



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Issue 48

Authority

With Special Reference to Paul

by – William R. Newell (1868-1956)

(edited and abridged)

ORIGINAL PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Since Calvary, God has been demonstrating His graciousness. Marvelous grace! Now Paul is God's perfect demonstration for all time of how grace operates. Paul's word, therefore, "Be ye followers of me, even as I am of Christ," is a command of Divine authority to every one that believeth.

What if the church refuse to follow Paul? Let the answer be found on every page of church history. Instead of grace, law; instead of the spiritual, the natural; instead of the headship of Christ, the popery of man; instead of an equal brotherhood, ecclesiasticism; instead of love of the brethren, persecutions, affections set upon things earthly, instead of heavenly.

Brother Newell commends himself to all the saints by his own example in the gospel. With the preachers of grace in all ages he has had to suffer for it, and we are comforted through him because the fruit of the Gospel has thus been made the more evident in him.

In view of the all important character of the teaching of this work, we urge it upon the ministry of the saints that you assist in the task of making it known or available to those at home and abroad who would profit by such instruction.

Weir Brothers
Grace Street
Chicago, c.1920

AUTHORITY

With Special Reference to Paul

There does not seem to be any hope of getting the saints of God into a permanent attitude toward God that befits the present attitude of God toward us, except we are instructed concerning the matter of Authority.

Now you know God committed Authority to Moses. I would define *Divine Authority* in some such way as this: Divine Authority, in the sense in which I am dealing with it now, is Divine power committed to a man, with the effect, in the conscience of those to whom this man is sent, of the consciousness of sin if they do not obey what the man says. Divine Authority is that delegated power of God to a creature – to a man – by means of which those to whom he is sent know they are committing sin if they do not obey his authority.

Now you will agree with me that most people do not think, these days, that they are committing sin if they reject Paul's authority. The reasons for this are several. In the first place, they do not understand the heavenly Gospel. Most of Paul's

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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.

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 ...”

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Bible Student’s Notebook™

ISSN: 1936-9360

No. 48 – March, 2000

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.”

SUBSCRIPTION

U.S.: 6 months (12 issues) - \$24⁰⁰; 1 year (24 issues) - \$42⁰⁰; 2 years (48 issues) - \$72⁰⁰; 3 years (72 issues) - \$90⁰⁰;

Foreign: 1 year (24 issues) - \$60⁰⁰;

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.

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(recompiled and edited)

words have no meaning for them, especially the great doctrinal utterances that describe the nature, state and destiny of those that are *in Christ*.

Many people when reading the Bible do not know but what any man who may be talking is talking to them. They make no discrimination. Instead of learning what God wants them to learn, for discipline and instruction, they put themselves right under the words of the person they may be reading.

There are those, for instance also, that take the Lord Jesus in the four Gospels for their authority, and they really think there is no authority but Him, forgetting that He has spoken in another way since then, – an entirely different way. I would like to remind everyone that we have no recorded words of Jesus Christ by any stenographer. All the words of the Lord Jesus were given to us by the Holy Spirit. Let's not forget that. Therefore that raises our estimate of Paul, or rather shows that Paul was used by God in the same way as was Matthew, Mark, Luke or John or the author of the Book of Acts.

Moses

Let me then mention a few of those people that have been used by God in the way of authority. First, let us speak of Moses. He went up into the mountain, you remember, in the sight of all the people. God called him up and gave him the Ten Commandments. *"I am Jehovah thy God, who brought thee up out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."* This God that brought them out of Egypt had to introduce Himself to them. Then He went on by this man Moses to speak to Israel, so that when Moses came down from the mountain he had two tables of law, written on stone, written with the finger of God.

When the people saw that Moses delayed his coming down from the mount, they gathered themselves unto Aaron and said, *"Make us a god which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we know not what is become of him."* When Moses came down from the mount, he heard a noise as of war in the camp, and he saw the calf they had made and saw them dancing. Then his

anger rose, and he cast the tables out of his hands and brake them beneath the mount. Afterwards he was called up to God, by God, and was told to bring two tables of stone with him, and the same words were written.

Then later on, you remember, there came a rebellion against the authority of Moses, recorded in the sixteenth chapter of the book of Numbers. Korah, Dathan and Abiram rose up before Moses, with two hundred and fifty princes of the congregation, and they assembled themselves together against Moses and Aaron and said unto them, *"Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and Jehovah is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the assembly of Jehovah."* God split open the earth, and they went down alive into hell. For Moses said, *"If these men die the common death of all men, Jehovah has not spoken by me; but if the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, then let all the congregation of Israel know that these men have disobeyed Jehovah."* Then Korah, Dathan and Abirani and two hundred and fifty of the people, their princes and little ones, were swallowed up. It was more necessary that the authority of God be maintained on earth than that they should stay on it.

Other Authorities in Israel

After Moses came Joshua with authority from God, and the people knew they must obey what he said. Then there were Aaron and the priestly line. They had the Urim and Thummim, and all that. Then there was Samuel, the first of the prophets. He called God to witness, and God thundered from heaven in answer. So that in the days of Israel there was always some one speaking with authority.

Then they asked for a king, and God gave them Saul, to show His displeasure. Then God gave them David. David had authority over the hearts and consciences of all the people, so that they knew David spoke from God; and the people that rebelled against it were called "the wicked." Not the wicked of the Gentiles; the wicked of the Gentiles are not spoken of in the Psalms, but the wicked of Israel.

Then we go on down through the prophets and come to the end of them, – four hundred years before Christ, – and there was no one to speak with authority. It was very much as in the days of the judges. Every man did that which was right in his own eyes. God withdrew Himself.

Then, at last, out in the wilderness there was a man that spoke from God, not as the Pharisees, but directly from God. John the Baptist was recognized in the hearts and conscience of all the people as a man who spoke with authority from God. He didn't need to have miracles to bear him up. *"John indeed did no sign."* He was preparing the way for another. Remember the authority God gave him over the consciences of men. Jesus described the nation afterwards by saying the common people, the publicans and sinners, justified God, being baptized with John's baptism. That is, they knew God was speaking to them by John the Baptist, and they justified God by being baptized with this baptism that John prescribed to them. Yet the leaders of the nation, the Pharisees and the Scribes, were not baptized of him. We read this in Luke. That's why they rejected Jesus Christ. They wouldn't consent to the fact that they were sinners.

Now our Lord Jesus came after John. I want to say, first, that any one who confuses John the Baptist with the present dispensation, as many do (tracing their denomination clear back to John the Baptist) only shows the awful darkness the Reformation still left. I want to say that I am done, I hope, of being afraid to say right out what ought to be said concerning this difficulty of the saints' being so tied up to the Reformation time, out of which all the denominations came, and which itself came out of the year 1000, which was the darkest Babylonian Captivity the Church ever saw. I say, I hope I am not afraid any longer to speak right out. I am telling the truth about the denominations. What you say about me amounts to nothing, for I am simply a servant. It's time we cut loose from our bigotry.

The Lord Jesus Christ

So our Lord Himself then came. Now beloved, I am anxious that we go on in the Truth. Therefore,

I want to say that our Lord Jesus didn't come to us. You never will learn the Truth unless you believe what Christ said. Jesus Christ said He was not sent *"but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel."* When He made that statement He was outside, on the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. Therefore that Syrophoenician pressed it till she got down to her place – simply a dog.

Now, if the Lord Jesus, – who always deals truly and loves souls more than you do, or I – if He compelled that woman to take the attitude, with respect to Israel, of a dog (now I want you to follow his line of reasoning, please, carefully), – if our Lord Jesus compelled that Syrophoenician woman, that Gentile, to take the attitude of a dog before she could get blessed, although He was outside the coasts of Israel at the time; if because of His being sent only to the house of Israel, the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and because of the fact that He was not only sent to them but not sent to anyone else; if therefore He would compel her to take, so far as earthly things are concerned, the attitude of a dog compared to children at the table, saying, *"It is not lawful to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs,"* how tremendously close then must our Lord have been following the Divine will, if I should say, the dispensational will, of His Father!

If the Lord Jesus says He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel, then He was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel! I suppose that that incident occurred to show you and me the difference between God's elect children sitting, at His table and the dogs, the Gentiles, who were not elect.

Now notice! God reversed things after Israel crucified His Son and wouldn't learn the lesson of grace. I say when God reversed things He did so completely. So that now He says there is no difference between Jew and Greek, and you and I are told to believe that.

Now let me make some sort of statement that will sum this up. The Lord Jesus' authority, in the days of His flesh, did not extend to the Gentiles. Notice! In saying that, I do not touch the matter of His Deity nor of His being Lord of all. He came

to this world as the Messiah of Israel. He came as King of Israel. Therefore, if you go back and put yourself under the Sermon on the Mount, you are going to have trouble.

You say, “Mr. Newell, you are just robbing me of Scripture on the right hand and on the left.” All right! What do you know about it? Are you clear about Scripture? You say, “I like the words of Jesus.” Why, so do I! But I don’t like them the way I used to. I used to take them instead of Moses’ law, hoping to keep them myself.

In this very Bible Class there is a certain family that have been taught that unless they sold everything they had and gave it to the poor, they couldn’t have salvation. One man gave away over a hundred thousand dollars – made a pauper of himself to get salvation; but he didn’t get it, so far as I know. I know this because I have personally dealt with this family. Yet Jesus said to the young man, “Go and sell everything you have.” Our Lord was dealing with him because he was hanging on to the Law. You know very well that’s the truth of the matter. The young man said, “What good thing shall I **DO** to inherit eternal life?” Jesus wasn’t contending with Moses at all, He told him to go to Moses and find out what is written in the law. He sent him to the authority.

So I want to call your attention once again to the fact that God’s Word says Jesus Christ was sent to Israel. So our Lord spoke with authority to Israel. When He comes the second time, He will speak to the nations (i.e., Gentiles) with a mighty voice.

Well, these things being so, we come to the book of Acts. Peter was given authority, and he was given authority for quite a while. But his was a Jewish mission. They were to preach the gospel first at Jerusalem and in all Judea. Peter was sent to the Circumcision. We read of him last going to the Circumcision. He writes his epistle to the “strangers and sojourners of the dispersion of Israel.” In the second of Galatians, you remember, Peter, James and John gave Paul the right hand of fellowship that he should go to the Gentiles and Peter, James and John, to the Circumcision. The reason I speak of this is, that we may learn

by simple faith to find the truth for ourselves and be governed by it. We are not here merely to be taught, but that we may be governed by the Truth.

Now, after Peter is called thus by God, there at Jerusalem and Judea, we have the conversion of Saul of Tarsus. His conversion was not any more important, in itself considered, than any of the others, and was by the same means. He was told to arise and be baptized. That was the Jewish prescription, by Peter himself. “Repent” he said at Pentecost, “and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins ...”

Spiritual authority among the Gentiles, however, is not given to Peter, James or John, but to Paul. In Colossians 1:24 Paul writes of himself, “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body’s sake, which is the church.” Now that’s the Body of Christ. Paul reveals it. Nobody else does. “Whereof I was made a minister.” You will find nobody else who claims to be a minister of this Church. What was Moses a minister of? The Law. Paul is a minister, as we read in :23, “of the gospel, which ye heard, and which was preached to every creature heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister.” He was made a minister, just as Moses was made minister of the Law. He was made minister of the Gospel. He was also made minister of the Church. Nobody else knew the things he revealed, at all.

You take these character preachers that preach the four Gospels and say you ought to imitate Jesus Christ. It sounds like blasphemy to contradict it, but I want to say to you that Jesus Christ in the four Gospels is *not* talking to Gentiles at all, except to call them dogs, or heathen. But now God has sent an entirely different message to the Gentiles. Who is going to tell it? Is Moses? Who is going to tell you, from the Spirit? You were taught you had to go back into the four Gospels. Christ’s death is at the close of the Gospels. The Gospel couldn’t be preached in the four Gospels.

Peter, James and John went out and showed their nation, as far as they would listen to them,

that this Jesus is the Messiah, according to Old Testament prophecy. When Paul went to the Gentiles, who didn't know anything about the Scriptures, he simply proclaimed this glorious favor from heaven, and told the story of God's reconciling the world to Himself by Jesus Christ.

One of the most intelligent physicians I know got perfectly astonished at the idea of God just reconciling the world to Himself. He had been one of these accusers of sinners. He came to me and said, "I spoke to a woman today and said, 'Do you know God isn't reckoning your trespasses to you?' She said, 'I hadn't heard of any such thing.' I told her the news. She said, 'If I could believe that, I would be so happy.' I told her that she could go away happy. I showed her that it was written, and she went away full of joy. I'm not going to preach anything else after this."

God didn't send Paul to us with the Law, but with the truth about the Body; He sent him with the Body Truth. So Paul says, *"If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandment of the Lord"* (I Corinthians 14:37).

Now of course we have gone over the Gospel that Paul preached, so often, – the Gospel he preached: Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures. That must be the first great thing to us in the book of Romans. Second, Christ was buried. There we have the sixth of Romans, and our being buried with Him. Next, Christ was raised. Then comes Paul's doctrine, marvelous doctrine of our being raised with Christ; union with Christ in death, burial and resurrection. *"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above ..."* (Colossians 3:1). Our fellowship is with our risen Head! The doctrine of the Body is connected with the resurrection of Christ. Then we have the experience Christ, formed in you, which is connected with Christ's appearing. He had been seen, He has been known, He can be known.

The revelation of Christ in the heart is a part of Paul's Gospel. Those four great things: Christ died for our sins, Christ was buried, Christ was

raised, Christ appeared, – all are the framework of the Pauline doctrine. Of course, Paul also taught the doctrine of the House of God. There are two characters of the Holy Spirit's dwelling: first, in you and me as individual saints. *"Now if any man hath not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His"* (Romans 8:9). Second, in the Body of Christ, so that we have fellowship with one another, even at far distances. If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; if one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.

All the doctrine of the love of the saints is based on the fact that we are one in Christ. We that are many are one body in Christ. We are members of one another. These and all the doctrine of our affections, etc., are based on the doctrine of the Body, in the Pauline Gospel; all the doctrine of our growth, in the fourth of Ephesians, is set forth by that which every joint supplieth; the body makes its increase to the building up of itself in love. Oh what doctrine are these!

I touch on these things because there is the whole body of Truth which has nothing to do with Moses and the Law of Israel or the Lord's ministry. Not that we do not enjoy the Gospels, but I want you to remember that Christ has spoken to us by Paul.

Let me put it another way. Do you believe Jesus Christ lived in Paul and spoke in him? Do you believe He lived in him in a way that makes him a sample believer? *"Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all his longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting"* (I Timothy 1:16). Therefore, the grace of God has full manifestation in Paul. Was Paul puffed up about it? No, he puffs himself clear down! *"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints"* (Ephesians 3:8). Do you think he believed that? He surely did! Was he that? Yes he was. Hear me! You say, "Oh, he was running himself down." No, he wasn't. He was telling the truth.

Didn't our Lord say that he who is least among you will be the greatest? Then he is less than the least. Why? Because he was the greatest sinner? God doesn't tell the reason why, but He says

it's a fact. Therefore I can't glorify Paul, for he is less than you are. On the other hand, Paul says, "*Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing*" (Galatians 5:2). Paul says, "*But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed*" (Galatians 1:8).

When he came down among those apostles - Peter, James, and John and those who were reputed to be somewhat, he said, "... *whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person ...*" (Galatians 2:6). Was that conceit? It was walking in the true fear of God, as God wanted him to, even if it meant that he had to resist Peter to the face.

Beloved we have just as real an authority in Paul as Israel had in Moses. You have no protection against Moses, except in Paul. Here comes someone, making great claims on us, and we just say, "You can't find us, because we're dead and buried." Who said so? The Holy Ghost did, by Paul. You can't put the Law over us, because we're dead, buried, and risen. You can't put it over Christ, and so you can't put it over us, because we're in Him. They can't get you, if you recognize the authority of the Pauline Gospel. But if you go to the four Gospels, where the Lord Jesus Christ has to defend the right keeping of the Sabbath, although He says He is Lord of it, you have no protection.

Did you ever hear of a heresy based on the Pauline Epistles? Come on now! You stay in the house God gave you. Oh, how the devil loves to come and say, "Moses wants to talk with you outside." Bless the Lord for grace! Now, we didn't go after grace - it came for us! It wasn't caused on earth: it started in God's heart. It started there! Grace did. It's reigning! Grace is reigning! Do you believe that? It's reigning grace! Grace reigning through righteousness. You say, "People are going to abuse this." Grace reigns by righteousness. Look at Calvary! God didn't let grace reign until after righteousness had been satisfied on the cross. The saints have a great outlook. Wonderful! ■

Dependable Dependence

by - C.H. MacIntosh

"For we walk by faith, not by sight"
(II Corinthians 5:7).

Our Father often uses our failure to foster and fortify our faith.

"Faith is dependence upon the Father. And this God-dependence only begins when self-dependence ends. And self-dependence only comes to its end, with most of us, when sorrow, suffering, affliction, broken plans and hopes bring us to that place of self-helplessness where we throw ourselves upon our Father in seeming utter helplessness and defeat. And only then do we find that we have learned the lesson of faith; to find our tiny craft of life rushing onward to a blessed life of fruitfulness and service undreamt of in the days of our fleshly strength and self-reliance.

"The divine counsel shall stand, and the divine good pleasure shall be accomplished. What relief for the heart amid rebuffs and disappointments! The Father will perfect that which concerns His own; and even where there are mistakes and failures, as alas! There are in abundance with all of us, His rich grace abounds over all, and actually takes occasion from our very mistakes to shine out all the more brightly - though, assuredly, the mistakes must produce their own painful and humiliating consequences.

"It is the remembrance of this which alone can give calm repose in the midst of the most discouraging circumstances. If we take the eye of faith off the Father, our souls must soon be overwhelmed. It is our privilege to be able, in our little measure, to thank our Father in view of everything, and take refuge in His eternal counsels, which must be made good despite all the unbelief of the Christian, and all the malice of Satan."

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith groweth exceedingly" (II Thessalonians 1:3).

None But The Hungry Heart, Vol. 10, p. 20
Miles J. Stanford

Body Building

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DOCTRINE OF EDIFICATION Part II

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs” (Romans 14:1-2).

Paul’s comments in Romans chapter 14 are prefaced by the context of “love” at the end of chapter 13.

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law ... Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. ... Let us walk honestly, as in the day; ... not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” (:8-14)

As we look at Romans 14, we will notice that Paul presents seven principles of edification.

PRINCIPLES OF EDIFICATION As Seen in Romans 14

- I. Reception (Romans 14:1)
- II. Forbearance (Romans 14:3)
- III. Lordship (Romans 14:4)
- IV. Charity (Romans 14:15)
- V. Peace (Romans 14:19)
- VI. Limited Liberty (Romans 20-21)
- VII. Personal Faith (Romans 14:22-23)

In this lesson we will look briefly at the first of these principles.

Principle #1: Reception

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

weak

Strong: (#0770) “to be feeble”; This word is taken from #0772, which is translated “without strength” in Romans 5:6.

Webster: “not able to bear a great weight,” “not strong ... easily broken.”

Arndt-Gingrich: “over-scrupulous.”¹

(Scrupulous: “hesitating to determine or to act; cautious in decision from a fear of offending or doing wrong. Be careful in moral conduct, not to offend scrupulous brethren” – Webster).

Paul contrasts *weak* with *strong* throughout the passage. Therefore, there will always be a full spectrum of growth (or lack of growth as the case may sometimes be) within the Body of Christ. Not everyone is at the same level. The believers run the gamut from infants (i.e., those in need of milk) to adults (i.e., those who use strong meat). There are even those who have been spiritually retarded in their growth (I Corinthians 3:1-3; Hebrews 4:12-14).

Paul places himself among the believers who are operating in their full adult sonship, as he demonstrates in Romans 15:1:

“We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves.”

1. W.F. Arndt and F.W. Gingrich, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957) p. 115.

in the faith

Here we have identified, for us, *where* the weakness is – it is very specific – it is “*in the faith*.” Now where exactly does this weakness lie? Not just in faith, as an action – “*weak in faith*” (i.e., subjective faith), but in faith as in the source of information being believed, “*weak in **the** faith*” (i.e., objective faith).

Throughout Paul’s epistles the term “*the faith*” is a reference to the body of doctrine committed to his trust (note I Timothy 4:1; 5:8; 6:10, 21; II Timothy 3:8; 4:7; Titus 1:13; Romans 14:1; I Corinthians 16:13; II Corinthians 13:5; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 1:23).

The weaker brother is *not* said to be weak in love for the Saviour, in character, or in sincerity. The weaker brother is *weaker* in that body of truth committed to Paul. There are two examples given in this chapter as we shall see. One is that of eating meats, and the second of observing days. Paul’s revelation deals with both of these issues. The weaker brother is under the bondage of his conscience because he does not adequately *understand* Pauline truth and therefore, neither does he understand his liberty under grace. “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32).

“Those weak in the faith had not the complete knowledge of their position in Christ, though they knew and loved Him.”²

Might we add that it is possible, maybe even somewhat probable, that those who are “weak” or “strong” concerning a single issue may be just the opposite where it concerns another issue. A brother may be weak in one area and strong in another. Although, as a general rule, one truth leads to another and strength begets strength.

receive

The issue in this passage, as we have already noted

2. Arno C. Gaebelin, *Gaebelin’s Concise Commentary on the Whole Bible*, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux Brothers, 1985; formerly published as *The Annotated Bible*) p. 921.

is *reception*. It is the opposite of *rejection*. The strong are to receive the weak. The new-comer, *odd*, or *different* brother or sister does not need to learn how to “fit” in. They are to be received *just as they are*. This allows each believer to be real, not hypocritical. This allows each believer to feel safe.

Strong: (#4355) “to take to oneself.”

Webster: “to embrace,” “to welcome; to lodge and entertain; as a guest,” “to bear with or suffer.”

Bullinger:³ “to take or receive to *and* for one’s self.”

Thayer:⁴ “grant one access to one’s heart; to take into friendship and intercourse.”

Bultema:⁵ “taking into one’s intimacy.”

English synonyms for “receive”: accept, accommodate, acknowledge, embrace, and salute.

English antonyms for “receive”: refuse, balk, challenge, reject, scorn, and snub.

A wonderful example of this *reception* is when Aquila and Priscilla “*took him [Apollus] unto them*” (Acts 18:24-26). Apollus was *weak in the faith*, for he was unaware of Pauline revelation. The phrase “*took him unto them*” is one word in the Greek – (Guess what word?) – #4355 – *proslambano* – the same word translated “*receive*” here in Romans 14:1.

Peshito defines the word receive as *Areach forth the hand*.⁶ Which reminds us of the origin of our

3. E.W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English & Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975) p. 626.
4. Joseph H. Thayer, *Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1977, Originally published in 1901) p. 548.
5. Harry Bultema, *Romans: Truth in Paradox*, (Grand Rapids: Grace Publications, 1989) p. 155.
6. Peshito quoted by William S. Plumer, *Commentary on Romans*, (Grand Rapids: Kregal Publication, reprint 1993, originally published, *Commentary on Paul’s Epistle to the Romans*, with an introduction on the Life, Times, Writings,

custom of shaking hands. In days gone by the empty hand would be offered out – as a token and gesture of *peace*. The hand, without weapon, would be shown to be “*without harm or injury*.”

“The word [received] ... conveys the sense of warmheartedness.”⁷

but not

Paul now tells us how *not* to receive our brothers – “to doubtful disputations.” Just what does that mean? Well, let’s ask the translators of the Authorized Version. They wrote this alternate translation in the margin of the 1611: “*Or, not to judge his doubtful thoughts*.” To this Tyndale, also using the Textus Receptus, agreed, translating, “*not in disputing and troubling his conscience*.” The 1602 edition of the Geneva Bible (also from the Textus Receptus) translates “to doubtful disputations” as “*for controversies of disputations*.”

“The strong are *not* to receive them [i.e., the weak] for the purpose of passing judgements on their opinions. That is, they are not to be received so as to allow opportunity to corner them with the intention of criticizing their weakness ...”⁸

“He cannot be argued out of his views; argument would only tend to make him more firm in his stand. He must *grow* out of them (by the Word of God), and in the meantime he is not to be criticized and judged, but loved.”⁹

“The brother is to be welcomed cordially into fellowship and love rather than argued out of his difficulties.”¹⁰

“They are not to be made to feel that the community tolerates them but condemns their scruples.”¹¹

“As for the brother who is weak in faith, make him feel at home in your fellowship and don’t argue

with him about his scruples.”¹²

Godet suggests that the fundamental idea is against getting into any debate which would only end in vain reasonings.¹³

We are not to feign his reception until we can get him to “see things our way.” We are to receive him. We are not to exert “peer pressure” to “convert” him to our understanding. We are to lovingly, meekly, and genuinely receive him.

“I have discovered that an *attitude* of love on our part is quickly detected by those who do not think as we do – and they also detect any lack of love! ... The basis of Christian fellowship is life in the Lord Jesus Christ, not the amount of light that a man has... . For fellowship, Christians must exclude debate, argument, and dispute. The church is not a debating society where affirmatives and negatives battle for a decision and the loser adopts the position of the winner.”¹⁴

doubtful

Strong: (#1261) “**debate**”

disputations

Strong: (#1253) “judicial estimation,” (From #1252) “**withdraw from**,” “to **discriminate**,” “**judge**,” “be **partial**.”

Webster: “the act of **disputing**; a reasoning or argumentation in opposition to something, or on opposite sides; **controversy in words; verbal contest**, respecting the truth of some fact, opinion, proposition or argument.”

Zodhiates:¹⁵ “not for scrutinizing of thoughts, i.e., not with searching out and pronouncing **judgment** on their opinions.”

Take special notice of the words printed in **bold** in these definitions: they are for emphasis of this lesson. What we learn is this: we are not to follow

and Character of Paul, New York: Randolph & Co., 1870).

7. Kenneth O. Gangel, *Romans 13-16 and Galatians*, (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1989) p. 21.

8. Kenneth L. Gentry, Jr., *The Christian and Alcoholic Beverages: A Biblical Perspective*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1986) p. 74.

9. Oliver B. Greene, *The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Romans*, (Greenville: The Gospel Hour, 1974) p. 458.

10. W.H. Griffith, *St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans: A Devotional Commentary*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1974) p. 367.

11. Garvie quoted by W.H. Griffith.

12. C.S. Lovett, *Lovett's Lights on Romans*, (Baldwin Park, CA: Personal Christianity, 1975) p. 354.

13. Godet cited by W.H. Griffith.

14. Donald Grey Barnhouse, *God's Discipline*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) pp.164-166.

15. Spiros Zodhiates, *The Complete Wordstudy Dictionary New Testament*, (Iowa Falls: World, 1992) p. 432.

the course of disputes and debates which invariably lead to discrimination, partiality and judgement (i.e., condemnation). We should remember that *debates* are a work of the flesh (c.f. Romans 1:29; II Corinthians 12:20).

Debate is defined as –

Strong: (#2054) “a quarrel, i.e., (by impl.) wrangling:–contention, debate, strife, variance.”

Webster: “contention in words or arguments,” “strife in argument or reasoning, between persons of different opinions, each endeavoring to prove his own opinion right,” “dispute; controversy,” “strife; contention.”

“Not all believers have the same knowledge of the things of Christ nor the same faith to appropriate liberty in the Lord. Therefore they do not have the same freedom from tradition. In every fellowship there are those whose consciences will not allow them to do this or that. They have scruples. They feel that if they violate certain taboos, the Lord will be displeased with them. Those bound by such scruples, Paul labels as *weak in the faith*. Then there are those who understand that Christ has set them free from customs and tradition and allow them to do anything they can do as “unto the Lord” (Colossians 3:17). They might mow their lawns on Sunday, live in an expensive home, have a glass of wine on special occasions, see a certain movie, or believe in cremation with complete liberty, doing so as unto the Lord. Such a Christian the apostle regards as *strong in faith*. Because of the big difference between these two types of Christians, the apostle feels it’s important to counsel each how to treat the other. In the first verse, his instructions are aimed at the stronger Christian. He is to open his heart to the weaker Christian, admitting him to the fellowship with **NO** thought of straightening out his scruples.”¹⁶

“Acceptance means you are valuable just as you are. It allows you to be the “real” you. You aren’t forced into someone else’s idea of who you really are. It means your ideas are taken seriously since they reflect you. You can talk about how you feel inside and why – and someone really cares.

“Acceptance means you can try out your ideas without being shot down. You can even express

16. Lovett, p. 355.

heretical thoughts and discuss them with intelligent questioning. You feel safe. No one will pronounce judgment on you, even though they don’t agree with you. It doesn’t mean you will never be corrected or shown to be wrong; it simply means it’s safe to be you and no one will destroy you out of prejudice.”¹⁷

“For there to be true maturity, people must be given room to grow, which includes room to fail, to think on their own, to disagree, to make mistakes. Grace must be risked or we will be stunted Christians who don’t think, who can’t make decisions, who operate in fear and without joy because we know nothing but someone else’s demands and expectations.”¹⁸

THE MIND OF CHRIST¹⁹

To receive when others reject,
To treat each one with true respect.
To shield when others throw stones,
To be with one who’s all alone.
To think and chose to see the very best,
To live like this is nothing less
Than to possess the mind of Christ,
My highest goal,
The Lord’s delight, the desire of my soul.
The Father’s heart will always guide my life,
If I will have in me the mind of Christ.

To build up when others tear down,
To seek the lost until they’re found.
To give grace where it’s needed most,
Rejecting pride when others boast.
To sacrifice my all without regret,
To live like this is nothing less than
Than to possess the mind of Christ,
My highest goal,
The Lord’s delight, The desire of my soul.
The Father’s heart will always guide my life,
If I will have in me the mind of Christ.

One author has some interesting words from Romans 14:1 in discussing various views among believers. He warns us of three attitudes that must be avoided:

“(1) We must avoid *irritation*. An impatient

17. Gladys M. Hunt, *That’s No Generation Gap!* (Eternity Magazine, Oct. 1969) as cited in *Grace Awakening*.

18. Chuck Swindoll, *Grace Awakening*, (Dallas: word, 1990) pp. 63.

19. Geoff Thurman and Michael Puryear, *Silent Witness*, (New York: Columbia Records, 1995).

annoyance with such a person gets nowhere ...

“(2) We must avoid *ridicule*. No man remains unwounded when that which he thinks precious is laughed at ... Laughter will never woo the other man to a wider view; it will only make him withdraw still more determinedly into his rigidity.

“(3) We must avoid *contempt*.

“It may well be that our own age is overfond of discussion for discussion’s sake. It is fatal to give the impression that Christianity consists of nothing but a series of questions under debate.”²⁰

14:2 For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.

one

“Consideration for other people’s viewpoints is the outward manifestation of love’s merciful conduct. Paul wants us to understand, first of all, that *uniformity is not imperative*. We do not all have to believe exactly alike, nor do we all have to behave exactly alike. God does not make all people on the same last²¹ nor pour them all into the same mold.”²²

20. Barclay, pp.180-181.

21. Last - “a block of wood or metal shaped like a foot, used in making and repairing shoes.” *Oxford American Dictionary*.

22. John Phillips, *Exploring Romans*, (Neptune, NJ: Loizeaux

(continued from page 522)

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

weak

See definition in :1

The weaker brother, in the context, is the one who does not eat meat and observes days. Limitations on food, and the observance of days belonged to the law in Israel’s former program. This law has been done away in Christ. Therefore, dietary restrictions (I Timothy 4:1-4) and the observance of holy days (Galatians 4:9-10) have been abolished.

herbs

Strong: (#3001) “a vegetable”

Daniel 1:8, 12 will provide us with an understanding of how one could misunderstand their liberty in relationship to meats.

“While Paul selects the eating of meat to illustrate the weaker brother, he is setting forth a principle that goes far beyond meat to include many things about which Christians have scruples today.”²³

Reception is the **beginning** principle of edification.

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

Brothers) p. 234.

23. Lovett, p.356.

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
3/2000