

Philippians - Commentaries by Clifford Henry Brown

Change: July 2017, Bodies Shall Be Changed (3:20-21)

"The Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Phil. 3:20, 21.

It is important to see the correct translation of part of this verse; it is "shall transform our body of humiliation," not "vile body." The body is not looked at in Scripture as vile. Our bodies are fitted through grace to be presented to God as living sacrifices. They are bodies of humiliation because they are marked with weakness and infirmity, with the possibility of dissolution and death. But the body in Scripture is not regarded as vile.

This is the reason the monkish idea of punishing the body as something vile is all wrong. When Paul speaks about buffeting his body and keeping it under, he is not speaking of the physical frame, but the lusts that are in the flesh. The human body is not regarded as vile and may be the temple of the Holy Spirit.

With the Christian, that body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. We are to glorify God in it. This body may finally break up and go to pieces, but by-and-by it is going to be changed for one that will never break up or go to pieces — a body that is fitted for glory. When God gave us a body and put us in this world, He gave us a body that was fitted for this world. When He takes us to glory, He will give us a body that is fitted for glory.

C. H. Brown

Christian Truth: Volume 5, Responsibility Recognized (1:1)

"Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons." Phil. 1:1.

The Apostle Paul sends his greeting and love to all saints, but recognizes among them those who stood in a special position of responsibility—the overseers and deacons. In other words, the Church of God is not a democracy where one man's word is as good as another's. It is not a free-for-all. God owns authority in that way in the local assembly. As to its being official, that it cannot be, owing to the broken state of the Church; but that there are those who are in a recognized position of responsibility in the local assembly, no one can deny. At least, if he knows anything about Scripture.

"Esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake." The tendency of the day is to throw off restraint—every man have his way, and each one have as much right to a say as the other. That spirit gets in among the saints of God. In the book of Revelation, when the Lord stands in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, He addresses the angels of the churches; that is, He recognizes those who are in a position of responsibility, and whom He will hold responsible for what He finds in those different churches. That is an important principle. The reducing of everything to a dead level in the Church, generally or locally, leads to chaos.

God is not the author of confusion. God is a God of order, and He would have us recognize that there are those that He has placed over us, whom He recognizes as being in a position of responsibility and authority among us; and if we are wise, we will recognize it, and give them their due place. It is not official, we must confess, but that it does exist, we must also recognize and confess.

Christian Truth: Volume 27, Why Preach the Gospel? (1:18)

"What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretense, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice." Phil. 1:18.

The Apostle rejoiced that Christ was preached. He didn't necessarily have to preach, but he rejoiced if anyone preached Christ.

We heard of a brother who was greatly offended because he was not asked to preach the gospel. Let us ask, Why do we want the gospel preached? I trust it is just for two reasons -for the glory of that blessed One who suffered and died for sinners, and that the lost might be saved. If I am passed over and neglected in preaching the gospel, does that mean the gospel has suffered? No; it may hurt my pride, but perhaps that is exactly the thing I need to show me how much pride is there. C.H.B.