1894 par. 9}

Jhn 6:38 For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me.

([ERV](#)) I came down from heaven to do ***what God wants, not what I want.***

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do."

John 5:19 (SDAC 5): Of himself. Literally, "from himself," that is, by **His own accord**, on **His own initiative**.

“The tempted one needs to understand the true force of the will. This is the governing power in the nature of man, - the power of decision, of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. *Desires for goodness and purity are right, so far as they go; but if they stop here, they avail nothing.* Many will go down to ruin while hoping and desiring to overcome their evil propensities. They do not yield the will to God. They do not choose to serve Him.

“God has given us the power of choice; it is ours to exercise. We cannot change our hearts, we cannot control our thoughts, our impulses, our affections. We cannot make ourselves pure, fit for God's service.

- But we can choose to serve God,
- we can give Him our will; then
- He will work in us to will and to do according to His good pleasure.
- Thus our whole nature will be brought under the control of Christ.

‘Yield yourself up to Me; give Me that will; take it from the control of Satan, and I will take possession of it; then I can work in you to will and to do of My good pleasure!’ 5T 515

“Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in the life. By yielding up the will to Christ, we ally ourselves with divine power. We receive strength from

above to hold us steadfast. *A pure and noble life, a **life of victory over appetite and lust, is possible to every one who will unite his weak, wavering human will to the omnipotent, unwavering will of God.***" MH 176

"It is through the will that sin retains its hold upon us." MB 61

"Satan takes the control of every mind that is not decidedly under the control of the Spirit of God." TM 79

"I saw how this grace could be obtained. Go to your closet, and there alone plead with God: 'Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.' Be in earnest, be sincere. Fervent prayer availeth much. Jacoblike, wrestle in prayer. Agonize. Jesus, in the garden, sweat great drops of blood; you must make an effort.

***True prayer engages the energies of the soul and affects the life.**" 4T 534, 535
Do not leave your closet until you feel strong in God; *then watch, and just as long as you watch and pray you can keep these evil besetments under, and the grace of God can and will appear in you.*" 1T 158

"I delight to do Thy will, O My God," He declared; *"yea, Thy law is within My heart."* Psalm 40:8. Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, *"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"* Luke 2:49. He had heard the call, and had taken up the work. *"My meat,"* He said, *"is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."* John 4:34.
{COL 282.3}

"All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so **blend** our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its **highest delight in doing His service.** When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us." DA 668

Eze 36:26 (TLB) And I will give you a new heart—I will give you new and right desires—and put a new spirit within you. I

will take out your stony hearts of sin and **give you new hearts of love.**

(ISV) "I'm going to give you a new heart, and I'm going to give you a **new spirit within all of your deepest parts.** I'll remove that rock-hard heart of yours and **replace it with one that's sensitive to me.**

Eze 36:27 And I will put my Spirit within you so that you will obey my laws and do whatever I command.

"Jesus invites us to accept His presence; we are to open the door of the heart, and let Him in. But He will not share a divided heart. *If it be given to the service of mammon, if selfishness and pride fill its chambers, there will be no room for the heavenly guest; He will not take up His abode with us until the soul-temple has been emptied and cleansed.* *Yet there is no need of making a failure in the Christian life.* **Jesus is waiting to do a great work for us, and all heaven is interested in our salvation."** OHC 55

The one law of His life was the Father's will.
{DA 486.2}

December 23, Sabbath

Zec 4:6 So he answered and said to me: "This *is* the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.

Yes; **in giving the Holy Spirit, it was impossible for God to give more.** To this gift nothing could be added. By it all needs are supplied. **The Holy Spirit is the vital presence of God,** and if appreciated **will call forth praise and thanksgiving,** and will ever be **springing up unto everlasting life.** The restoration of the Spirit is the covenant of grace. Yet how few appreciate this great gift, so costly, yet so free to all who will accept it? When faith takes hold of the blessing, there **comes rich spiritual good.** **But too often the blessing is not appreciated.** **We need an enlarged**

conception in order to comprehend its value. – {ST August 7, 1901 Par. 4}

The Holy Spirit desires to lead us...

.. **whatever prevents us from making Christ our entire dependence, is abomination in the sight of God.** – {ST August 24, 1891 Par. 9}

➤ ***When man works, man works
When man prays, God works***

"The ministry of the children of God is not doing but praying; not strategizing, but prostrate before God seeking His will; not clever strategies for manipulating people and events, but trusting in God who moves in the hearts of even His most implacable enemies.

Through prayer Nebuchadnezzar, and today's dictators get converted, Manassah's and today's persecutors repent and kingdoms of Babylon and Iron Curtains are torn down.

We do not engage in ministry and pray for God's blessing on it, prayer IS the ministry from which all other ministries must flow."

-Patrick Johnstone, Operation World

The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power. – {PP 717.1}

➤ ***Faith a Foreign Language***

The Lord reveals His will to those who are earnest and anxious to be guided. The reason for your inefficiency is that you have given up the idea of **knowing and doing the will of God**, therefore you do not know anything positively. — (Testimonies for the Church 3:466.) – {Pr 225.4}

From the soul that **feels his need**, **nothing is withheld**. He has unrestricted access to Him in whom all fullness dwells. {DA 300.1}

➤ ***Process over Results***

He who will give himself fully to God will be guided by the divine hand. As he treasures the lessons of divine wisdom, he will be enabled to make his life an honor to God and a blessing to the world. – {TT 150.3}

God is the treasure-house of all wisdom, and **the humblest worker that depends on this undiminished supply will be able to work the works of Christ...**— {ST August 19, 1897 Par. 14}

Wisdom:

5. In Scripture theology, wisdom is true religion; godliness; piety; the knowledge and fear of God, and **sincere and uniform obedience to HIS commands**. This is the wisdom which is from above. Psalm 90:12; **Job 28:28**.

Job 28:28 (SDABC3): 28. Behold. Job now points his listeners to the conclusion toward which the entire chapter has been progressing. **What is wisdom?** The answer is given—“The fear of the Lord.” **Proper recognition of God and submission to Him is the important factor.** Humility, reverence, respect, adoration, faith—these are **aspects** of the wisdom that **supersedes** earthly knowledge.

One sentence of Scripture is of more value than ten thousand of man's ideas or arguments.. – {3TT 110.3}

Psa 33:6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

(NLT) The LORD **merely spoke**, and the heavens were created. He breathed the word, and all the stars were born.

Psa 33:9 For He spoke, and it was *done*; He commanded, and it stood fast.

- **What if Moses didn't step on the banks of Red Sea**
- **What if Gideon stayed with his 32,000 men**
- **What if the Israelites didn't want to have an earthly king to rule over them**
 - sincere and **uniform obedience** to HIS commands

...If the **aim of the worker is to glorify God**, there will be **abundant channels of usefulness opened for him**, in which he may work with **all hope of success**. God has provided such helpers for him in the heavenly intelligences, that **failure will not be seen or mentioned**. Christ has promised, "**Lo, I am with you always, even unto**

the end of the world.” **If God be for us, who can be against us?** **If Christ is our companion, because we wear his yoke and lift his burdens, we shall gain advanced victories.** **The opposition of men will be strengthless, and their wisdom weakness,** as the disciples of Christ **reach out their empty hands of faith to One who is always ready to impart.** Men may oppose, but no weapon can prosper that is formed against those who are imbued with the love of Christ, and armed with the Gospel weapons. — {ST August 19, 1897 Par. 14}

We need to **look constantly to Jesus,** realizing that **it is His power which does the work.** While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the word of God. **Only the work accomplished with much prayer,** and sanctified by the merit of Christ, **will in the end prove to have been efficient for good.**—(The Desire of Ages, 362.) — {Pr 29.4}

The Gospel Will Make Rapid Progress as a Result of Prayer—**God would work mightily for His people today *if* they would place themselves**

wholly under His guidance. They **need** the **constant abiding of the Holy Spirit.** **If** there were **more prayer** in the councils of those bearing responsibilities, **more humbling** of the heart before God, we should see **abundant evidence of divine leadership,** and **our work would make rapid progress.**—(Testimonies for the Church 8:238.)
— {Pr 50.4}

Standing in the way of God

"The Lord has shown me that **men in responsible positions are standing directly in the way of His work** because they think the work must be done and the blessing must come in a certain way, and they will not recognize that which comes in any other way. My brethren, may the Lord place this matter before you as it is. God does not work as men plan or as they wish; He "moves in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." Why reject the Lord's methods of working, because they do not coincide with our ideas? God has His appointed channels of light, but these are not necessarily the minds of a particular set of men. **When** all shall take their **appointed place** in God's work, **earnestly seeking wisdom and guidance from Him,** then **a great advance** will have been made toward

letting light shine upon the world. **When men shall cease to place themselves in the way, God will work among us as never before.**" E.G. White, Testimonies for the Church, Volume 5, page 726

Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, **will in the end prove to have been efficient for good.**—(The Desire of Ages, 362.) – {Pr 29.4}

December 22, Friday

The battle which we have to fight--the greatest battle that was ever fought by man--is the surrender of self to the will of God, the **yielding of the heart** to the sovereignty of love. *The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up.* {MB 141.2}

Psa 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* fullness of joy; At Your right hand *are* pleasures forevermore.

No one has ever walked this planet that was assailed, tormented and attacked by the devil more than Christ.

When Jesus came into the world, Satan's power was turned against Him. From the time when He appeared as a babe in Bethlehem, the usurper worked to bring about His destruction. In every possible way he sought to prevent Jesus from developing a perfect childhood, a faultless manhood, a holy ministry, and an unblemished sacrifice... {DA 759.4}

Even amid the turbulence of angry enemies He was surrounded with an **atmosphere of peace**. The **beauty** of His countenance, the **loveliness** of His character, above all, the **love expressed** in look and tone, drew to Him all who were not hardened in unbelief. Had it not been for the **sweet, sympathetic spirit** that shone out in every look and word, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did. The afflicted ones who came to Him felt that He linked His interest with theirs as a

faithful and tender friend, and they desired to know more of the truths He taught. Heaven was brought near. **They longed to abide in His presence, that the comfort of His love might be with them continually.** {DA 254.4}

The one absorbing aim of the life of Christ was to do the will of his heavenly Father. He did not become offended with God; for he lived not to please himself. The human will of Christ would not have led him to the wilderness of temptation, to fast, and to be tempted of the devil. It would not have led him to endure humiliation, scorn, reproach, suffering, and death. His human nature shrank from all these things as decidedly as ours shrinks from them... **What did Christ live to do? It was the will of his heavenly Father.** Christ left us an example, that we should follow in his steps. Are we doing it? {ST, October 29, 1894 par. 9}

➤ **What Heaven Witnessed**

Heaven beheld the Victim betrayed into the hands of the murderous mob, and with mockery and violence hurried from one tribunal to another. It heard the sneers of

His persecutors because of His lowly birth. It heard the denial with cursing and swearing by one of His best-loved disciples. It saw the frenzied work of Satan, and his power over the hearts of men. Oh, fearful scene! the Saviour seized at midnight in Gethsemane, dragged to and fro from palace to judgment hall, arraigned twice before the priests, twice before the Sanhedrin, twice before Pilate, and once before Herod, mocked, scourged, condemned, and led out to be crucified, bearing the heavy burden of the cross, amid the wailing of the daughters of Jerusalem and the jeering of the rabble. {DA 760.1}

Heaven viewed with grief and amazement Christ hanging upon the cross, blood flowing from His wounded temples, and sweat tinged with blood standing upon His brow. From His hands and feet the blood fell, drop by drop, upon the rock drilled for the foot of the cross. The wounds made by the nails gaped as the weight of His body dragged upon His hands. His labored breath grew quick and deep, as His soul panted under the burden of the sins of the world. All heaven was filled with wonder when the prayer of Christ was offered in the midst of His terrible suffering,--"*Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*" Luke 23:34. Yet there stood men, formed in the image of God, joining to crush out the life of

His only-begotten Son. What a sight for the heavenly universe! {DA 760.2}

- **What Jesus Felt/Experienced**
- **His Greatest sorrow**

As the Father's presence was withdrawn, they saw Him **sorrowful with a bitterness of sorrow exceeding that of the last great struggle with death.** The bloody sweat was forced from His pores, and fell in drops upon the ground. Thrice the prayer for deliverance was wrung from His lips. Heaven could no longer endure the sight, and a messenger of comfort was sent to the Son of God. {DA 759.5}

Satanic agencies confederated with evil men in leading the people to believe Christ the chief of sinners, and to make Him the object of detestation. Those who mocked Christ as He hung upon the cross were imbued with the spirit of the first great rebel. He filled them with **vile** and **loathsome speeches**. He **inspired** their **taunts**. **But by all this he gained nothing.** {DA 760.4}

- **Christ Cling on to His Father's presence even all His senses tells Him that God has abandoned Him**

Eph 6:12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*.

But he was defeated. He could not lead Jesus into sin. He could not discourage Him, or drive Him from a work He had come on earth to do. From the desert to Calvary, the storm of Satan's wrath beat upon Him, but the more mercilessly it fell, the more firmly did the Son of God cling to the hand of His Father, and press on in the bloodstained path. All the efforts of Satan to oppress and overcome Him only brought out in a purer light His spotless character. {DA 759.4}

Could one sin have been found in Christ, had He in one particular yielded to Satan to escape the terrible torture, the enemy of God and man would have triumphed. **Christ bowed His head and died, but He held fast His faith and His submission to God.** {DA 761.1}

***Victory or Success is not just completing a task... quantity or even quality of what we've accomplished.
It's Doing/Fulfilling what He asked us to do.
It's staying true and faithful to HIM.***

But as soon as Jesus pointed out their duty they were ready to obey. Not only did they tell their own households and neighbors about Jesus, but they went throughout Decapolis, everywhere declaring His power to save, and describing how He had freed them from the demons.

- **In doing this work they could receive a greater blessing than if, merely for benefit to themselves, they had remained in His presence.** It is in working to spread the good news of salvation that we are brought near to the Saviour. – {DA 339.4}

Dr. Scott Nelson' Testimony

- **His perspective on safety**
- **Thank God that His perspective on safety is not like ours.**
- **We wouldn't have existed**
- **Jesus knows that the only way is the Father's way**
- **Jhn 15:5** "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; **for without Me you can do nothing.**
- **Apart from Him, there's no Victory, no Power, no Life...**

Psa 16:11 You will show me the path of life; In Your presence *is* **fullness of joy**; At Your right hand *are* **pleasures forevermore**.

But by all this he gained nothing. {DA 760.4}

December 21, Thursday

The **tenor** of the Bible is to **inculcate distrust of human power** and to **encourage trust in divine power**. – {PP 717.1}

The battle which we have to fight--the **greatest battle** that was **ever fought by man--is the surrender of self to the will of God**, the **yielding of the heart to the sovereignty of love**. The old nature, born of blood and of the will of the flesh, **cannot inherit the kingdom of God**. **The hereditary tendencies, the former habits, must be given up.** {MB 141.2}

Every one will be tested and tried (*will you trust HIM or yourself*) in the way that is the most trying. Men can not trust to their own wisdom. Self-sufficiency, if indulged, will prove a stumbling-block. *Self must die—not to have a resurrection every other day.* The words must be spoken from the heart, “**I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me.**”

- Whenever we fall, it's not just because that the temptation is stronger than what we can bear
- **1Co 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.
- It's because Christ has not been invited in to take full control
- It's because I have not been fully dependent on HIM

The “I” is a very hard personality to kill. “I” rises into life in full proportions if given the least encouragement. Then, confident in their own supposed wisdom, men forsake the right way. Thus *many* who *have been real Christians*, who have known the right way, but have forsaken it, **come under the jurisdiction of**

Satan, to be used as his instruments against the truth as it is in Jesus. – {ST March 17, 1898 Par. 4}

Satan's masterly power will be exercised to prevent men and women from obtaining the crown of life. But when the Lord sees that we will **trust Him implicitly, He will work in our behalf**, and we shall see the salvation of God. The Lord **proves us**, He **tests us** to see if we will make the Lord our **only trust...** **Sharp spiritual eyesight will be given every true seeker.** The Lord bids us, "**Seek ye My face.**" And individually we should respond, "**Thy face, Lord, will I seek.**" **Psa 27:8**

➤ **Let us seek Him more than we seek for answers / miracles**

Joh 5:40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

This is the call of God, and this the appropriate answer to that call. **The Lord wishes us to know Him as a kind, tender Father, who has our interest and happiness in mind.** – {ST March 17, 1898 Par. 5}

- He already know what you need before you ask

Communion with God, personal and direct, is waiting for each one. *Then watch unto prayer, and you will know that your life is hid with Christ in God. Those who live in these last days are to be overcomers by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.* **There is no time now for levity, self-indulgence, and stupidity in the understanding of the work we have to do. Activity and devotion are to be united; work and piety must blend. Sufficient strength will be given for daily duties.** *The lamp must burn; and this is impossible unless it is fed with the holy oil. And the oil which is so precious is efficacious only as its light is shed upon the pathway of others. – {ST March 17, 1898 Par. 7}*

We are now amid the perils of the last days, when many shall be purified, made white, and tried. But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. The warning is given, “Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” O, that the work of reformation so essential might begin! O, that all on duty would stand at their post, saying, “Here am I, send me”! **He who is wise in counsel is waiting for all to see their need of help; and it is abundantly provided; it is waiting for you.** *As a present help in every time of need, God’s presence is revealed. As you call upon His name for help, He says, “Here I am,” close beside you, ready*

to help you if you are ready to be helped. – {ST
March 17, 1898 Par. 6}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means taking away our sins, and filling the vacuum with the graces of the Holy Spirit. It means divine illumination, rejoicing in God. It means a heart emptied of self, and blessed with the abiding presence of Christ. When Christ reigns in the soul, there is purity, freedom from sin. *The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The acceptance of the Saviour brings a glow of perfect peace, perfect love, perfect assurance. The beauty and fragrance of the character of Christ revealed in the life testifies that God has indeed sent His Son into the world to be its Saviour.* {COL 419.6}

It is not only forgiveness for sin, but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*" Psalms 51:10. And again he says, "*As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us.*" Psalms 103:12. {MB 114.1}

The **Christian's life** is **not a modification or improvement** of the old, but a **transformation of nature**. There is a **death to self and sin**, and a **new life altogether**. This change can be brought about only by the **effectual working of the Holy Spirit**. {DA 172.1}

By an agency as unseen as the wind, **Christ is constantly working upon the heart**. Little by little, perhaps unconsciously to the receiver, impressions are made that tend to draw the soul to Christ. **These may be received through meditating upon Him, through reading the Scriptures, or through hearing the word from the living preacher**. Suddenly, as the Spirit comes with more direct appeal, the soul gladly surrenders itself to Jesus. By many this is called sudden conversion; but it is the result of long wooing by the Spirit of God,--a patient, protracted process. {DA 172.3}

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; **He desires only the service of love**; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by **love is love awakened**. To know God is to love Him; *His character*

must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

Jesus came not to save men in their sins, but from their sins. "Sin is the transgression of the law," and if we fail to obey the law, we do not accept our Saviour. The only hope we have of salvation is through Christ. **If His Spirit abides in the heart, sin cannot dwell there.** {RH, March 16, 1886 par. 2}

Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

With untold love our God has loved us, and our love awakens toward Him as we comprehend something of the length and breadth and depth and height of this love that passeth knowledge. By the revelation of the attractive loveliness of Christ, by the knowledge of His love expressed to us while we were yet sinners, the stubborn heart is melted and subdued, and

the sinner is transformed and becomes a child of heaven. God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. {MB 76.3}

December 20, Wednesday

If God Be For Us

There is no safety except in strict obedience to the word of God. All His promises are made upon condition of faith and obedience, and a failure to comply with His commands cuts off the fulfillment to us of the rich provisions of the Scriptures. We should not follow impulse, nor rely on the judgment of men; we should look to the revealed will of God and walk according to His definite commandment, no matter what circumstances may surround us. **God will take care of the results; by faithfulness to His**

word we may in time of trial prove before men and angels that the Lord can trust us in difficult places to carry out His will, honor His name, and bless His people. – {PP 621.5}

Joshua

God's Deliverance (His Power Over Nature)

League With the Gibeonites

This chapter is based on Joshua 9 and 10.

While the **Amorites** were continuing their headlong flight, intent on finding refuge in the mountain strongholds, Joshua, looking down from the ridge above, saw that the day would be too short for the accomplishment of his work. If not fully routed, their enemies would again rally, and renew the struggle. “Then spake Joshua to the Lord, ... and he said in the sight of Israel, Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the **sun stood still, and the moon stayed,** until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies.... **The sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day.**” – {PP 508.2}

“The Lord cast down great stones from heaven:
... they were **more which died with
hailstones** than they whom the children of
Israel slew with the sword.” **Jos 10:11** – {PP
508.1}

(NIV) As they fled before Israel on the road down from Beth
Horon to Azekah, the LORD hurled large hailstones down on
them, and **more of them died from the hail than were
killed by the swords of the Israelites.**

Before the evening fell, God’s promise to Joshua
had been fulfilled. The entire host of the enemy had
been given into his hand... **“There was no day
like that before it or after it, that Jehovah
hearkened unto the voice of a man: for the
Lord fought for Israel.”** – {PP 508.3}

**This mighty miracle testifies that the
creation is under the control of the Creator.**
Satan seeks to conceal from men the divine agency in
the physical world—to keep out of sight the unwearied
working of the first great cause. **In this miracle all
who exalt nature above the God of nature
stand rebuked.** – {PP 509.2}

The Spirit of God inspired Joshua's prayer, that evidence might again be given of the power of Israel's God. Hence the request did not show presumption on the part of the great leader... ***The secret of success is the union of divine power with human effort. Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm.*** **The man who commanded,** "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon," **is the man who for hours lay prostrate upon the earth in prayer in the camp of Gilgal. The men of prayer are the men of power.** – {PP 509.1}

Boldness of Joshua springs from humility before God.

Boldness without humility would be presumptuous.

- **What is prayer and what is the purpose for which it is offered?**
- **It is the expression of your consent to what God is willing and waiting to do for you.** **It is expressing to God your**

willingness to let Him do for you what He wants to. It is not left for you to instruct the Lord in regard to what you need. “Your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him.” He knows what you need much better than you know yourself.

- “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.” Rom. 8:26.
- (NKJV) Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. **For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.**
- (TLB) And in the same way—by our faith—the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. **For we don’t even know what we should pray for nor how to pray as we should, but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words.**

- Living by Faith, Ch. 35 Prayer

Solomon's highest glory

Solomon was never so rich or so wise or so truly great as when he confessed to the Lord: "I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in." 1 Kings 3:7 {9T 281.2}

When man works, man works; When man prays, God works.

"The ministry of the children of God is not doing but praying; not strategizing, but prostrate before God seeking His will; not clever strategies for manipulating people and events, but trusting in God who moves in the hearts of even His most implacable enemies.

We do not engage in ministry and pray for God's blessing on it, prayer IS the ministry from which all other ministries must flow."

-Patrick Johnstone, Operation World

Sufficiency in Jesus vs Self-Sufficiency

"There's nothing **so offensive to God or so dangerous to the human soul as pride and self-sufficiency**. Of all sins it's the most hopeless!" *Christ Object Lesson, p. 154*

Every one will be tested and tried (*will you trust HIM or yourself*) in the way that is the most trying. Men can not trust to their own wisdom. **Self-sufficiency, if indulged, will prove a stumbling-block. Self must die—not to have a resurrection every other day**. The words must be spoken from the heart, **"I live, yet not I; but Christ liveth in me."**

- Whenever we fall, it's not just because that the temptation is stronger than what we can bear
- **1Co 10:13** No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear *it*.
- It's because Christ has not been invited in to take full control
- It's because I have not been fully dependent on HIM

The “I” is a very hard personality to kill. “I” rises into life in full proportions if given the least encouragement. Then, confident in their own supposed wisdom, men forsake the right way. Thus *many* who *have been real Christians*, who have known the right way, but have forsaken it, **come under the jurisdiction of Satan, to be used as his instruments against the truth as it is in Jesus.** – {ST March 17, 1898 Par. 4}

Satan’s masterly power will be exercised to prevent men and women from obtaining the crown of life. But when the Lord sees that we will **trust Him implicitly, He will work in our behalf**, and we shall see the salvation of God. The Lord **proves us**, He **tests us** to see **if we will make the Lord our only trust...** **Sharp spiritual eyesight will be given every true seeker.** The Lord bids us, “**Seek ye My face.**” And individually we should respond, “**Thy face, Lord, will I seek.**” **Psa 27:8**

➤ **Let us seek Him more than we seek for answers / miracles**

Joh 5:40 But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.

This is the call of God, and this the appropriate answer to that call. **The Lord wishes us to know Him as a kind, tender Father, who has our interest and happiness in mind.** – {ST March 17, 1898 Par. 5}

➤ He already know what you need before you ask

Communion with God, personal and direct, is waiting for each one. *Then watch unto prayer, and you will know that your life is hid with Christ in God. Those who live in these last days are to be overcomers by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.* There is no time now for levity, self indulgence, and **stupidity** in the understanding of the work we have to do. **Activity and devotion are to be united**; work and piety must blend. Sufficient strength will be given for daily **duties.** *The lamp must burn; and this is impossible unless it is fed with the holy oil. And the oil which is so precious is efficacious only as its light is shed upon the pathway of others.* – {ST March 17, 1898 Par. 7}

We are now amid the perils of the last days, when many shall be purified, made white, and tried. But the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand. The warning is given, “Let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” O, that the work of reformation so essential might begin! O, that all on duty would stand at their post, saying, “Here am I, send me”! **He who is wise in counsel is waiting for all to see their need of help; and it is**

abundantly provided; it is waiting for you. As a present help in every time of need, God's presence is revealed. **As you call upon His name for help, He says, "Here I am," close beside you, ready to help you if you are ready to be helped.** – {ST March 17, 1898 Par. 6}

Those who achieve the greatest results are those who rely most implicitly upon the Almighty Arm. The man who commanded, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon," is the man who for hours lay prostrate upon the earth in prayer in the camp of Gilgal. The men of prayer are the men of power. – {PP 509.1}

December 19, Tuesday

Psalm 16:8 (SDABC3):

Always before me. In David's eyes, God was no mere abstraction, but a Person actually at his side. Enoch walked with God (Gen. 5:22; see 5T 596; 8T 329–331). Moses kept a vision of God before him (see 5T 652). **We need a consciousness of the constant presence of God.** *Not only will a sense of God's presence be a deterrent to sinning, but it will gladden the heart, brighten the life, and give meaning to circumstances.*

At my right hand. *The phrase, applied both to man and to God, is especially common in Psalms. The position is one of honor and dignity, defense and protection. Here the latter is intended.*

Shall not be moved. See Ps. 15:5. The Christian may well **rejoice** because he is **standing on the Rock of Ages.**

Psa 61:1 To the Chief Musician. On A Stringed Instrument. A Psalm of David. Hear my cry, O God; Attend to my prayer.

Psa 61:2 From the end of the earth I will cry to You, When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.

God is the treasure-house of all wisdom, and **the humblest worker that depends on this undiminished supply will be able to work the works of Christ.**

Wisdom:

5. In Scripture theology, wisdom is true religion; godliness; piety; the knowledge and fear of God, and **sincere and uniform obedience to HIS**

commands. This is the wisdom which is from above. Psalm 90:12; **Job 28:28**.

Job 28:28 (SDABC₃): 28. Behold. Job now points his listeners to the conclusion toward which the entire chapter has been progressing. What is wisdom? The answer is given—“The fear of the Lord.” **Proper recognition of God and submission to Him is the important factor. Humility, reverence, respect, adoration, faith—these are aspects of the wisdom that supersedes earthly knowledge.**

If the **aim of the worker is to glorify God, there will be abundant channels of usefulness opened for him**, in which he may work with **all hope of success**. God has provided such helpers for him in the heavenly intelligences, that **failure will not be seen or mentioned**. Christ has promised, “***Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.***” **If God be for us, who can be against us?** If Christ is our companion, because we wear his yoke and lift his burdens, **we shall gain advanced victories. The opposition of men will be strengthless, and their wisdom**

weakness, as the disciples of Christ reach out their empty hands of faith to One who is always ready to impart. Men may oppose, but no weapon can prosper that is formed against those who are imbued with the love of Christ, and armed with the Gospel weapons. – {ST August 19, 1897 Par. 14}

The tenor of the Bible is to inculcate distrust of human power and to encourage trust in divine power. – {PP 717.1}

*With growing impatience he awaited the arrival of Samuel and attributed the confusion and distress and desertion of his army to the absence of the prophet. **The appointed time came, but the man of God did not immediately appear. God's providence had detained His servant.*** But Saul's restless, impulsive spirit would no longer be restrained. Feeling that something must be done to calm the fears of the people, he determined to summon an assembly for religious service, and by sacrifice entreat the divine aid. *God had directed that only those consecrated to the office should present sacrifices before Him. But Saul*

commanded, “Bring hither a burnt offering;” and, equipped as he was with armor and weapons of war, he approached the altar and offered sacrifice before God. – {PP 618.2}

.. if the will of the human and earthly were held in subjection to the will of God, He would continue to be the Ruler of Israel. *So long as the king and the people would conduct themselves as subordinate to God, so long He could be their defense. But in Israel no monarchy could prosper that did not in all things acknowledge the supreme authority of God. – {PP 621.3}*

If Saul had fulfilled the conditions upon which divine help was promised, the Lord would have wrought a marvelous deliverance for Israel, with the few who were loyal to the king. *But Saul was so well satisfied with himself and his work that he went out to meet the prophet as one who should be commended rather than disapproved. – {PP 618.3}*

December 18, Monday

If God Be For Us

Psa 33:6 By the **word of the LORD** were the **heavens made**; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.

Psa 33:9 For **He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.**

- “A **revival of true godliness** among us is the **greatest and most urgent of all our needs**. To seek this should be our first work. There must be earnest effort to obtain the blessing of the Lord, not because God is not willing to bestow His blessing upon us, but because we are unprepared to receive it. Our heavenly Father is more willing to give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts to their children. But it is our work, by confession, humiliation, repentance, and earnest prayer, to fulfill the conditions upon which God has promised to grant us His blessing. A revival need be expected only in answer to prayer.—Selected Messages 1:121 (1887). – {LDE 189.1}

Psa 16:8

I have set the LORD

always before me:

because He *is* at my right hand,

I shall not be moved.

(**NLT**) I **know** the LORD is always with me. **I will not be shaken**, for he is right beside me.

(**RSV**) I **keep** the LORD always before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

(**TLB**) I am **always thinking of the Lord**; and because **He is so near**, **I never need to stumble or fall**.

(**NIV**) I **keep my eyes always on the LORD**. With him at my right hand, **I will not be shaken**.

David - is the only king who has not faced defeat in battle.

- **Relies wholly upon God for direction**
- **Inquired of God**

God is the treasure-house of all wisdom, and **the humblest worker that depends on this**

undiminished supply will be able to work the works of Christ.

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world. Mat 28:20 **If God be for us, who can be against us?** **If Christ is our companion, because we wear his yoke and lift his burdens, we shall gain advanced victories.** **The opposition of men will be strengthless, and their wisdom weakness,** *as the disciples of Christ reach out their empty hands of faith to One who is always ready to impart.* **Men may oppose, but no weapon can prosper that is formed against those who are imbued with the love of Christ, and armed with the Gospel weapons.** – {ST August 19, 1897 Par. 14}

The **tenor** of the Bible is to **(TEACH)** **inculcate distrust of human power** and to **encourage trust in divine power.** – {PP 717.1}

The contrast between the focus of Saul and Jonathan

The **Philistines** had gathered an immense force at Michmash—**“thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which is on the seashore in multitude.”**

When the tidings reached Saul and his army at Gilgal, the people were appalled at thought of the mighty forces

they would have to encounter in battle. They were not prepared to meet the enemy, and **many were so terrified** that they dared not come to the test of an encounter. **Some crossed the Jordan, while others hid themselves in caves and pits and amid the rocks that abounded in that region.** As the time for the encounter drew near, the number of desertions rapidly increased, and those who did not withdraw from the ranks were filled with foreboding and terror. – {PP 617.1}

Day after day Saul tarried, but **without making decided efforts toward encouraging the people and inspiring confidence in God.** Before the time appointed by the prophet had fully expired, he became impatient at the delay and allowed himself to be discouraged by the trying circumstances that surrounded him. **Instead of faithfully seeking to prepare the people for the service that Samuel was coming to perform, he indulged in unbelief and foreboding.**

Our confidence in God is affected when we lose our focus on HIM

Yet the Lord still cared for them and did not give them up to the disasters that would have come upon them if the frail arm of

flesh had become their only support. **He brought them into close places, that they might be convicted of the folly of depending on man, and that they might turn to Him as their only help.** – {PP 617.1}

Moved by a divine impulse, he proposed to his armor-bearer that they should make a secret attack upon the enemy's camp. "It may be," he urged, "that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few." – {PP 623.1}

The armor-bearer, who also was a man of faith and prayer, encouraged the design, and together they withdrew from the camp, secretly, lest their purpose should be opposed. **With earnest prayer to the Guide of their fathers, they agreed upon a sign by which they might determine how to proceed.**

Angels of heaven shielded Jonathan and his attendant, angels fought by their side, and the Philistines fell before them. The earth trembled as though a great multitude with horsemen and chariots were approaching. Jonathan recognized the tokens of

divine aid, and **even the Philistines knew that God was working for the deliverance of Israel.** Great fear seized upon the host, both in the field and in the garrison. In the confusion, mistaking their own soldiers for enemies, the Philistines began to slay one another. – {PP 623.3}