

THE NEW CREATURE'S STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE

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

THERE is a duality in Christians that is not to be recognized in others. The natural man has no distinct entity aside from his body. The New Creature is recognized as having a life and entity distinct from the body; and this New Creature is temporarily being developed and nourished in the old body. The old body has its will, its desires. The New Creature has its interests, its desires. Consequently there is a conflict between them.

In the first part of the text – "I keep my body under" – we may see the thought of *mastery*. The New Creature should say, "I am the master – I will not allow my body to master me," as though there were fear lest the old creature should get the New Creature down and strangle it. It is a battle to determine which will win, which will live and not be destroyed.

The first thing, then, is for the New Creature to get the body under, and thus have the mastery. The New Creature having gained the mastery should, as a secondary step, bring the old nature into subjection and not do its bidding. The old creature is continually trying to assert itself. Very frequently it argues as to how it should be treated and how it should not be treated. Sometimes through false sympathy it might be treated too well.

We must remember that the *life* of the *old creature* means the *death* of the *New Creature*. We must vanquish the flesh; and we shall not be the *victor* until the flesh is entirely destroyed. Our victories as New Creatures will not be gained until we as old creatures die. So the battle is *unto the death*, and there should be no particular sympathy between the two natures.

That which would enliven, encourage, the flesh in any way is a foe, and must be banished from our hearts. This might lead in some cases to extremes of conduct, and we might be judged as extremists by the world. But the world is not our judge. The world has no "exceeding great and precious promises" before them. They are a different class from us altogether. We are not to take our instructions from them, nor to allow them to shape our view of the matter, but we are to use the spirit of a sound mind in all things.

DEATH OF THE FLESH ESSENTIAL

The Apostle says that we are to be dead with Christ, to suffer with Him. The Master invites us to take up our cross and follow Him. This means the complete subjection of the flesh – the *death* of the flesh. If we fail to gain the victory over the flesh, we shall fail to gain the great prize. The ones who are to gain the prize of the High Calling are those who will crucify the flesh, who will put it to death. We are to be "more than conquerors."

This is what the Apostle means: But I keep my body under and bring it into subjection; lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. All the preaching to others will not get me into the Kingdom. I must keep my body under and bring it into subjection, using *all diligence*. Whatever I would get out of it, my pampering it in any way would be to my [R5221 : page 119] disadvantage. I am to be on the lookout to accomplish the victory, lest I should be a castaway.

KNOWLEDGE OF THE NEW WILL CONDITIONAL

Elsewhere the Apostle has told us that the Church is a New Creation of God; and that to those begotten again of the Holy Spirit old things pass away and all things become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17.) Addressing the same class, he says, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds." We have put off the old man, the natural, fallen man, with his privileges as the successor of Adam, in the same sense

that we put off the old will and have received a new mind, in Christ. Instead, therefore, of belonging to the human family, we have stepped into membership in the Body of Christ – out of the old into the new.

The Body of Christ is not *human*, but *spiritual*. We have made this transfer from one family, with its hopes and interests, into the other. The old man is in a fallen and dilapidated condition in every way; and we realize that its deeds were far from satisfactory to ourselves, and especially unsatisfactory in God's sight. We, therefore, by our wills, stepped out of this condition, under guidance from on High. We have made a full consecration of all the old rights and interests, which we had in the old nature, in order that we may be in the New Man, Christ.

As we have come into membership in the New Man, Christ, of which Jesus is the Head, we have under this Head an increase of knowledge. "We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us." The New Creature comes to a more and more clear knowledge of the new will in proportion as he seeks to put down the human will and to be directed by the Holy Spirit.

It would seem, therefore, that we put off the old man, Adam, and the human nature in general, in order that we may put on Christ and be found in Him, as members of His Body, and may receive with Him a share in the exceeding glory, and ultimately be accounted worthy of a place in the Kingdom of God. In proportion as we grow in grace, in knowledge, our appreciation of the Heavenly things increases. Thus our renewing progresses.

The new will recognized by God in the begetting of the Holy Spirit is the *New* Creature which thus puts off the *old* and puts on the *new*. Its existence depends on this transformation. Failure means Second Death. Barely to overcome would mean a lower place on the spirit plane – in the "Great Company." Only the "more than

conquerors" will get joint-heirship with their Lord – with exceeding glory and the divine nature.

