



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

Presenting *every man* perfect in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28

Volume 23
Issue 571

Divisiveness and Contention

and Our Divine Calling to Peace

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

One of the principal manifestations of immaturity and carnality in a believer's life is *divisiveness* and *contention*. Simply stated:



PEACE IS OUR DIVINE CALLING

Looking at some believers we might be led to think that conflict and contention are our divine calling from God. Their marital lives, their relationships with others, their ministries – even their own hearts – appear filled with discord, strife and fighting. This may indeed be the normal course of some; but it's *NOT* our calling as believers. The fact is that ours is a calling of *peace!*

*Let the **peace** of God rule in your hearts, to which also YOU ARE CALLED in one body; and be you thankful* (Colossians 3:15).

*GOD HAS CALLED US **TO peace*** (I Corinthians 7:15).

PEACE:

The Divine Counterpart of Grace

Peace is the divine complement of grace. Paul begins each and every one of his letters with "Grace and peace."

Grace to you and peace (Romans 1:7).

Grace to you, and peace (I Corinthians 1:3).

Grace to you and peace (II Corinthians 1:2).

Grace to you and peace (Galatians 1:3).

Grace to you, and peace (Ephesians 1:2).

Grace to you, and peace (Philippians 1:2).

Grace to you, and peace (Colossians 1:2).

Grace to you, and peace (I Thessalonians 1:1).

Grace to you, and peace (II Thessalonians 1:2).

Grace, mercy, and peace (I Timothy 1:2).

Grace, mercy, and peace (II Timothy 1:2).

Grace, mercy, and peace (Titus 1:4).

Grace to you, and peace (Philemon 1:3).

There are not mere words. They are not mere salutations tacked on to letters. After all, God is not only the "God of all grace" (I Peter 5:10), but He's the "God of peace" as well.

The God of peace (Romans 15:33).

The God of peace (Romans 16:20).

The very God of peace (I Thessalonians 5:23).

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God is the author of peace.

*God is not the author of confusion, but of **peace** (I Corinthians 14:33).*

Our peace comes from Him.

*Now the Lord of peace Himself give you **peace** (II Thessalonians 3:16).*

In fact, we have peace *with* God Himself.

*Therefore being justified by faith, we have **peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5:1).*

He made this peace through Christ's work at Calvary.

*Having made **peace** through the blood of His stake¹ (Colossians 1:20).*

He Himself *is* our peace.

*He is our **peace** (Ephesians 2:14).*

As faith is exercised, God fills us with peace.

*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and **peace** in believing (Romans 15:13).*

The peace of God keeps our hearts and minds.

*The **peace** of God, which passes all understand-*

1. What is often translated as "cross" is merely "an upright stake or pale, without any crosspiece." – A.E. Knoch (*Concordant Keyword Concordance*, page 63). For more information read [THE "CROSS": Was Christ Nailed to a "Cross" or a "Stake"?](#) by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

ing, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:7).

We are to let God's peace rule our hearts.

*Let the **peace** of God rule in your hearts (Colossians 3:15).*

God wants us to live in peace.

*Live in **peace** (II Corinthians 13:11).*

We are to be at peace with each another.

*Be at **peace** among yourselves (I Thessalonians 5:13).*

We are called to live peaceably with others as well.

*Live **peaceably** with all men (Romans 12:18).*

*Being at **peace** with all mankind (Concordant).²*

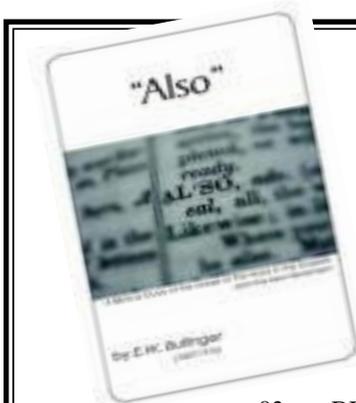
PEACE: A Hallmark of Spirituality

Peace is a hallmark of spirituality; it is the fruit of God's Spirit manifested in our lives.

*The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, **peace** ... (Galatians 5:22-23).*

*To be spiritually minded is life and **peace** (Romans 8:6).*

2. "Follow peace with all" (Hebrews 12:14).
"Pursue peace with all" (Concordant).



83 pp., BK

134 pp., PB

"Also"

by — E.W. Bullinger

This work consists of a listing and explanations of 378 New Testament passages where the word "also" may be ambiguous or misleading to the English reader.

www.EWBullinger.com

Peace is what we are to pursue and follow.

Follow righteousness, faith, love, **peace** (II Timothy 2:22).

Let us therefore follow after the things which make for **peace** (Romans 14:19).

PEACE: *The Secession of Againstness*

What is peace? It is the *secession of againstness*,³ the absence of alienation, enmity and estrangement. It's freedom from schism, division, separation, hostility, strife, conflict, hatred and fighting.

Now granted, *all* around us is a devastating flood of *againstness*. After all, we live in "this present evil age" (Galatians 1:4), where those walking in "the course of this age" (Ephesians 2:2) are "alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them" (Ephesians 4:18). This *againstness* is rooted in ignorance and is constantly apparent in all circumstances that surround us.

Added to these base conflicts comes the tenacious *againstness* toward the truth from those who are, knowingly or not, "enemies⁴ of the cross¹" (Philippians 3:18).

Regardless of this ceaseless deluge of animosity and hatred, God has called us as the *contrast of againstness*; He has called us to the *secession of againstness*: He has called us to peace.

In an age that is at war *against* God, whose inhabitants are hostile toward Him, who are "haters of God" (Romans 1:30) and are "enemies" in their minds by wicked works (Colossians 1:21), we stand in stark contrast as living examples of *God's attitude toward the world*.

Sadly, in an administration characterized by *grace*⁵ there are those who attempt to represent "the God of peace,"⁶ "the God of patience,"⁷ "the God of hope,"⁸ "the

*God of comfort*⁹ and "the God of love,"¹⁰ with a divisive and contentious spirit. Instead of manifesting love, peace, gentleness, patience and meekness, they display contention, division and strife.

Schismatics – those who are divisive and contentious – are to be *avoided*.¹¹ Such, regardless of the otherwise "soundness" of their "doctrinal positions," are actually hazardous *hindrances* to the truth as well as dangerous *distractions* from the unity of the spirit.

We need not be influenced by those who are contentious and divisive. As we come to embrace our higher calling, that of *keeping the unity of the Spirit* that God has established, we are grounded in "the bond of peace."¹²

EXCUSING OURSELVES FROM CONTENTION AND STRIFE

From a party-man,¹³ after a first and second admonition, excuse thyself (Titus 3:10, Rotherham).

The "bond of peace" is the divine high-road to which we have been called. We are thus *free* from being pulled down into fleshly and carnal divisiveness and contentiousness. We are at liberty to *excuse ourselves* from all such wrangling.

It is really quite simple: it takes at least two to argue and fight. No one can really be at war all by themselves. As an act of faith, we can refuse to be one of the two. We can honorably and graciously *excuse ourselves* from that which is a grief to God's Spirit.

Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitter-
(see **DIVISIVENESS**, page 4974)

9. II Corinthians 1:3

10. II Corinthians 13:11

11. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you have learned, and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

It is not those who have incorrect doctrine who are to be avoided, but those who have an incorrect spirit: those who are divisive. Such divisions among believers are contrary to the nature of the doctrine which Paul taught: "grace and peace."

12. Ephesians 4:3

13. *Party-man* is defined as "a factious man" (Noah Webster, 1828); *faction* being defined as "tumult; discord; dissension."

Tumult: "commotion, disturbance or agitation"

Discord: "variance; opposition; contention; strife; any disagreement which produces angry passions, contest, disputes"

Dissension: "disagreement ... producing warm debates or angry words; contention in words; strife; discord; quarrel; breach of friendship and union"

3. Secession: the act of withdrawing from.

Againstness: The state or quality of being against.

4. *echthros* (ἐχθρός) "hostile" (*Strong's*, G2190).

5. Ephesians 3:2.

6. Romans 15:33

7. Romans 15:5

8. Romans 15:13

Paul's Stern Warnings Against Divisiveness and Contention

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

In no less than fourteen passages Paul fervently warns against the carnality of a divisive spirit. We will now catalog his persistent warnings against such deceptive attitudes of the heart. In these passages Paul will use ten different Greek words in his passion to stress the serious nature of a contentious spirit.¹

Romans 1:29-32

*Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, **debate** [eris²], deceit, malignity; whisperers, backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, without understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

Romans 13:13-14

*Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in **strife** [eris²] and envying; but put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.*

Romans 16:17

*Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which **CAUSE divisions** [dichostasia³] and offend*

es contrary to the doctrine⁴ which you have learned; and avoid⁵ them.

I Corinthians 1:10-12

*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no **divisions** [schisma⁶] among you; but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind⁷ and in the same judgment.⁸ For it has been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are **contentions** [eris²] among you. Now this I say, that every one of you says, “I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.”*

- “dissension, division” (Thayer).

4. Special note should be made that it is not those who have incorrect doctrine who are to be avoided, but those who have an incorrect spirit: those who are divisive. Such divisions among believers are contrary to the nature of the doctrine which Paul taught: “*grace and peace.*”

5. “*Incline yourselves out away from them*” (Dabhar).

6. Σχίσμα (**schisma**):

- “a split or gap” (Strong);

- “schism” (Bullinger);

- “parties” (Rotherham);

- “division, dissension” (Thayer).

- SPLIT-effect (Concordant Keyword Concordance)

7. This “mind” is not some supposed doctrinal “likemindedness,” rather it is the “mind” of Christ – the mind of humility:

*“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfill you my joy, that you be **likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.** Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in **lowliness of mind** let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. **Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, **he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross**” (Philippians 2:1-8).*

8. The “same judgment” is that of esteeming “others better than” ourselves (i.e., the likemindedness of Christ).

“But why do you judge your brother? Or, why do you set aside your brother? ... Let us not therefore judge each other anymore: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Romans 14:10, 13).

“Be kindly affectionate one to another with brotherly love; in honor preferring one another” (Romans 12:10).

1. In the next issue of the *Bible Student’s Notebook* we will have a chart of these ten words.

2. ἔρις (**eris**):

- “contention, strife, wrangling” (Thayer);

- “strife, quarrel, especially rivalry, contention” (Bullinger);

- “the expression of enmity” (Vine);

- “enmity or zeal in action, evil competition” (Concordant Keyword Concordance).

3. Διχοστασία (**dichostasia**):

- “disunion, discord” (Bullinger);

I Corinthians 3:1-3

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are you able. For you are still carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and **strife** [eris²], and **divisions** [dichostasia³], are you not carnal, and walk as men? For while one says, "I am of Paul;" and another, "I am of Apollos;" are you not carnal?

I Corinthians 11:18-19

When you come together as the ecclesia, I hear that there are **divisions** [schisma⁶] among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also **heresies** [hairesis⁹] among you, that they who are approved may be made manifest among you.

I Corinthians 12:25

That there should be no schism [schisma⁴] in the Body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.

II Corinthians 12:20

Lest there be **debates** [eris²], envyings, wraths, **strifes** [eritheia¹⁰], backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults ...

Galatians 5:19-21

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, **variance** [eris²], emulations, wrath, **strife** [eritheia¹⁰], **seditions** [dichostasia³], **heresies** [haire-sis⁹], envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like...

9. αἵρεσις (haire-sis):

- "a party or disunion" (Strong);
- "dissensions arising from diversity of opinions" (Thayer);
- "sect" (Bullinger; Concordant Version translation).

10. ἐριθεία (eritheia):

- "faction" (Strong);
- "party-spirit, faction" (Bullinger);
- "a desire to put one's self forward, a partisan and fractious spirit" (Thayer);
- "STRIFE" (Concordant Keyword Concordance).

Philippians 1:15-17

Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and **strife** [eris²]; and some also of good will: the one preach Christ of **contention** [eritheia¹⁰], not purely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defense of the gospel.

Philippians 2:3

Let nothing be done through **strife** [eritheia¹⁰], or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem the other better than themselves.

I Timothy 6:4,5

He is proud,¹¹ knowing nothing, but diseased about questions and **strifes of words** [logomachia¹²], whereof comes envy, **strife** [eris²], slander, evil suspicions, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself.

II Timothy 2:22-26

Follow righteousness, faith, love, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart; but foolish and unlearned questions avoid, knowing that they do gender **strifes** [mache¹³]. And the servant of the Lord must not **strive** [machomai¹⁴]; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will.

11. "Conceited" (Dabhar)

12. Λογομαχία (logomachia):

- "to contend about words" (Thayer);
- "word-battles, war about words" (Bullinger);
- "controversies" (Concordant Version translation);
- "LAY(say)-FIGHT (Concordant Keyword Concordance).

13. Μάχη (machē):

- "battle, that is, controversy" (Strong);
- "a fight, battle, contest (Bullinger);
- "a fight or combat; ... of persons at variance, disputants etc., strife, contention; a quarrel" (Thayer).

14. Μάχομαι (machomai):

- "to quarrel, dispute" (Strong);
- "to fight ... of those who engage in a war of words, to quarrel, wrangle, dispute" (Thayer).

Titus 3:2-3, 9-11

To speak evil of no man, to be **no brawlers** [ama-chos¹⁵], but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another ... Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and **contentions** [eris²], and

strivings [mache¹³]; about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is a **heretic** [aihretikos¹⁶] after the first and second admonition reject; knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sins, being condemned of himself.¹⁷ ■

15. ἀμαχος (amachos):

- "not contentious; abstaining from fighting" (Thayer);
- "unquarrelsome" (Dabhar);
- "un-fighting" (Concordant Keyword Concordance);
- "pacific" (Concordant Version translation).

16. αἰρετικός (aihretikos):

- "a schismatic" (Strong);
- "divisive person" (Holman);
- "a party-man" (Rotherham);
- "a sectarian man" (Young, Concordant);
- "one who acts from party spirit, a factious person" (Bullinger);
- "Sectarianism is essentially preferring to associate with a class or clique." – A.E. Knoch (1874-1965), *Concordant Commentary on the New Testament* (Titus 3:10)

17. For more information on this subject see A.E. Knoch's study "The Fall of Satan" [Bible Student's Notebook #547](#).

DIVISIVENESS (continued from page 4971)

ness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be kind to each other, tenderhearted, being gracious to each other, even as God for Christ's sake has been gracious to you (Ephesians 4:30-32).

the carnality of party-men.

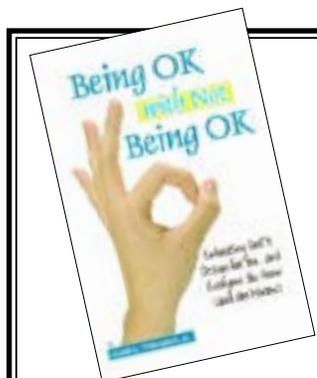
Answer not a fool according to his folly, lest you be like him (Proverbs 26:4).

DEMEANING THE TRUTH IN OUR TRUST

We can fellowship with anyone, but once they become divisive and contentious, we can simply excuse ourselves from their disruptive discord and faithfully remain in our high-calling.

Humble, gentle, gracious spirits are such a breath of fresh air standing in contrast to wide-spread pride and arrogance of our age. Some who rail against Christendom with a clamoring spirit don't actually realize how much like them they really are. It is dreadfully demeaning to the truth divinely placed in our trust, to take "grace and peace" and attempt to manifest it in ungracious againstness. ■

We are under no obligation to enter into debate or respond to divisiveness and contention. It is all vanity. Those with factious spirits can't possibly argue with themselves. So, we can bring it to a close – at least as far as it relates to ourselves. We need not be party to



134 pp., PB

See order form.

I have read it completely three times. I always refer back to certain chapters. – **FL**

When I read it, it was like I could breathe again. Your calming words lead me to a greater realization. – **OH**

**Being OK with Not Being OK –
Embracing God's Design for You ...
and Everyone You Know (and Don't Know)**

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

For now, you're broken, and you aren't going to be "fixed." Granted, you may have some days that are better than others, some circumstances that seem to indicate that you are "OK," but the wearisome cycle simply will recur.

Thus it is by design – by divine design. Father is bringing you to a place where you are OK with not being OK, where you simply rest in His current purpose and plan in your training and development for that grand and magnificent culmination that He has so wonderfully and skillfully designed especially for you – in your next life.

Thank you for this! It brought such peace and rest to me, and brought a greater understanding of God's great love for all His creation. That He alone is in control of everything is mind boggling to say the least! – **NM**

So fantastic! Such peace!! – **Australia**

Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

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This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the proclamation of the riches of God's abundant, exceeding grace (Romans 5:20; 11:6; Ephesians 1:7);
- the affirmation that God will 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 in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 1:1-3);
- 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 freedom from sins (Colossians 1:14);
 - union in His death, burial and resurrection (Romans 6);
 - adult sonship position (Galatians 4).

We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication. 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 "church," "denomination," "movement," "organization," "mission," "creed," "meeting," "school," "conference" or "fellowship."

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ABBREVIATION KEY

<i>Scripture Version</i>	Concordance (Knoch)
(Unless otherwise noted all Scripture quotations are taken from the <i>Bible Student's Version</i>).	CL: A Critical Lexicon and Concordance (Bullinger)
CV: Concordant Literal Version	CWS: Complete Word Study Dictionary (Zodhiates)
DAR: Darby Translation	FoS: Figures of Speech (Bullinger)
DT: Dabhar Translation	SEC: Strong's Exhaustive Concordance
FF: Ferrar Fenton Bible	TGL: Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon
KJV: King James Version	UR: Unsearchable Riches
RE: Rotterdam's Emphasized Bible	VED: Vine's Expository Dictionary
WT: Weymouth Translation	YAC: Young's Analytical Concordance
YLT: Young's Literal Translation	
<i>Reference Sources</i>	<i>Reference Notations</i>
AA: Analytical Analysis (Welch)	<i>cf.</i> – compare
BDB: Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew Lexicon	<i>e.g.</i> – for example
CB: Companion Bible Notes & Appendixes (Bullinger)	<i>et al.</i> – and others
CC: Concordant Commentary (Knoch)	<i>etc.</i> – et cetera (and so on)
CKC: Concordant Keyword	<i>ff.</i> – and the following
	<i>i.e.</i> , – that is

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