

KEEPING THE BODY UNDER

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air." – I Cor. 9:26.

THE Apostle Paul had definite knowledge as to what constitutes the prize. He was not uncertain about it; it was not a question with him as to its being one thing or another. St. Paul knew that the "high calling in Christ Jesus" is that we may be heirs with him, if we suffer with him – that we shall be with him in glory. Neither was the Apostle uncertain as to the terms and conditions of the race. He knew that they were even unto death; and that if he should seek to save his life he would lose it. Neither was he uncertain as to his own determination. He knew positively that he had entered the course. He was not of those who merely say, "I hope to do so some time." He had made with the Lord his covenant of sacrifice unto death.

Nor was the Apostle uncertain as to his opportunity to gain the prize. He knew that it remained with *him* to will and to do in harmony with God's good pleasure. He knew that nothing impossible was required of him in this race; that the terms and conditions of the race include "grace to help in every time of need"; and that [R4810 : page 136] this grace and help would come from the Lord. Hence, the Apostle's expression that, for the runners in this race-course, there was no uncertainty, from first to last.

Thus it may be with all under the guiding eye of the Great Redeemer. We may each make our calling and election sure: "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." – 2 Pet. 1:10,11.

"I KEEP MY BODY UNDER AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION"

The Apostle tells us that he *kept his body under*, lest, having preached the good tidings to others, he himself, should be a castaway. "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection,...lest I myself should be a castaway," he declares. (I Cor. 9:27.) One translation has this, "I brow-beat my body"; that is to say, I use coercive measures upon my body.

The body originally belonged to the natural man, the natural will. When the old will gave place to the new will, the latter became the owner of the body. The new will cannot properly be served by the old body, because the new mind is perfect and the body imperfect. When the new mind, the mind of God, the mind of Christ, therefore, takes into possession the mortal body, it has more or less difficulty. The mind is not suited to the body, nor the body to the mind. It is the work, therefore, of the new will to show its obedience to the Lord, its full loyalty to the Divine will, even though the body should be, in some respects, treated shamefully, its claim, its supposed necessities, etc., being ignored.

Not only are we all thus to mortify and brow-beat the body, but, additionally, we are to bring it into subjection. We are to make it serve the New Creature. The Apostle says, "But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit." (Rom. 8:11.) The holy Spirit, which comes to us more and more as we feed upon the Lord, assists us to conform our lives to his will, and also quickens or makes alive our mortal bodies to the service of the Truth.

There are not two creatures, but one; we cannot be two creatures at once. It is not until the old creature submits and we are transformed, so far as the will is concerned, that we become New Creatures, so that, henceforth, we really are New Creatures. But the New Creature has not its new body as yet. In our text the Apostle evidently refers to the New Creature, the New Man. There is an outward man, which the world may think is the individual, but in proportion as the outward man is brought

into subjection and service, the New Creature is growing stronger, until eventually, with the death of the human body, God will give the New Creature a new body, in the resurrection. Then the new Creature will be satisfied, when it shall be found in his likeness.

There is a tendency for the body, the flesh, to arise from its condition of reckoned deadness. Hence the New Creature needs to be continually on guard in the good fight of faith. These battlings of the new mind against the flesh are a "good fight," in the sense that they are fightings against sins and weaknesses that belong to the fallen nature. The entire course of the New Creature is the course of faith. It would be impossible for one to keep up this battle against the flesh and its propensities and desires, unless he exercise faith in the promises and in the Lord as his Helper.

THE APOSTLE HAD NO THOUGHT OF HIS COMING SHORT

There is another passage in which St. Paul says that we should "fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of *you* should seem to come short of [R4810 : page 137] it." (Heb. 4:1.) He had no thought of coming short of it *himself*, but he urged those to whom he was writing to make their "calling and election sure."

It will be a great help to the overcoming of the weaknesses of the fallen nature to have rightly made a full consecration of the will, a full enlistment of every power and talent of mind and body to the service of the Lord. He who takes this proper view of his consecration to the Lord and of his enlistment in the Lord's army, realizes that he has nothing more to give to the Lord. Hence, whatever struggle of the will he may have had, is all ended when he has finally decided to give himself to the Lord. How important it is, therefore, to realize that the service is until *death*, and that there is no room even to consider any suggestion to withdraw and cease to fight the good fight of faith!

We are to remember that it is *not the flesh*, the old creature, which has entered the School of Christ, and is under instruction and preparation for the Kingdom, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (I Cor. 15:50.) Our acceptance of the Divine call to the spirit nature means, not only the renunciation of the earthly nature *in every sense of the word*, but also our begetting as New Creatures, "sons of God." The New Creature, the new mind, the new will, is in the School of Christ, to be perfected, to be brought into full accord with the Divine will, to become a copy or likeness of the Lord. We shall never succeed in bringing our *flesh* into absolute harmony with the Divine Law, because of its imperfections, inherited and otherwise. Hence, the necessity that it be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. He who looks for perfection of his flesh, and who rests his faith therein, must of necessity have a poor hope of ever attaining to the likeness of Christ – of ever becoming one of the predestinated class – of becoming "the image of his Son." – Rom. 8:29.

**"WE DO THOSE THINGS WHICH WE OUGHT NOT AND LEAVE
UNDONE WHAT WE OUGHT TO DO"**

In joining the Lord in faith and consecration we are proclaiming ourselves, *not* as graduates and heirs, but as *students*, disciples, who *desire to be prepared to inherit* "the things which God has prepared for them that love him." (I Cor. 2:9.) If this thought be kept in mind as the Divine teaching on the subject, it will tend to prevent our discouragement with ourselves when we find that, unavoidably, we do those things which we ought not to do, and leave undone those things which we ought to do; for in our flesh dwells no perfection. – Rom. 7:15,18,19,25.

It is unnecessary for us to point out that the new mind, in proportion as it develops in likeness to the mind of Christ, will relax no efforts to keep the body under, with the motions of sin – to keep the will of the flesh dead. Surely no spirit-begotten son of God could allow sin to *reign* in his mortal body. Should sin to any degree control him, it will

not be willingly, and hence could be but momentarily – until the new mind, the New Creature, seeing the uprising of the flesh, would conquer it, obtaining the promised grace and help in every time of need, from the heavenly storehouse of grace – Christ.

This thought, rightly entertained, will help true disciples to appreciate their own position, and not to be utterly cast down if overtaken in a fault of the flesh, so long as they realize that their *hearts* are not in sympathy with the sin and unrighteousness, but, on the contrary, in full sympathy with the principles and instructions of our Teacher, and longing to be cleansed and acceptable in his sight. Moreover, this thought will also help all such to exercise fervency of love amongst themselves, toward the brethren who similarly are *disciples, pupils in this School* – New Creatures, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit of their mind. If, therefore, each should see blemishes in the flesh of the brethren, disapproved and striven against, he should remember that the evil which he sees is his brother's enemy, and not the brother himself, the New Creature – if so be that he gives us the assurance that his heart, his will, is in harmony with the Lord and his law of Love; and that he is daily seeking to fight a successful warfare against the weaknesses of the flesh.

"A MAN IS TEMPTED WHEN HE IS LED AWAY OF HIS OWN DESIRES"

When studying this subject we must keep two facts in mind: (1), The Scriptures ascribe *no sin* to the New Creature, and (2), *no perfection in righteousness* to our fallen flesh. The New Creature (whose flesh is reckoned dead), which is represented by the new mind, and which is begotten of God, CANNOT SIN; for in its very essence, as the seed or germ implanted by the Truth – "the *spirit* of the Truth" – it is opposed to sin. This New Creature is so fully in accord with righteousness, so fully imbued with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, that it delights in holiness and not in sin; and this must be the case so long as this begotten or Holy-Spirit-condition continues. "He

that is begotten of God sinneth not [willingly – neither approves of sin nor takes pleasure in it]; because his seed remaineth in him" [the holy seed of the Truth, the spirit of Truth with which he was begotten]; "and that Wicked One toucheth him not." – I John 3:9; 5:18.

We are not to suppose that every trial or difficulty which besets us is of the Devil; but rather to remember the Apostle's words, "A man is tempted when he is led away of his own desires and enticed." (James 1:13,14.) Such temptations, then, are of the flesh, and the result of our being members of the fallen race, whose weaknesses and imperfections have been aggravated and intensified for now six thousand years. So, then, we are to recognize as among our chief foes our own inherent weaknesses and predisposition to things selfish, depraved, sinful.

The whole world, thus depraved and under the control of the spirit of selfishness, are largely, though unconsciously, the tools of Satan, "who worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2.) To the children of God the world has become an enemy and a **[R4811 : page 137]** tempter by reason of the fact that we [the Church] have been "begotten again" to *new* hopes, *new* ambitions, *new* aspirations, *new* desires, which are along radically different lines from anything the world knows or has sympathy with.

"THE FLESH DESIRES CONTRARY TO THE SPIRIT, AND THE SPIRIT CONTRARY TO THE FLESH"

Our begetting is of the Holy Spirit, and its tendencies are heavenly and spiritual, in harmony with righteousness and love. Yet it is only our *hearts* that are thus changed – our *flesh* is much more in harmony with the *world* than with the new order of things *established in our hearts and wills* by grace and truth, through Christ. Consequently, when the world, through the words or writings or general spirit of any of its children, comes into contact with the Lord's people, immediately they – the Lord's people – find that, although their hearts are loyal to the Lord and loyal to all the gracious things which he has promised them, and to

the spirit of righteousness, love and truth, yet nevertheless, their flesh has an affinity for and an attraction toward the world, its views, its arrangements, its pleasures, etc. [R4811 : page 138]

For this reason the Christian is called upon to reckon himself *dead*, not only to sin, but to his own natural desires, appetites, inclinations, and also to the world, which is in harmony with sin and has perverted tastes and appetites. As the Apostle intimates, there is a constant battle between the New Creature, the new will, and the old creature, the fleshly and depraved disposition. He says, "The flesh desires *contrary* to the spirit, and the spirit *contrary* to the flesh." (Gal. 5:17.) And even though the advanced Christian has reached the place where he is enabled to reckon his flesh and will completely dead and buried, nevertheless, he has need continually to re-examine himself lest the flesh should become alive again. This was the Apostle's method. He says, "I keep my body under [dead, buried] and bring it into subjection [to the new mind]; lest having preached to others I myself should be a castaway." (I Cor. 9:27.) This keeping of the body under, this watching it lest it should become alive again, is a constant necessity to those who would be overcomers; for it is the victory of the new mind, the new will, over the old will, the will of the flesh, that constitutes us victors, by developing in us strong, holy character – character like unto that of our glorious Lord and Redeemer.

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