

## December 16

*How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, follow him. 1 Kings 18:21*

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

R4467 "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

The Apostle does not tell us the basis of his confidence in doing the will of the Lord in going to Jerusalem, but we may be sure that he had substantial reasons for believing that he was walking in the Lord's way. His entire character shows us that he would be too cautious, as well as too faithful, to go in any direction contrary to the Divine will.

As to how we may decide as to what is and what is not the Lord's way for us, 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 own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths

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....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

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.

[3] 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.

[4] Next, I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will, in connection with his Word and his Spirit.

[5] I ask God in prayer to reveal his will to me aright.

[6] 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.

[7] and, if my mind is thus at peace, I proceed accordingly."

### R5212 DISCERNING THE WILL OF GOD "Teach me Thy way, O Lord." Psalm 27:11

THE LORD does not wish us to walk by *sight*, and thus to have *no difficulty* in discerning His will. Therefore He puts matters in such a way that both our *obedience* and our *perseverance* are tested; for we are to walk by faith and not by sight. In order to do this, we should daily take everything to the Lord in prayer. We should not undertake anything without seeking to know the will of the Lord respecting the matter.

Since, however, we have no miraculous insight through which we may know what is the will of God in all the details of every-day life, we are not always able to discern that will. When the matter is one about which the Scriptures give instructions, then the way is clear; for the only course which the child of God desires to follow is that of *obedience*. But when the matter is such as depends upon *one's own judgment*, then the way is not so clear. Realizing that our judgment is not sufficient, we should not tax our minds with what we know is beyond our power to decide, but should leave the matter to the Lord.

We know that the Lord can direct our course in whatever way He chooses, if we put ourselves under His care. So at the beginning of the day we can say, "Lord, here am I; I thank Thee for the privilege of another day, which I hope will be full of opportunities for serving the Truth and the brethren. I ask Thee to direct my thoughts, words and conduct, that I may serve Thee acceptably." Then we may go forth and use our best judgment.

R5652 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF SELF-CONTROL

*"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city which is broken down and without walls."--Proverbs 25:28.*

THE word "spirit" is used in a variety of ways. We speak of a horse as having a fiery spirit or as having no spirit. We speak of the

angels as being spirits. We sometimes speak of the spirit of life. We also speak of the spirit of the human mind--that is evidently the

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 more quickly will we find our characters established on proper lines. Z. '02-42 R2950:5

If the Lord wants to lead us in one direction or another, that is His part, not ours. We have solicited His guidance; and our eyes are alert to know and to do His will at any cost. In this attitude we may rest easy, knowing that God is able and willing to overrule all things for His glory and our profit.

As a child, the Editor noticed that some people had a *certain way* of going to the Lord with all of their affairs. They would open their Bibles at random; and whatever verse their thumb or finger happened to touch they would consider to be the Lord's message to them; and they would follow its suggestion carefully. Sometimes the text to which they opened seemed to be a remarkable answer to their prayer.

This method is not one with which the Editor desires to find fault. But since it did not appeal to his judgment, he took the matter to the Lord in prayer and said, "Father, I am really afraid to adopt this plan. So if it please Thee, I would rather be directed by my judgment than by this method; for my mind does not seem capable of accepting it." The Lord seems to have taken him at his word.

There is surely a reason why right is right in every matter; and we should desire to know it. We should desire to know why God wishes a matter *this way* rather than *that way*; not that we doubt His wisdom, but that we may enter into the *spirit* of the Divine regulations. The Editor's method of seeking Divine guidance is to study the Scriptures, taking all of the verses bearing upon the subject under consideration, and trying to find the *underlying principle* of God's dealings and teachings.

By this method he has much more happiness than he otherwise could have. By following the other method he could not know whether God or the Devil or chance would open the Bible for him. He much prefers to follow what he believes to be the teaching of the Word of God; that is, to commit all to the Father in prayer, asking Him to guide both reason and judgment, and then go out and use that judgment and reason to the best of his ability. Even if God should permit him to use his judgment in a way that afterward appeared not to have been the best, nevertheless the Father may use it to bring some great blessing or profitable lesson. By *judgment*, of course, he means his understanding of the Father's Word and of His providential leadings. Thus doing, he knows that all things shall work together for good.--Rom. 8:28."

(Psa 25:9 KJV) "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way."

thought that is here presented. The words of the text are equivalent to saying, He that hath no rule over his own mind, his thoughts, is like a city that is broken down.

What would a broken-down city be like? In olden times, when civilization had not reached the degree to which it has now attained, there was but little police protection, and marauders were numerous. Those who were disposed to get their living by stealing had excellent opportunities. It was necessary that cities be surrounded by walls as a protection against enemies. Any city with broken-down walls would have great reason to fear such marauders. It would invite attack and be certain to meet with disaster some time.

The wise man has here likened such a city to a broken down human will. The will is to be continually on guard over the mind and to allow nothing to enter there except through the regular gates--Conscience and Judgment. These gates are to be watched so closely that they may admit only such thoughts as would be non-injurious, profitable, wise--in harmony with the Word of God. Every human being should have a will and should keep it in good repair, should see to it that it does not get broken down; otherwise shipwreck of character will follow.

By the *will* is not meant merely a *wish*. There is a decided difference between a wish and a will. Some wish that they possessed a million dollars, but they have not the will even to try to get it. Some have a wish to get up at a certain hour in the morning; but the *wish* does not get them up, because the *will* is broken down. They say to themselves, "Oh, a little more sleep, a little more slumber, a little more folding of the hands in sleep!" They have no control of themselves. They may think they will gain this control by setting an alarm clock. By and by the alarm clock does no good; they do not hear it at all.

#### CONTROL IN SMALL THINGS GAGE OF CHARACTER

Whoever allows his will to become broken down as to the time he will arise in the morning has a more or less weak will in all matters. We should make reasonable regulations for our time of rising and of retiring. Having used our best judgment as to what should be done, we should see that it is done. Unless the doing of this should be found harmful to ourselves or to someone else, it should be carried out.

It is important to carry out the dictates of our best judgment so that the will may be strong, so that the individual may not be a vacillating character. The same principle applies to our choice of food. Some will say, "I know that this dish does not agree with me; but it comes to the table, and it seems to agree with others. I cannot eat it without subsequent discomfort; but I like it. I wish it would not come to the table!" So he partakes of it and suffers the consequenc-

R2411 "If at first we, as pupils, get confused and mistake self-will for God's-will, and our Teacher points this out to us by some failure of our projects, we are not (1) to be rebellious and resentful of the lesson; nor (2) to be discouraged and disheartened. On the contrary, we are to *profit* by every experience; seeking that the lessons of one day shall be put in practice and become our aids on following days.

The most important lesson of this school-term is Faith: the faith with which we became the Lord's and entered his school must grow. And our faith can only grow by knowledge (We do not refer to worldly knowledge, worldly learning.), knowledge of the Lord--of his methods, his plan, his character. Hence we must study well our Teacher's words and general conduct and as well his providences or private instructions to us individually--interpreting these always by his words. Much of what we accepted at first by *faith* (respecting the Lord's goodness and wisdom) will gradually become *knowledge*: giving basis for still greater lengths and breadths of faith as well as for greater love and appreciation of our Redeemer...

#### A FULL SUBMISSION OF OUR WILLS TO THE LORD'S WILL!

Do you answer,--Why, that is what I have been wanting to do ever since I conse-

es. He has the desire for the food, but not the will to resist taking it. The proper course for each one is to see to it that he does not eat what he knows is injurious to him, whatever others may be able to do or may choose to do.

Indecision and lack of character in little things affect all the greater things in life. The person who gets up irregularly is apt to be irregular in business. The person who cannot determine what he should eat is likely to be subject to caprice, to be weak in all his decisions. Such a one will be likely to let some salesman influence him as to what he will buy. Some are too largely subject to the control of others.

#### A FIRM WILL--NOT OBSTINACY--ESSENTIAL

An old adage has it that "A wise man sometimes changes his mind--a fool never." Ruling our own spirit does not mean that we are to go to extremes and say, "Well, I said I wouldn't; and I won't!" There may be good reasons for changing our mind, and then it would be our proper course to make that change. God is seeking for the class of people who *properly* rule their own minds. If they learn to rule their minds before they come into the family of God, it will be that much the better for them. But at any rate, the only way they can get into the Kingdom will be by developing character.

The Bible tells us particularly what things are of the flesh, and what are of the Holy Spirit, the holy mind, of God; what things, therefore, constitute the holy disposition we should have. It tells us that we should put away anger, malice, hatred, bitterness, wrath, anger, strife; and that we should put on meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. These lessons must be learned. We cannot say that the *flesh* will ever be brought under complete control; but the *will* must be there, and as much control of the flesh as is possible by Divine help should be added day by day.

The Lord is seeking people of strong will, strong character. Therefore there must be a positive turning to the Lord and a definite covenant with Him at the first, or else we are not acceptable to the Father. Then after we come into His family we find that some things that we thought all *right* are all *wrong* and must be corrected; and in proportion as we have in our past life ruled our own minds, controlled our fleshly appetites and impulses, in that proportion we shall make slow or rapid progress in the new way. How much of consecrated time may we use for business, for pleasure, or in one way or another? How much of consecrated money shall we spend on ourselves? All this is to be regulated by our Covenant with God. We must seek first the interests of the Lord and His Kingdom. These must be first in all our arrangements, and earthly things must be secondary. Hence the importance of fixed character, a will prompt and unflinching for God.

crated myself to the Lord; but I have not attained it;--What more can I do? Ah yes! so it has been with all fully consecrated children of God; for a long time we all made the same mistake of *wanting* to fully submit our wills to God's will, instead of *doing so*.

A good *wish* is an excellent thing, very important indeed, but if the wish does not lead to performance it is valueless. Some people never get beyond the wishing point in any of life's affairs: they wish to rise at a certain hour in the morning, or to attend to certain recognized duties, or render some service, or speak some word of kindness or encouragement in the name of the Lord,--but they never fulfil their good wishes in deeds. The good wish should be followed by a good and determined *will*, which is sure to be favored by a way in matters fully in accord with the divine will. Now, without dropping a single good *wish*, let us begin immediately to make this a successful year, by throwing the entire strength of our wills into *doing*."

R5488 "At first the individual has not the power to control himself in everything; but as he learns to exercise self-control in the little things, more and more doing what he can in this direction, in thought and word and deed, he will gain in strength of character. We should remember the story of the

man who wished to develop his muscles, and who for this reason began to practise each day in lifting a calf. He commenced when the calf was very young, and he lifted it day by day for weeks and months. In due time the calf had become an ox, and he was then able to lift the ox. His daily practise had gradually strengthened his muscles; they increased in strength with the increase in the weight of the animal, until he was strong enough to lift the full-grown ox.

And so with the Christian in his character-development: If we daily practise self-control, we shall gradually attain a strong character along this line, which will be of inestimable advantage to us in our Christian warfare...

#### MORAL STRENGTH MORE DESIRABLE THAN PHYSICAL

There is no place where the proof of our ability to rule our spirit is better shown than in our own home. With husband and wife, with parent and child, with brother and sister, this is an important matter. The battle with self is the greatest battle we have to fight; and the Word of God declares that "he that ruleth his own spirit is greater than he that taketh a city." He is greater because he has learned to exercise the will, the determination, of a true character in the right direction, in the direction of control of self."

R2950 (From Harvest Truth Database V5.0)  
**DECISION IN CHARACTER BUILDING**

*How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God follow him, but, if Baal, follow him.--1 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 *Thees. 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.

<sup>(1)</sup>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.

<sup>(2)</sup>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 family; 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

<sup>(1)</sup> ½ Dec. 16 Manna, 1 Kings 18:21

<sup>(2)</sup> ½ Dec. 16 Manna

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 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.

#### IMPORTANCE OF FIXITY OF WILL AND PURPOSE

*One ship drives east, one drives west  
by self same wind that blows,  
Tis the set of the sails and not the gales  
which determine the way it goes.*

*As we journey through life,  
Tis the set of the will that decides its goal  
and not the calm or the strife.*

R4517 "The only safe course for any mariner on the stormy sea of life is to take on board the great Pilot, the Lord Jesus Christ... Under this Pilot the human will is like a strong vessel with mighty sails or a powerful engine. The greater the power, the greater the capacity and the more useful. The proper Pilot will guide us not only safely past the rocks of disaster and the shoals of sin, but into the haven of life, joy, peace and fellowship Divine."

R5487 NECESSITY OF SELF-CONTROL  
*"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down and without walls."--Proverbs 25:28...*

All mankind are born with more or less of determination. Some have this in a very marked degree; others in a lesser degree; no one, we believe, is wholly without this quality of will, purpose. But we find that whether our wills are strong or weak they need direction...

To yield ourselves to passion, to allow it to sweep over us and master us, is disastrous... We hear a great many say, when they have lost control of their temper, or have been petulant or morose or ill-natured or discourteous, Well, that's *my way*; I do not mean any harm... But no human being should live according to what is *natural* to his or her fallen nature...

#### ALL NEED REGULATION BY SOME STANDARD...

The Law of God is the very highest standard of law. And the spirit of God's Law is embodied in the Golden Rule. This standard the whole world recognizes as right; and surely the Lord's people should measure all their conduct and their words, yea, their very thoughts, by this standard. Thus they will be rulers over their own spirit.

The word *spirit* in the text under consideration represents the mind, the impulses of one's nature. We are to rule our mind, our natural impulses. This means that if a thought present itself to the mind, or if we feel a certain impulse, we should be quick to perceive the nature of the thought or impulse; and if it is not in harmony with the principles of righteousness or with our covenant as children of God, we should at once resist it. If we are unable to do this successfully of ourselves, as is often the case, the heart should be promptly lifted to the Lord for His promised grace to help in time of need...

#### WHAT WOULD JESUS DO?

WHEN the morning paints the skies,  
And the birds their songs renew,  
Let me from my slumbers rise,  
Saying, "What would Jesus do?"

When I ply my daily task,  
And the round of toil pursue,  
Let me every moment ask,  
"What would Jesus do?"

Would the foe my heart beguile,  
Whispering thoughts and words untrue?  
Let me to his subtlest wile  
Answer, "What would Jesus do?"