

THE MORTAL BODY THE SERVANT OF THE NEW MIND

"I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means...I myself should be a castaway." – 1 Cor. 9:27.

ST. PAUL was a most successful soldier of the cross; and from his Epistles we gain much information as to how to fight our own weaknesses successfully. In our text the Apostle speaks particularly of himself, with the evident intention of teaching a lesson to all of the Lord's people whom he addressed at that time or who would receive his word subsequently – including ourselves.

The thought is not that we are to keep each other under, nor that the Lord is keeping our bodies under, but that a special commission is given to us in respect to our own bodies, and that we ourselves will be held accountable for their conduct. This statement, "I keep my body under," would be true only of one who has been begotten of the Holy Spirit, and who has become a New Creature in Christ Jesus. But although the individual is reckonedly a member of the Body of Christ, adopted into God's family, and called a son of God, he has not as yet, of course, received the spirit body promised him, but is waiting to receive it in the resurrection.

GOOD INTENTIONS NOT SUFFICIENT

Meantime God calls upon all spirit-begotten ones to demonstrate their loyalty to righteousness and their faithfulness by practising upon their mortal bodies. When coming into Christ, they made a full consecration of themselves, of their bodies and all that is theirs, to the Lord's service. It was on account of this Covenant of sacrifice that they were counted as members of the Body of Christ and begotten of the Holy Spirit – sons of God. It is not sufficient, however, to declare our intention; but God allows the difficulties and trials of life to prove our

faithfulness to the sacrifice we have made. And while making provision for the blemishes of our mortal body, He, nevertheless, holds us responsible for our bodies, for our words and our actions. He calls us to be New Creatures; and we must develop our characters to such an extent that the New Creature will fight down, to the best of his ability, everything opposed to the new will. The first part of the text declares, "I keep my body under," that is to say, in subordination, under restraint.

Those who deal in horses tell us that all horses must be broken; and that to break a horse is difficult of accomplishment and requires a great deal of force. The object in thus dealing with the horse is not to continue to break the animal every day, but to break him once for all, that he might be put to some service. This illustration seems to fit the Apostle's thought.

As a New Creature the Apostle had a mortal body which was rebellious against God's will, and thus must be dealt with in a firm manner, in order to bring it under the control of its master – the new mind, whose Head is Christ. If the body be taught this lesson of submission, it may be a good, useful servant of the new master and serve unto death, just as a horse may be broken in and serve his master well. This is the thought in the Apostle's words, "I keep my body under." In substance the Apostle says, "I must break in this human nature, force it into harmony with the new will, and bring it into subjection, making it a servant to myself, the New Creature. This I do because this is the Divine will and the very thing to which I have been called.

As a New Creature I wish to show that I am loyal to the principles of righteousness and truth everywhere. But this old body is more or less in rebellion against God and against the principles of the Divine arrangement. And it is my duty to see to what extent I can carry out this proposition – the bringing of the old mind into subjection to God and to righteousness. And in proportion as I make myself a servant of

righteousness, God will use me, and to that extent I shall grow and become an overcomer. By doing these things an entrance will be administered to me into the everlasting Kingdom of Jesus Christ. But if I fail to carry this out, I shall fail of the character-development which all must have who would be accounted members of the Body of Christ."

As St. Paul says in another place, God foreordained that He would have a Church, and that all who would be of this Church should become copies of His Son, Christ Jesus. (Rom. 8:28-30.) So, if St. Paul would remain a member of this Body of Christ, he must keep his human body under, must subordinate his earthly nature, not merely bringing it into subjection to things which would be for righteousness and truth, but also bringing it into subjection as regards natural things. So must all do who would come off "more than conquerors" in the good fight; it is necessary that we should carry out this fulness of service; that we should be faithful unto death, and that we should show this consecration, not only in our minds, but also in our mortal bodies.

When the Apostle says here that he would be in **[R5002 : page 112]** danger of being a "castaway" if he did not bring his body into subjection, and thus prove to be an overcomer, it is tantamount to saying that he would fail to make his calling and election sure. He was called to become an heir of God and joint-heir with Jesus Christ. If, therefore, he should fail to perform his part of the contract of sacrifice, he would become a castaway in respect to this election. He would not gain the election. He would lose in the race in which he had started.

HABITS MAKE CHARACTER

It is our duty to watch ourselves that we do no harm, that our body does good service and not injury to ourselves. A man or a woman or a child who goes through the house slamming doors, and merely says, "I was in a hurry and could not help it," is not gentle. He is not a gentleman, or she is not a gentlewoman. Whoever fails to cultivate gentleness is failing to cultivate the fruits of the Spirit. He is losing a

glorious opportunity of practising upon himself – of keeping his body under, of getting himself into the way of doing things in a sensible, reasonable manner. The person who bangs doors and goes about noisily is one who does not think of other people and their interests. When we talk about ourselves all the time and think about ourselves all the time, it is an evidence of selfishness. In all these things the Lord expects us to keep our bodies under, and to show carefulness in keeping our bodies under, in the little things of life as well as in the great things.

If our Lord Jesus were here, none of us would expect Him to go about noisily, slamming the doors of the house, or to be wasteful. Our Lord was most economical in the two cases where He fed the four thousand and the five thousand. Although there was plenty of food to feed the multitude, He told His disciples to "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost." – John 6:12.

Thus did God's dear Son view matters; and we desire to be copies of Him. In building character we must wilfully and intentionally do right. The person who practices in the little things will be also careful in the larger matters. Even the pins, the needles and the paper we should use carefully. Not that any should be miserly – not willing to give one a pin if he wants one – but do not think to waste even them, saying, "Oh, the pins cost only a trifle, anyway!" The Lord was always generous, but He was economical. So we should all be. We should keep the body under the new mind. The new mind should be looking out for these matters and keeping the old body in service.

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