

HOW RIGHTEOUS CHARACTER IS PRODUCED

OUR WILL REPRESENTS our choice, but our choice is made up largely of our impressions and our judgment – or mis-judgment – of things surrounding us. As a child will reach for a finely polished razor or for a light and be cut or burned, so our wills sometimes grasp for things that are not good for us. From the time that we first heard the Lord's voice, therefore, the education of our wills has progressed; for all are defective in their choice, in their views of matters, and in their manner of thinking.

Our soundness of mind increases with our knowledge of the Divine Plan and of the character of our Lord. When we think of His perfection as the Logos and as the Man Christ Jesus, we are enabled to realize somewhat our own imperfection, and we thenceforth seek to eliminate those things which belong to our imperfect judgment. We recall that He was "holy, harmless, undefiled and separate from sinners" – that He was perfect; and we realize, that having a consecrated mind, He entered the "narrow way" with a right will and a balanced mind, which would be accentuated by His experiences in life. With His perfect example before us, we seek daily to train our wills in harmony with the Divine will.

The will is the result of a certain *combination of mental qualities*, or faculties. We may, therefore, change our wills in various ways by having *divers combinations* of the mental qualities; for instance, one quality of the mind is called *acquisitiveness* – a desire *to get*, to control. Another quality of the mind has respect to justice, another to music, another to art, and so on.

If the quality of justice be small or if it be dormant, a person of large acquisitiveness might be led to *steal*. He would have no quality of justice to tell him that this act is wrong. Some one might be tempted to take money, or one might be willing to do something

dishonorable to gratify love for music or what not. On the contrary, if one has a large organ of justice, it would control him. If this faculty were thoroughly awakened and brought into exercise, he would say, "No, it is *wrong* to steal. In this matter there are principles to be regarded." Thus his desire is not gratified at the expense of principle.

One's will is made up of the organs which control his conduct. If the selfish propensities rule, he will be selfish. In some people the organ of conscientiousness seems to be dormant. Along some lines these people act just as an animal would – without thought as to either their own motives or the effect that their actions will have upon others. If such people should at any time give their hearts to the Lord in consecration, their attention is sure to be called, sooner or later, to their manner of living. If they consult the Word of God for instruction, the Scriptures tell them that God is not pleased with their conduct. As a result of this information, they begin to learn to scrutinize their thoughts and words and doings, and in due time to change their ways.

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS GIVES STRENGTH OF CHARACTER

A person who has large veneration, large spirituality and large conscientiousness has great advantage over one who has small veneration, or small spirituality or small conscientiousness, for as different matters come up, these three faculties naturally agree and say, "This is right" (or *wrong*, as the case may be). When the thing seems right, judgment would say, "This is a proper thing." This kind of people can be martyrs for anything that they believe is right, for they are strong in three qualities of the mind which give them a force of character for righteousness.

A person who has less conscientiousness would have less of this strength of character. Strong will exerted in any direction produces strong character; bad will, bad character; good will, good character. We are to some extent what we are by birth. After our consecration

God instructs us and we are so transformed by the renewing [R5158 : page 11] of our minds that we have our minds made up to do *right* instead of *wrong*. This making up of the mind is the formation of *will*.

We should strive to have strong will, strong character, and should put away everything that would be likely to weaken our character. One who builds strong character reasons out what he thinks is God's will – what he thinks is the right thing to do. Then he determines to do that thing and resolves to let nothing interfere with the accomplishment of his purpose. Whoever has a good, strong will has something to help him over every trial and difficulty in life.

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