

[R.4809: page 136]

‘I KEEP MY BODY UNDER AND BRING IT INTO SUBJECTION’

—1 CORINTHIANS 9:27—

‘I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.’

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. (1 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 WATCH TOWER, MAY 1, 1911
(Extract, p.136.)