



# Bible Student's Notebook™

## *The Herald of His Grace*

Issue 47

### *Body Building*

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF EDIFICATION

#### Part I

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).*

One of the ways that Paul presents the believers of this present dispensation is as a body. He does not present us as just *any* body: he presents us as the Body of Christ. This being the case, that we are Christ's Body, how very important to Him is the issue of our growth *together*. Just like our physical body, this body must be *interdependent* for maturity and growth to take place. The day has come that we must face the fact: we *need* one another. The Body of Christ needs to observe "Interdependence Day."

This *mutual* growth is called *edification*. Paul is clear on this matter, Christ's Body edifies *itself*, and that, in love (Ephesians 4:16). This issue of edification then, is an important one.

Let's first start with some definitions of edification:

Strong: (#3619) "a structure"; (#3618) "to be a house-builder, *i.e.*, construct"

Webster: "to build, in a literal sense"

The importance of this edification should be obvious to each believer. In fact, many believers speak of it often. "Edify" has become a part of our vocabulary. But do we really know much about it? Do we really know *how* to edify each other? Or, do we simply hang out together hoping that it will just *happen*?

Now, in this study it is our object to go through the epistles of Paul and note every occurrence of this important term "edify." We will pay close attention to the context of its use, as well to any information that may be supplied about it. Can you think of a better way to learn about edification and how it works than from God Himself?

#### **1st & 2nd Occurrences**

Romans 14:19; 15:2

We will look at the first two occurrences of the word together since they appear in the *same* context (Romans 14:1, 15:7).

Let's first look at Romans 14:19 and see some of the

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## Dear Readers,

No, your eyes are not playing tricks on you. You really do have another issue of the *BSN*!

Some of you probably had a “Gomer Pyle” reaction: “Surprise, Surprise, Surprise!” It is hard to believe isn’t it? After all these years of having them trickle out, and now to receive one for three months in a row.

It appears, mainly due to the faithfulness of Andy Sneidar who does our layout work, that we may be able to finally publish the *BSN* on a monthly basis. This has long been our heart’s desire. In fact, we are quite backlogged with articles that we are eager to bring your way. So, hold on to your seats – you might just see another *BSN* next month!

### Authority

In this issue we are printing an article that we recently came across by William R. Newell (1865-1956), entitled *Authority, With Special Reference to Paul*. We are always on the lookout for older grace literature through our used books sources. This booklet was published by the Weir Brothers of Chicago around 1920. It was a transcription of a message delivered by Brother Newell.

### NEWELL AND THE MYSTERY

Our hearts have always held a special place for Brother Newell and his written ministry. Newell had a tremendous impact upon many regarding Paul’s unique ministry and apostleship. In particular, many today (ourselves included) owe Brother Newell a debt of gratitude for helping them to see just who they are in Christ. I am amazed at how often Newell’s name is brought up, when the topic of enlightenment to *identification in Christ* is discussed. In fact, Miles Stanford (author of *The Green Letters, i.e., The Principles of Spiritual Growth*) credits Newell’s commentary on Romans for awakening his own heart to this great truth.

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### Bible Student’s Notebook™

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This biweekly publication (24 times a year) is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God’s abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7)
- the affirmation of God’s purpose to save all mankind through the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11)
- the “preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:25)
- true freedom and liberty apart from the law (Galatians 5:1)
- the organic nature of the church, the body of Christ (I Corinthians 12)
- the distinct ministry of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles (Romans 11:13)
- the importance of receiving all whom Christ has received (Romans 14-15)
- the recovery of *rich* Biblical truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13).
- the completeness of the believer in Christ (Colossians 2:10), with ...
  - total forgiveness of sins (Colossians 1:14)
  - identity in His death, burial, and resurrection (Romans 6)
  - adult sonship position (Galatians 4)

This publication is a joint effort of a few members of the body of Christ. It is a product of our individual lives and ministries together. We do not claim infallibility for its contents. Our readers are asked to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21).

This publication is not connected with any “Movement,” “Organization,” “Mission,” or separate body of believers, but is sent forth to and for all “saints.”

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### PATRIARCHS

Remember that it is our responsibility as husbands and fathers to take the truths we learn from God’s Word, the truths that we hold dear, and impart them to our families.

### The Bible Student’s Notebook™

bsn@studyshelf.com  
www.BibleStudentsNotebook.com

PO Box 265  
Windber, PA 15963  
Office: (800) 784-6010

Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. – Editor  
Andre Sneidar – Managing Editor

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things that may be learned.

*“Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another.”*

1. There is a relationship between *edification* and *peace*.
2. The opposite of edification is *destruction*.  
(Note verse 20 “*For meat destroy not the work of God ...*”)
3. “*Let us*” demonstrates that edification is a conscious, *willful* and *deliberate* decision.
4. The words “*follow after*” show the need for discernment. We must know what *things* “make for peace” and what *things* do not.
5. The phrase “*one may edify another*” marks edification as *mutual* and *corporate*.

Now, how about a look at the overall context of the verse.

1. The *BROADEST* context is that this instruction appears in Paul’s epistles (Romans through Philemon). This instruction, although given specifically to the believers at Rome, applies to all who live in the *dispensation of the grace of God*. This is *current* information.

*“For I speak to you Gentiles, inasmuch as I am the apostle of the Gentiles, I magnify mine office” (Romans 11:13).*

2. The context of the *EPISTLE* to the Roman believers is one of *establishment*. This was the issue upon Paul’s heart as he wrote this letter.

*“For I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established” (Romans 1:11).*

*“Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began” (Romans 16:15).*

3. The context of this *SECTION* of the book of

Romans is *deportmental*. Romans is divided into three distinct parts: Doctrinal (chapters 1-8); Dispensational (chapters 9-11); and Deportmental (chapters 12-16). This last section has to do with the practical, daily outworking of the doctrine, dispensationally considered in the earlier parts of Romans.

This section starts with Romans 12:1-5:

*“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.”*

4. The *immediate* context is one that starts in Romans 14:1 and runs through 15:7. The subject here is *areas of controversy among believers*. The principle is one of *reception*. Notice the first and last verses of this section:

*“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations” (Romans 14:1).*

*“Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God” (Romans 15:7).*

This reception is based upon *divine reception*:

*“Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him” (Romans 14:3).*

Dare we *reject* those whom God has *received*? Are we better or holier than He?

Reception is the *beginning* principle of edification!

(This is part of a continuing series on edification).

# The Dating Game

## AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE HOME

### Part XX

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*"Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart" (II Timothy 2:22).*

**D**ating is a shared event between a male and a female who have made no binding, biblical commitment to one another and who are themselves primarily responsible for their own supervision while on the date (to a lesser or greater degree). They may be given a curfew, but they are entrusted with the enormous responsibility of supervising their own conduct while on the date.<sup>1</sup>

In our last lesson we looked at the longstanding practice of courtship, noting its biblical principles. Times have changed, haven't they? A totally new institution, known as *dating*, has now been **firmly** established as society's standard.

Does it really make any difference whether we pursue a course of courtship or dating? Let us consider some particular areas.

#### DATING, THE SUITOR, AND THE COURT

This "new" standard has diminished, if not altogether removed the issues of the suitor and court. No longer is the evidence of the male's life submitted to the father. Now, the "examination" is between the "couple." Therefore, the focus of the dating experience is placed on independent outings. This is all outside the evaluation of the "court." It is important "evidence" that is withheld from the court. The father no longer has the benefit of all the available evidence.

The female is then the sole, or at least the *primary* object of the male's persuasion. And yet she is the **least** qualified to be judge!

#### DATING AND COVERTURE

The age when the father was the instrumental agent in the formation of a new family unit has, for all practical purposes, ceased. A new institution has usurped his position and coverture. Dating has all but destroyed his role. His function has been reduced to mere "token" approval.

Noah Webster in his 1828 *American Dictionary of the English Language* has no definition listed for our popular use of the word "date" or "dating." That is because dating was not yet a practice at that time. In fact, the word date did not refer to "an appointment ... with a member of the opposite sex" until "ca. 1905" and hence, "the person with whom one has a "date" until "ca. 1944."

Dating has placed the female in a very vulnerable position. She is out from under the effective coverture of her father, while not yet being under the coverture of her "date." She is allowed to fall into a "coverture gap" – a "protection gap," an "identification gap." Thus, the weaker vessel is left unprotected from the often aggressive male.

A Pennsylvania State University report states that:

"Courtship in the traditional meaning of the term does not seem to exist in our society today. ... The old concept of courtship does not fit the present day dating relationship between young people. ... The large sexual component in dating – necking so-called, and petting – constitutes a large part of the attraction of dating ..." *Dating, Mating and Marriage* (pages 47, 48).

1. *Christian Education In the Home*, by Greg L. Price, 1994.

A work published by John Hopkins University Press reports:

“Dating as we know it is a recent phenomenon ... At the beginning of the century, it would have been customary for a young man to call on a ... young woman without the idea of straying from her parents’ parlor or front porch. ...

“Dating had almost completely replaced the old system of calling by the mid-1920s ... Dating moved courtship into the public world, relocating it from family parlors ... to restaurants, theaters, and dance halls. At the same time, it removed couples from the implied supervision of a private sphere – from the watchful eye of family ... – to the anonymity of the public sphere. ...

“Courtship took place within the warm bosom of the family. ... Dating moved courtship out of the home and into man’s sphere – the world outside of the home. ...

“The term **date** was associated with the direct economic exchange of prostitution at an early time. A prostitute called ‘Mamie,’ in letters written to a middle-class benefactor/friend in the late nineteenth century, described how men made ‘**dates**’ with her. And a former waitress turned prostitute described the process to the Illinois Senate Committee on Vice this way: ‘You wait on a man and he smiles at you. You see a chance to get a tip and you smile back. Next day he returns and you try harder than ever to please him. Then right away he wants to make a **date**, and offer you money. ...

“Dating moved courtship into the world of the economy. Money – men’s money – was at the center of the dating system ... Dating, like prostitution, made access to women directly dependent on money ... In a 1925 **Collier’s** article, ‘Why Men Won’t Marry,’ a twenty-four-year-old university graduate exclaimed ... [that] girls who were glad to ‘go with him’ when he had money would not ‘see’ him when he lacked their price. And ‘nice girls’ cost a lot.

“One author, in 1924, made sense of it this way: In dating, he reasoned, a man is responsible for all expenses. The woman is responsible for nothing C she contributes only her company. Of course, the man contributes his company, too, but since he must ‘add money to balance the bargain’ his company must be worth less than hers. Thus, according to this economic understanding, she is selling her company; it was a direct purchase.

“Yet another young man, the same year, publicly called for a halt to such ‘promiscuous buying’.... In **American Magazine**, the author declared a ‘one-man buyer’s strike’ ...

“In all three of these economic analyses, the men are complaining about the **new** dating system, lamenting the passing of the mystic good old days ... before a woman had to be ‘bought’...

“Money purchased obligation; ... money purchased control ... Men paid for everything, but often with the implication that women ‘owed’ sexual favors in return. ...

“The first recorded uses of the word date in its modern meaning are from lower-class slang. George Ade, the Chicago author ... [who] published many slang-filled stories ... probably introduced the term to literature in 1896. ...

“By the mid-1910s, the word **date** had entered the vocabulary of the middle-class public. In 1914, the **Ladies’ Home Journal**, a bastion of middle-class respectability, used the term (safely enclosed in quotation marks but with no explanation of its meaning) several times. The word was always spoken by the exotic, the college sorority girl ...

“National magazines with booming subscription rates promulgated middle-class standards to the white, literate population at large. Women’s magazines were especially important in the role of cultural evangelist. These magazines carried clearly didactic messages to their readership. ... The **Ladies’ Home Journal** [had] a circulation of over one million by 1900.”

## THE PHYSICAL CONTEXT OF DATING

Common dating activities such as caressing, kissing, petting, necking, etc. have become the standard of the day. They not only take place, but are expected, and accepted as the norm. They are **all** acts of unconsummated sex. They are intended, by design, to naturally arouse and lead to consummated sex (intercourse). And to have the former (unconsummated sex) without the latter (consummated sex) is unnatural **and** dangerous.

Sexual contact is clearly to be restricted to the relationship of a husband and his wife. Paul tells us that “it is good for a man not to touch a woman [sexually]” (I Corinthians 7:1), and to do so is fornication (vs. 2). The divine intent of one man and one woman being alone, as is found in the “dating relationship,” is that it results in the two becoming “one flesh” (Genesis 2:24). In other words, the **creational** purpose of the one-on-one, male-female relationship is that they may become “one flesh.” This has been replaced by a **recreational** purpose. Is it any wonder that virginity, in most circles, has become a thing of the past? We are told that 80-90% of the population of the United States are not virgins when they “marry.”

God’s standard of virginity is **very** plain: all unbetrothed are to be sexually uninvolved. Paul appeals to the Body of Christ regarding the seriousness of this issue:

**“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body”** (I Corinthians 6:18).

**“Flee** also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart” (II Timothy 2:22).

A great example of this **fleeing** from fornication can be seen in the life of Joseph. We are told in Genesis 39:7-12 that “he … fled, and got him out” (:12).

The bodies of the husband and wife, as designed by God, are to be given in exchange to each other (I Corinthians 7:5). This is their marriage gift! They are to belong **only** to each other. This is an inheritance that is to be aggressively protected by the father. The marriage gift is not to be a **used, second-hand** item!

Elders, in carrying out their responsibility of teaching God’s truth as related to life, should not neglect passages such as I Thessalonians 4:3-8. In so doing they can teach the saints **how** to properly acquire a wife, thus avoiding **fornication, lust, and the defrauding** of one’s brother (i.e., spoiling of the father’s inheritance).

Modern society’s acceptable standard of dating makes “*provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof*” (Romans 13:13-14). Thus, “dating is rooted in a deceptive practice of working ill upon one’s neighbor” (Romans 13:10).

Let us draw a few contrasts between the “old” courtship and the “new” dating:

<b><u>COURTSHIP</u></b>	<b><u>DATING</u></b>
Father’s role is essential	Father’s role is unnecessary
Family relationship	One-on-one relationship
Sexuality limited to marriage	Sexuality the norm
Espousment is a binding covenant	Engagement is non-binding
Activities planned by the family	Activities planned by the “couple”

Clearly the long standing practice of courtship best preserves the integrity and role of the father and family in the situations where a prospective husband is taking the initiative in finding a wife. Let us not “*follow a multitude to do evil*” (Exodus 23:2). But rather let us preserve and walk in “*the old paths*” (Jeremiah 6:16).

(This is part of a continuing series on the home)

# *Living in the Fullness of God*

by – H.W. Webb-Peploe (1837-1923)  
(edited and abridged)

*"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God" (Ephesians 3:14-19).*

**T**he one thing that strikes me more and more as I near the end of my course on earth is the failure of the Church of God to see what God is offering. This failure is found even in the faithful in regard to the things that God has announced as His loving purpose concerning the believer.

The great majority of professing Christians know and even wish for so painfully little of what God is prepared to give. I look at the Church, and I see the great majority of professing believers living far below their privileges, below their high and holy and heavenly calling.

Paul the apostle prayed "*that He [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory*" (Ephesians 3:16). Let that be the starting point. It is not what we expect but rather what God is in Himself that is to be the measure of His bestowment on us. And if this bestowment could possibly be measured to us in any degree "*according to the riches of His glory*," we would rise infinitely far above what we have ever known or thought of, hoped for or expected in any way. The life that we now live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God (Galatians 2:20) would be infinitely higher than anything we have ever dared to ask for

or thought of claiming (Ephesians 3:20).

God has given to each one of us a grant, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

Many of us have failed to realize that God is calling us by the Holy Spirit to receive His strength in the inner man, the will of the man.

As the will takes from God the mighty power of the Holy Spirit, then the spiritual prevails. Instead of constantly failing, instead of having to mourn – as so many of us have had to mourn – over unceasing failure and faultiness and helplessness, let us realize the magnificence of the gift of God – that we may be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man until Christ shall dwell in the heart by faith.

It is possible that those who until now in their Christian life have experienced ever-recurring

failure might begin to say, as Paul said, “For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (Philippians 1:21).

What a magnificent life ours might be if each of us realized, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). Take what God is offering – the very Christ of God.

Then Christ will see that we go on “that [we may] be filled” (Ephesians 3:19). What we have to do is be filled from the fullness of God. Shall we claim it? Let us hand ourselves over to God, saying, “For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord’s” (Romans 14:8).

Paul wrote, “The life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God ...” (Galatians 2:20b). Think what that means! It means nothing less than a reflection of Christ: Christ my life, Christ my Lord, Christ my provision.

If we realized that the gift of God **is** Christ Jesus in all His fullness, the world would soon see it. It would become manifest at once in character, in life, in conduct and in purpose, and God’s blessing would rest on us in every department of life.

You and I are to realize this: “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20a). By this we are enabled to glorify God in our bodies and in our spirits, which are His (I Corinthians 6:20). Our life is Christ’s and not ours at all.

The Keswick Week, 1920

## What Every True Believer Should Know

by – Andy Visser

In Romans six, verses three and four,  
The old man in us lives no more.

We died with Christ and were buried too,  
And in God’s sight, a creature new.

Why should such a grand and glorious truth,  
Be buried beneath a man-made traditional  
booth?

This message of grace was revealed through  
Paul,  
The blasphemer and persecutor who was  
formerly Saul.

Who at the feet of Gamaliel’s school,  
Which made him an enemy and the devil’s  
tool.

Away with false brethren who came in  
unaware,  
And pollute the Word of God with traditions  
and fare.

The curse of God rests on angel or man,  
Who refute God’s Word and refuse to stand.

For the gospel of glory committed to me,  
Which was hid in God and for Paul to see.

For he died in chains for this message of  
grace,  
How that every believer could be carried up  
in space.

At the Father’s right hand be a part of Christ’s  
Body  
Oh, what a beautiful story for saints to study.

# The Paradox of Grace

by – Cornelius R. Stam (1909-2003)

Perhaps we would appreciate the wonder of God's grace more fully if we viewed it against the background of what He Himself says about the essential principles of justice.

In Deuteronomy 25:1 it is written:

*"If there be a controversy between men, and they come unto judgement, that the judges may judge them; then they shall *justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked.*"*

Well, of course! This is simple, basic justice! Any deviation from this course would be *wrong!*

The Word itself says in no uncertain terms:

*"He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord"* (Proverbs 17:15).

Bildad, though a "miserable comforter," reiterated this basic principle when he said to Job:

*"Behold, God will not cast away a perfect man, neither will he help the evil doers"* (Job 8:20).

Job acknowledged this to be so, for he replied:

*"I know it is so of a truth: but how should a man be just with God?"* (Job 9:2).

Yes, here is the rub. It is so. God is perfectly and infinitely just. The slightest injustice is, and must always be, an abomination to Him. Just where does this leave *us*? We are sinners by nature and practice. Does this not mean that He *must* condemn and punish us?

The story of grace is the answer to this awful question. Here we find what is certainly a striking paradox: God Himself condemning the righteous

and justifying the wicked; forsaking the perfect and helping evil doers.

Behold the spotless Lamb on Calvary, as He cries: *"My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"* Behold the Holy One as Judas kisses Him in base betrayal, as wicked men spit in His face, mock Him, smite Him, scourge Him and nail Him to a tree.

And God, the Judge of all, does *nothing* to stop them. Indeed, He Himself unsheathes His sword and smites the one person in all history who could truly say: *"I delight to do Thy will, O God."*

This is not all, for on the other hand He *saves* the one who is Christ's bitterest enemy; "a blasphemer, a persecutor and injurious." To him He shows "*grace ... exceeding abundant*" and "*all longsuffering.*" Indeed, He sends him forth to proclaim to all, that:

*"To him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness"* (Romans 4:5).

How can all this be *right*? The answer is that the One who died in agony and disgrace on Calvary is God Himself – "*God manifest in the flesh.*" There, at Calvary, "*GOD was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*" (II Corinthians 5:19). It was the Judge Himself stepping down from the throne to the Cross in infinite and matchless grace to represent the sinner and pay for all his sins. Thus the chief of sinners exclaims: *"He loved me and gave Himself for me!"* (Galatians 2:20).

Who will say that *this* is injustice? Injustice? It is justice and more! It is *grace!* He became identified with us and *paid* for our sins that we might be *justified.*

Thus it is that we read in Romans 3:24-26:

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: “Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; “To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus ...”

Under the terms of the Law we find God “showing

mercy unto thousands of them that love Me, and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:6). Yet grace is infinitely more: it is the riches of God’s mercy and love to the “children of disobedience,” the “children of wrath” (Ephesians 2:2-4). And, praise His name, it is all in strictest accord with perfect and infinite justice!

*The Berean Searchlight*  
May 1999

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*Ready*  
by – Bernice Whitman

I Thessalonians 4:14-17

Another year has come and gone,  
The shout did not take place.  
Salvation still is offered you,  
In this the day of grace.

He paid the price of all your sin,  
Believe in Him today.  
Eternal life will then be yours  
Removed from all harm’s way.

# *Jesting*

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

*“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: But rather giving of thanks” (Ephesians 5:3, 4).*

**S**urely there is nothing wrong with wholesome wit. In fact, a merry heart can be a great benefit in day-to-day living (c.f. Proverbs 17:22). A “sense of humor” can, indeed, go a long way. But Paul does warn us of three forms of merriment that are not becoming of the saints. They are (1) filthiness, (2) foolish talking and (3) jesting, and they’re all contrasted with the giving of thanks.

Filthiness would seem rather clear, it is humor without modesty. Surely it would be unbecoming of saints to offer up immoral wit. It’s not who we are.

Foolish talking is humor without moderation. Buffoonery is unbecoming of saints. It’s just not who we are.

Jesting is humor without mercy. It is humor that tears down rather than builds up, and it too is unbecoming of saints. It’s simply not who we are.

These three forms of wit and merriment are as prevalent in our day as they were in Paul’s day. But none of them are who we are!

It is the last of these that I wish for us to consider at this time. Jesting forgets Paul’s admonition to *“let your speech be always with grace”* (Colossians 4:6a).

Let us notice the definition of *jest*:

“To cast reproaches and sneering expressions; to rail at; to utter taunting, sarcastic words; to flout [mock or insult]; to fleer [derision or mockery]; to scoff” (Webster).

“To utter gibes [sneers] or taunts, to give utterance to ridicule; to scoff, jeer, mock” (Oxford).

*Jesting* is a major form of humor in our day – humor that cuts-down and insults. Modern comedy is often built on the foundation of *jesting*. Who can best “one-up” the other in ridicule, taunting, and sarcastic one-liner “comebacks”?

It is sad to see this form of “humor” enter into the life of Christ’s Body. It is unbecoming of saints. It is not who we are, but it does happen. Instead of giving thanks, we give ribbing. Instead of encouraging and edifying, we jeer and taunt – all in the name of “good fun.” Then after we sense that a dear fellow member has been hurt, we are quick with, “Oh, I was just kidding” – or, “I only meant it in *jest*.”

Dearly beloved, let us cast off the jovial jabbing to Adam’s race. We can better use our time together to encourage, edify and with a merry heart give thanks for and to one another.

*“I thank my God upon every remembrance of you” (Philippians 1:3). ■*

# Your Part

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(continued from page 520)

## **AT CALVARY**

One of the things that Newell will be long remembered for is writing that great hymn *At Calvary*. It is one of my personal favorites! "Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan! Oh, the grace that brought it down to man! Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span At Calvary! Mercy there was great, and grace was free; Pardon there was multiplied to me; There my burdened soul found liberty, At Calvary ...."

## **BOOKS BY NEWELL**

Thanks to the faithfulness of two publishers, we still have some of Newell's works in print. Bible Doctrines to Live By publishes *Paul vs. Peter*, and Kregel Publications continues to keep *Romans, Verse by Verse* in print. These titles are available through us. If you do not already own them, they will make valuable additions to your

## **OTHER OLDER WORKS**

We will continue to stay on the lookout for old copies of great works such as Newell's. If you have, or come across, any good literature by saints of the past, please consider making us aware of them. We would love to make more such materials available

through the BSN.

## **Body Building**

The second installment of Body Building can also be found in this issue. In this portion we are looking at the first principle of edification: *reception*. This truth is precious to our hearts. How wonderful that we have been received by God, and that we have the blessed privilege of receiving one another in the same manner! I trust that you will find great joy and refreshment in this truth!

## **Our Catalog**

Our catalog is at the printer. We are having it printed in tabloid newsprint style, which will keep our costs down. We are having 5,000 copies printed, so if you could use extra copies please feel free to let us know.

Until the next issue, we remain,

Yours in His eternal bonds,



Clyde Pilkington