

December 5

Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord. Joshua 24:15

LET others reverence whom and what they will; we, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we, who have come to know Him through the power of the spirit by

which we are begotten again to newness of life--we can do naught else than reverence our God; and reverencing Him we must trust Him implicitly; and trusting Him implicitly we will gladly walk in whatever way He may mark out for us; and thus trusting and thus walking we are content, whatever lot we see, since 'tis His hand that leadeth

us. And let us be assured that, following the true Shepherd after this manner, we shall ultimately reach the heavenly fold. In these assurances we have joy and peace and blessing of heart, even in the house of our pilgrimage, before we reach the heavenly city. Z. '01-284 R2873:1

R2872 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

QUARTERLY REVIEW--SEPT. 29

Golden Text:--"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting, upon them that fear him."--Psa. 103:17

OUR TEXT is a forceful reminder of our studies in the past quarter. It was a lack of reverence for the Lord that permitted mother Eve to be deceived and to become the first transgressor. It was a lack of reverence for the Lord that led our father Adam into disobedience, into practical suicide, because of his love for Eve, and because he had not yet learned the proper reverence for God which would have led him to be obedient and to trust the results of Eve's disobedience to divine wisdom. It was lack of reverence for the Lord which operated in Satan to an evil ambition, and thus to his fall. It was lack of reverence for the Lord and for his rules of government that permitted the angels of the first dispensation to leave their own condition, and thus to get into sin with humanity. It was a lack of reverence for the Lord on the part of the world in general that caused the world to be full of violence and ready for destruction in the flood.

It was a proper reverence for the Lord that controlled Noah and his family, and kept them separate from the evil of their time, and that brought to them ultimately the divine blessing and preservation through the flood. It was a proper reverence for the Lord that enabled Abraham to forsake home and country in response to a divine promise, and that guided him throughout his pilgrimage and kept him separate from the Sodomites and the evil influences of that time. Similarly, on Isaac's part, it was reverence for the Lord which kept him in his father's footsteps; and we have just seen how fully Jacob was imbued with this reverence for divinity, and for all the gracious promises by which the Lord represented himself to him. We have seen the hand of the Lord with all those who had this rev-

erence, and that even though they passed through numerous and severe trials, difficulties, etc., they were not forsaken, but upheld.

On the other hand, we have seen Lot's insufficiency of reverence, which permitted him to associate with evil-doers, and which ultimately brought upon him a share of their trouble. We have seen Ishmael's lack of reverence, and Esau's lack of reverence, and how these though not injured of the Lord, nevertheless missed greater blessing which a different course might have brought to them.

The lesson for us is that which Joshua expressed to Israel later, saying, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15.) ^[1] Let others reverence whom and what they will; we, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, we, who have come to know him through his Word, and through his providences, and through the power of the spirit by which we are begotten again to newness of life--we can do naught else than reverence our God; and reverencing him we must trust him implicitly; and trusting him implicitly we will gladly walk in whatever way he may mark out for us; and thus trusting, and thus walking we are content, whatever lot we see, since 'tis his hand that leadeth us. And let us be assured that following the true Shepherd after this manner, we shall ultimately reach the heavenly fold. In these assurances we have joy and peace and blessing of heart, even in the house of our pilgrimage, before we reach the heavenly city.

^[1] Dec. 5 Manna, Joshua 24:15

R4780 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)

THE WISE CHOICE

"Choose ye this day whom ye will serve; as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."--Joshua 24:15.

THE Children of Israel had crossed Jordan. Moses was dead and Joshua was their Leader. They were having no difficulty at that time; but Joshua thought that it was proper just then for them to make their decision--proper for them to decide whether or not they would be faithful to the Lord, or would allow themselves to be led away by the idolatry of the people who lived in Canaan. Joshua had called them together and had recounted to them the Lord's blessings and favor which they had thus far enjoyed, and then expressed himself in the grand and noble sentiments of our text.

So, dear friends, we who realize that the Lord has been blessing, guiding and sustaining us in the past, should come to a full, positive *decision* as respects our course of life. The very fact of coming to a positive decision is a great blessing and a great help in the formation of character. Every time we come to a wise decision on any question, it strengthens mind and character, and makes us much more ready for another test--along some other line, perhaps.

We well recognize the fact that the entire consecration which the Christian makes, leaves nothing out; but we need to have some touchstone, something which will enable the mind to reach a decision quickly, and this touchstone should be *God's will*, so that to perceive the Lord's will on any subject would be to settle it without any temporizing. Again, it is highly proper that we should reiterate our consecration, and thus make it prominent before others.

For instance, if this were New Year's Day, and we were at a testimony meeting, there would be nothing wrong in saying, "Whatever any one else may do, I acknowledge God and will serve him!"--not as a new vow, but as a fresh acknowledgment of the consecra-

tion Vow we have already taken.

We are to recognize the difference between making a new covenant every day, and the daily renewing of our covenant; the one would be an impropriety; the other would be proper. If we have made a binding covenant for life, we should no more think of breaking it than would a man who had leased a house or sold it.

Every day we should renew our covenant with the Lord--renew it and make it fresh in our minds, thus showing that there has been no change on our part; that we are still in the same attitude. This is the same thought as was in the making of our consecration; we are dead with Christ--"Ye are not your own, ye are bought with a price." We are exhorted to make this review of our lives and renewal of our consecration daily; to continue to keep this before our minds and hearts; to render our sacrifice to the Lord. Thus we are baptized by baptism into his death; and this baptism continues just as it was with our Lord. He had made his consecration and so it had to be completed; so it is with us; our vow, our covenant is unto death.

If the Lord's consecrated people could be brought to the point where the chief aim in life, the burden of all their prayers, would be that they might have a larger measure of the Spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of the Truth, the spirit of Christ, the spirit of a sound mind, what a blessing it would mean! If then they should wrestle with him until the breaking of day, their hold upon him would be sure to bring the desired blessing. The Lord reveals himself for the purpose of giving this blessing; but he withholds it until we learn to appreciate and desire it.

DAILY CHOOSING THE
BETTER PART

R3073 "We...are in danger from the besetments of our own flesh and from the besetments of sin abounding and from the Adversary--in danger of making other gods, and turning our hearts away from the proper center of their affections, either to the god of wealth or the god of fame or the lesser gods of the family circle and home, or to the most ignoble of all, self...

Our choosing of life and blessing and righteousness and God are not merely the choice of a moment; the daily trials and testings of life prove whom we love and whom we serve. Let us examine our hearts and our daily course of life, and note for what we are spending life's energies, what fills our affections, what "satisfies our longings as nothing else could do." To the extent that we find the Lord the center of our lives, our hopes, our aims, and his will the ruling law in every affair of life, in that same proportion we find joy and peace and blessing and growth spiritually... We are choosing the better part..."

R5630 LETTER: "Realizing that I must draw nearer to God to be kept in this hour of trial now upon the whole world, I have prayed more; and I find the following form very helpful; I therefore call it

"THE PRAYER OF THE
CONSECRATED":

"Dear Heavenly Father, reverently, and in the name of Jesus, I approach Thy Throne of Grace to renew my consecration vows *today*. Not content with having made my consecration years ago, nor even yesterday, I renew it *today*, and present to Thee my body and all its powers, my heart and all its affections. I give to Thee, willingly and gladly, *everything* I possess, to be wholly Thine--*today*. I would not withhold from Thee one single thing.

"Gracious and loving Father and dear Lord Jesus, come in all Your fulness into my heart and life; take full possession and *reign there* supreme, without a rival *today*. Dear Lord Jesus, my glorious High Priest and Head to Thy Body, the Church, continue to offer me *today* upon God's holy altar of sacrifice, and until the sacrifice is completed in death."

I have found that doing this daily I have been greatly enriched and blessed spiritually.

Yours, in His love and service, W. J. THORN. Isa. 41:10; Num. 6:24-26.

R1281 "Spiritually, we have feasted on the bounties of divine favor, while in things temporal, under whatsoever circumstances we have been placed, having the assurance that *all things* work together for good to them that love God. We have realized that godliness with contentment is great gain, having promise of the life that now is [so long as God wills to have us remain here], and also of that which is to come. Wherefore, we can and do most heartily "offer unto God thanksgiving." And shall we not render unto him, not only the praise of our lips, but also the incense of truly consecrated lives, throughout the year upon which we are just entering. Dearly beloved, consecrate yourselves anew to the Lord today -- not in

the sense of invalidating the consecration made once for all, possibly many years ago, but rather in the sense of re-affirming and emphasizing that covenant. Tell the dear Lord that you consider yourselves entirely his, and that it is still your purpose to keep your all upon the altar of sacrifice during this new year and until it is wholly consumed in his service. Then let us proceed with studious care from day to day these, our vows of full consecration, unto the Most High...

HOW SHALL WE PAY
OUR VOWS?

This is an important question with all the truly consecrated, and one surely of paramount importance. Let us consider, then, that when we consecrated ourselves fully to the Lord, we thereby signified that we would hold nothing back for self. That consecration included all our possessions, our time, our physical energies and our mental attainments. And it implied the sacrifice of all our former earthly ambitions, hopes and aims, so that we should no longer pursue them to any extent. This, and nothing less, is what our vow of full consecration signifies. But it signifies, further, that these possessions or personal qualifications, which the Lord terms talents, are not only to be released from the service of the worldly ambitions, etc., but that they are to be so released, not for aimless inactivity, but for the purpose of being utilized in an opposite direction--in the service of God, of his plan and of his children...

After providing things decent and honest for ourselves and those dependent upon us, let us judiciously appropriate our talents to what we profess to consider the chief business of life. Here are the testing points of true loyalty and devotion. Let us ponder them well, and not lightly set them aside....

None are so clear in their apprehension and appreciation of truth as those who are fully enlisted in its service. Let all who would run the race successfully look well to their zeal and activity in the Lord's work. If we bury our one or our many talents under a weight of worldly cares and encumbrances which might be avoided or set aside; if we bury them under worldly ambitions for either self or family--whether this be by wasting consecrated time upon science, philosophy, music or art; or upon business, politics or pleasures; or in pampering pride and appetite--then as unfaithful servants we will sooner or later go into outer darkness..."

R4348 "Whoever has not seen his need of making resolutions, making vows to the Lord, has not recognized the first principle of Christian development. He who finds from the Enemy's attack where his wall is weakest, and who then repairs the weak places as quickly as ascertained, does so by resolution to the Lord--by vows. He who has not discovered any weaknesses in his character is duly blind and "cannot see afar off." He who has not attempted to correct his weaknesses by resolutions to the Lord, vows to the Lord, has not yet begun that character development which must be completed before he can be pronounced an overcomer."

R1485 "Be sober, be vigilant, because your

adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. Whom resist [by standing] steadfast in *the faith*, knowing that similar afflictions are being accomplished in your brethren in the world."--1 Pet. 5:8.

The more we realize that we are in the harvest --the winnowing and testing time--the more we should each seek to follow the Apostle's advice, "Make straight paths for your feet lest that which is lame be turned out of the way." Each of us has learned some of his weak or vulnerable points of character, and each should seek, not only to strengthen these weak points but also specially to fortify himself against temptations and besetments of the adversary upon those weakest points, lest he thereby be turned out of the straight and narrow way.

This means a circumspection of your affairs in general: home affairs, business affairs, all should be ordered and systematized with a view to protect your own weak points to the Lord's praise and to the good of yourself and others. See that your heart is fully given up to the King, and then, with the wisdom which he will supply those who seek it, divide your time and talents among your various duties so as to spend and be spent more to the honor of the Lord and to the service of his truth...

While we did not fall last year, some did. Our trials and testings may be more severe during the year beginning, and unless we feel our own insufficiency and look to our Master continually, we shall be liable to depart from humility, to become puffed up with pride and haughtiness, the sure precursors of a fall. And again, if we look merely to our own weaknesses we will become so discouraged as to yield readily to the adversary's assaults. Our only safe position will be to feel humble and to realize our insufficiency, but to trust implicitly and always to him who has promised that he will never leave us, nor forsake us. (If there be any breach between us, if any leaving and forsaking, it will be on our part, not his.) We can safely trust our all to him who assures us that "All things shall work together for good to them that *love God* (with all their hearts)--to those called according to his purpose." We need have no fear of the ultimate results, so long as we find *our wills* fully submitted to our Master's will, and our hands and thoughts filled with his work. We may have full confidence, and may rest in peace upon the promise. "He will not suffer you to be tempted *above that ye are able*, but will, with the temptation, provide also a way of escape."

(Heb 12:13 KJV) "Make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."

R4348 "We are to seek to overcome the lameness, and, to do so, are not only to pray, "Abandon us not in temptation," but are to seek to avoid the temptations in all ways. How do we do this? We answer, by the exercise of our wills, or determination-- by mental resolutions; or, in other words, by making vows or solemn promises to the Lord respecting our determinations to take the proper course."

R2950 (From Harvest Truth Database V8.0 2013)
DECISION IN CHARACTER BUILDING

*How long halt ye between two opinions?
If the Lord be God follow him, but, if Baal, follow him."--I Kings 18:21.*

MULTITUDES are in an undecided condition of mind, not only as respects the worship of God, and as respects their faith, but also in regard to the common affairs of life. They are not devoid of good intentions, good resolutions, hopes and ambitions; but these are rather vague and shapeless. Their thoughts, their intentions, have not crystalized. As a result they are making little progress and accomplishing little good, either in or for themselves or others. Even worldly people who manifest great decision in business and social and moral matters lack decision in religious affairs.

The poet has truly said, "Life is real, life is earnest; and the grave is not the goal;" but the difficulty with many is that they have not even so good a goal as the grave would be. If they could even have that before their mind as an end; if they could even think of how they would wish to terminate their lives eventually, and leave some luminous foot prints in the sands of time that would be helpful to others and an honor to themselves, it would be very much better, indeed, than to pass through life with no aim, no wish, no thought, except to eat, to drink, to sleep, to gratify earthly tastes. We believe that it is even much better that men set their ambition upon money or fame or some other object, than to have no fixed purpose before them in life; yet money and fame and such matters end with the grave, and the Lord's consecrated people, inspired by new hopes, new aims, new ambitions, beyond the grave, have much advantage every way over all others.

Nevertheless, even those who have been so highly favored of God that the eyes of their understanding have been opened,--that they have caught glimpses of the glorious things in reservation for the Lord's faithful, are frequently lax and measurably indifferent to these wonderful things which should induce them to zeal and inspire them with courage and strength. What is the difficulty? Why do they not accomplish more? The answer frequently should be that it is because of indecision. They should decide promptly, but they hesitate,--holding important questions in abeyance, and continuing to balance and to weigh matters which they already determined are *right*. They halt between two opinions; they hesitate to take the Lord's Word fully and entirely, and to walk boldly forward in the right direction, even when they clearly discern the footsteps of Jesus and the proper course for them as his followers. As one point after another comes up and is thus set aside indefinitely, the whole Christian course of that individual is stagnated and fresh duties and privileges as they appear, are stopped in the way by the muddle of mind which unsettled questions of years produce; thus indecision has more or less hindered them all their lives. By and by there is such an accumulation of undecided points and matters that they feel the case is almost hopeless, become discouraged, grow cold, indifferent, and perhaps fall completely away from the faith and its service.

For all such our text is specially appropriate. We want to decide, first of all, who is our Master, who is our God; then, having concluded, we want to decide promptly that his servants we should and will be. The Master warned us of the impossibility of any other course being satisfactory, saying, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Attempt to do so will make us and all with whom we are particularly identified unhappy. Almost everyone will acknowledge that there is a Supreme Being, and that it is the duty of his creatures, to serve and obey him. The whole question then should be, not as to obedience and service, but merely, Who is our God? We see many of the worshipers of Baal, Mammon, energetic in their service, and we should feel ashamed if we who, by the grace of God, know the true God and his gracious plan, are not as zealous, as persevering, as energetic, as are the servants of error. "What manner of persons ought we to be?" We ought most positively to be committed to that which we believe to be the truth, and we ought to be most zealous in its service.

A part of the mistake is in the exercise of a wrong kind of caution;--proper enough in respect to earthly affairs, in which we have to guard our interests against unscrupulous fellows; but out of place, impedimenta, in our dealings with God. This wrong caution says,--

Do nothing, until you see how it will all end;--I must walk by mental sight at least. But this kind of worldly wisdom will not do, in dealing with God. He makes the rules by which we may approach him and progress in his favor. One of his rules is, that every item of truth we learn must be accepted and acted upon before we are ready for more. They that receive the truth in the love of it, will surely serve it with all the decision they can command and acquire;--piece by piece, as they receive it. They who on receiving truth balance it and ponder long whether it will not ultimately cost too much, thus give evidence that their love for the *truth* is not great enough,--that it is mixed with selfishness. Such must cultivate love of the truth until it outweighs all other things, else they will not be fit for the Kingdom. The Lord's charge against those who are about to fall in the present testing time, is that,--They received not the truth in the *love of it*.--2 Thes. 2:10-12.

"CHOOSE YE THIS DAY"

After Israel had reached the promised land, Joshua sought to bring them to such a point of decision. He called them together, recited to them the Lord's favor and blessing enjoyed thus far, and expressed himself in noble language, saying, "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve;...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." (Josh. 24:15.) So, dear friends, we who realize that the Lord has been blessing, guiding and sustaining us in the past, should come to a full, positive *decision* as respects our course of life. We should not be content for one moment longer to go along indefinitely, serving whiles the Lord, and whiles Mammon (selfishness). We should settle the matter at once, and for all time, that we will be the Lord's.

The very fact of coming to a positive decision is a great blessing, and a great help in the formation of character. Every time we come to a decision, on any question, it strengthens mind and character and makes us that much more ready for another test--along some other line, perhaps. One decision for the right prepares the way for others in the same direction, just as hesitancy, indecision upon one point prepares us for hesitancy upon all points, and more or less stops our Christian progress and character-building.

We are not advocating rashness--the doing of something without a reasonable, proper amount of consideration. But we are urging upon the Lord's people the cultivation of promptness, decision of mind, in respect to questions we have sufficiently examined. Some things may of necessity require pondering, but many things in life require no such delay to reach a proper decision. The majority of the questions which present themselves before the bar of our minds could be decided in a moment; and the less time we take in reaching a decision on such problems the better for us, and for the upbuilding of proper character in this regard.

We need to have some touchstone, as it were, some matter which will help us to decide, which will enable the mind to reach a decision quickly. This touchstone should be *God's will*; so that to perceive the Lord's will in respect to any question would be to settle it--as quickly as discerned. There should be no thought of opposing the divine will. There should be no temporizing, no haggling to see what a thing would cost, once we discern that it is the Lord's will. There should be no further question about the rejection of any matter which we discern to be contrary to the Lord's will; no matter how enticing, no matter how much of profit or of advantage there may be connected therewith.

Ability to decide quickly, and to decide always on the right side, what the Lord's will is, requires some experience and discipline; but the sooner we begin the sooner we will become proficient; the more energetically we set ourselves to know the Lord's will and to do it, and to show him by our promptness that we delight to do his will, the better and the quicker will we find our characters established on proper lines.

There are many gods presenting their claims to us, and seeking our reverence. To some, perhaps to the vast majority, self is the most prominent idol and false god; to others it is fame; to others the fami-

ly; to others wealth. But all these false gods are more or less related, and the one name, Mammon, selfishness, is appropriate to them all. It requires not a great deal of discernment to decide that none of these ambitions is worthy of us, and that the worship of our hearts and the sacrifices of life should all be to the true God.

TO-DAY IF YOU SHOULD HEAR HIS VOICE, OBEY!

The Scriptures appeal to us along these lines of prompt decision, and it is because these appeals are neglected, not obeyed, that many of the Lord's people are so lean and so undeveloped, both in knowledge and in character. Mark the appeal, "Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts." The suggestion is that the matter be not put off for another day. We cannot tell how distinctly we will hear the voice of the Lord's providence speaking to us tomorrow. On the contrary, we know that even as we may become accustomed to an earthly call, or an earthly alarm, so that by and by it would cease to awaken us, so our spiritual ears become accustomed to the important messages reaching them from the Lord's Word. They will have less and less weight and influence, and will become less and less helpful to us in proportion as we neglect them and fail to act upon them. Does not this explain the fact that some who have newly come into the truth, are farther along both in faith and good works than some whose ears were blest long ago?

We are still in the beginning of a new year and a new century, and now is a favorable time for us to make good resolutions. One of these should surely be that henceforth we will cultivate decision of character; --that when we hear the voice of the Lord we will respond promptly. So that when we see a work of the Lord, which we have the privilege of attending to, it will be performed not only willingly and well, but also speedily. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver"--a prompt giver;--not merely as respects money matters, as this text is generally applied, but in respect to all of our little offerings and sacrifices to him and for his cause' sake. If we would be pleasing to the Lord and grow in his favor and in nearness to him, we must bring our hearts more and more into the condition that he approves, that he loves, viz., heartiness, cheerfulness, promptness in every service we may render. The trouble with many Christians is, that they have not thoroughly learned what a great privilege we of this Gospel age enjoy,--in being permitted to present our little sacrifices and self-denials to the Lord, under the assurance that our imperfect works shall be acceptable through Christ to God.

We have all noted with pleasure the wonderful success of that wonderful Apostle Paul. It is well, therefore, that we shall note that one of the chief elements contributing to the success of his apostleship was this element of character--decision. Mark how this

R4467-4468 "Let us all remember that all of the Lord's special dealings with his people during this Gospel Age are with a view to developing them in character, not only good character, but fixed character. It is not sufficient that we accept Christ, nor sufficient that we should preach him to others. To be fit for the heavenly Kingdom we must develop characters in harmony with our Lord--gentle, yet firm; sweet, yet strong. This is signified in the terms of our discipleship. We are to copy our Teacher, who is also our Redeemer. We are to let his light shine. It is important that we see this fact. The difficulty apparently with the majority of people is that they do not see and do not understand the purpose of life; hence valuable opportunities and precious lessons are wasted upon them.

Mr. Marden has recently said, "I know a man whose accomplishments have been the marvel of all who knew him, who in his boyhood made the resolution: 'Let every occasion be the great occasion, for you cannot tell when fate may be taking your measure for a larger place.' If he was in school, he kept thinking, 'I must not skip the hard problems, for they may rise up in my manhood and testify against my faithfulness as a

boy, and may defeat me. I must see an opportunity in every lesson and cultivate a habit of overcoming, a habit of faithfulness and accuracy."

This is merely an elaboration of what the Good Book says, "Do with thy might what thy hand findeth to do, for there is neither wisdom nor knowledge nor device in the grave whither thou goest." And again, "He that is faithful in that which is least will be faithful also in that which is greater."

Difficulties in the way would not prove that it is not the right way. Bunyan's Pilgrim, in traveling toward the heavenly city, found the Hill of Difficulty in his way. And our Lord forewarned all who would walk in his steps that their pathway must, of necessity, be full of tribulation--testings. The reward is to them that overcome. There could be no overcoming unless there were difficulties.

HOW TO DECIDE THE LORD'S WILL...

We find that the rule which George Mueller tells us he followed is so nearly the one which we follow ourself that we take pleasure in quoting it:--

[1] "I seek in the beginning to get my heart in such a state that it has no will of its

quality of his shines out in the statement, "This one thing I do," etc. He had only one real aim or purpose in life, toward which he was bending all his energies. He had cast aside all others as weights and hindrances, and as not being worthy to be compared with this one service, so high in its point of privilege. The one thing he did was to serve the Lord, to serve the brethren, to serve the truth. All other matters were secondary to this. If he could accomplish this one thing the results would be so blessed, so happifying, both now and everlastingly, that he could afford to count all other things and objects and aims as loss and dross and not worthy of comparison.-- Phil. 3:7,8,13,14.

This is the spirit that all of the Lord's overcoming people should have. All do not have this character or quality of disposition by nature; but in proportion as we lack, the Lord will reckon to us of his own merit to compensate, if he finds in us the spirit, the will, the disposition, to thus follow the example of Jesus and the apostles and all the faithful. If we are weak in this respect, lacking in this quality of decision and firmness of character, we need to be more alert, and to go the more frequently to the throne of grace to obtain mercy and to find grace to help. But those who are naturally weak, and who yet have tried this matter according to the lines here laid down,--who have sought to cultivate this principle of character and decision and firmness for the right, give abundant testimony that the Lord is their helper and that in thus following the directions of his Word and the examples of faithfulness, they have become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. May this be a blessed year for all the faithful in Christ Jesus, along the lines of character-building, energy and firmness for the right and for the truth, as God grants us to see these.

Let us not forget that it is just such a class that the Lord is seeking, to be the Bride and joint-heir of his Son. He is not looking for those who are perfect in this respect; for there is weakness along this line throughout the whole human family; there is none perfect in this or in other respects, none fit for the Kingdom by nature. It will encourage us, perhaps, to remember that the Lord is taking the weak things of the world and making them strong, and that in proportion as we submit our wills to his will we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, and that he thus works in us to will and to do his good pleasure in the establishment of strong, decisive characters, through the promises of his Word. To it, as represented in Jesus, he exhorts us to look, while we endeavor to run with patience the race set before us, trusting in him who has redeemed us and called us, and who has promised to be our ever-present helper in every time of need.

own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be.

- [2] Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If I do so, I make myself liable to a great delusion. I seek the will or Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone, without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusions also. If the holy Spirit guides us at all, he will do it according to the Scriptures, and never contrary to them.
- [3] Next, I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will, in connection with his Word and his Spirit.
- [4] I ask God in prayer to reveal his will to me aright.
- [5] Thus by the prayer to God, the study of the Word, and reflection, I come to deliberate judgment according to the best of my knowledge and opportunity, and,
- [6] if my mind is thus at peace, I proceed accordingly."