



Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Grace

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

Volume 42
Issue 1029



Tidbits of Truth #69

“Tidbits” is a column dedicated to short comments, thoughts, studies and excerpts.

I suppose that all who do biblical research wish at times that they could set forth fragmentary and unfinished ideas in printed form without people thinking that a final and definitive conclusion has now been chiseled into imperishable granite which shall stand forever as the final word on the subject dealt with. Any such conclusion will be far from correct. — Otis Sellers (1901-1992)

The Concordant Version

[Excerpt:] The Word of God does not change, but the translation and understanding of it must continually be adjusted more truly to what the Word actually is saying. From the first issue of *Unsearchable Riches* in October 1909 there has been a call for adjustment in much of the usual and dominant thinking concerning what God is saying in the Scriptures ... At first the *Authorized Version* of 1611 (somewhat adjusted, itself) was used for the most part. But it soon became apparent that a new translation was needed, based on a Greek text that reflected the original wording as accurately as seemed possible. This was a gigantic challenge and task, involving much drudgery and perseverance. A first edition of the *Concordant Version* was issued in 1926, joined with a *Lexical Concordance* in 1931. Then a new approach using different typefaces and superior letters to indicate the Greek text more literally in the translation itself was issued in 1942, joined by the *Keyword Concordance* in 1944. This too was revised in 1966 under the name *Concordant Literal New Testament*, again revised slightly in 1976. Yet now we are struggling to prepare a further (and in some ways a more radical) revision to be called the *Concordant Version New Testament*, designed to accompany the *Concordant Version Old*

Testament, first issued in 2014 and slightly revised in 2021.

But why all this? It is hardly noticed even by fellow believers, and when it is noticed there is still much disagreement about what God is saying. Nevertheless, God continues to operate all in accord with the counsel of His will (Ephesians 1:11), and if in any way He uses us to testify to this fact and to what He has made known in His Word as to His counseled will, may it be so that He continues to do so in this small effort of a concordant translation and ministry.

— Dean H. Hough

Unsearchable Riches, Vol 115, No 1 (2024)

“The Lake of Fire”

[To K.G.:] The term “*Lake of Fire*” appears only in the book of Revelation. Paul never once mentions it at

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Bible Student's Notebook™

Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal

ISSN: 1936-9360

Volume 42, No. 1029 – July 22, 2024

Scripture education in a weekly format!

This free electronic publication is dedicated to:

- the absolute sovereignty and deity of God (Romans 11:36);
- 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 through the death, burial and resurrection of Christ (I Timothy 2:3, 4; 4:10; Titus 2:11);
- the universality of death and resurrection (I Corinthians 15:21);
- the unique gospel of Paul – which he calls "my gospel" (Romans 2:16; 16:25; II Timothy 2:8; I Corinthians 15:1-4; Acts 13-28; Acts 20:24);
- the "preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret in ages past" (Romans 16:25);
- the epistles of the present Secret Administration being Ephesians & Colossians (Ephesians 3:2, 9; Colossians 1:25);
- true freedom and liberty apart from law (Galatians 5:1);
- the organic nature of the One Body (Ephesians 4:16);
- the Secret Administration, being the operational revelation for today (Ephesians 3:9);
- the unpropheesied, Celestial hope and calling of the One Body (Colossians 3:4);
- the distinct message and ministry of Paul, the apostle to the nations (Ephesians 3:1-3);
- 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 and ascended seated position among the celestials (Ephesians 2:6);
- adult sonship position (Ephesians 1:5).

This publication is the product of humble efforts of ordinary men intended to stimulate the earnest study of Scripture. We do not claim infallibility for the contents of this publication; thus they are not meant to imply finality on any subject discussed, or that further research would not add further light from the Word of God. God's storehouse of truth is inexhaustible, so draw on its wealth by prayerful study. 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."

We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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all. It is plainly a part of Israel's program, restricted to a very narrow timeframe within that program.

If people today were in **danger** of this "Lake of Fire," why didn't Paul even once warn them about it? Why didn't he instruct us to warn them? Isn't this extremely odd?

It's also interesting that there is no mention or warning of the "Lake of Fire" **anywhere** in the Hebrew Scriptures either. For example, isn't it odd that God warned Adam about "death" but not the larger more looming "second death"? Also, isn't it significant that none of the prophets warned the past generations of Israel concerning this significant judgment?

There is so much confusion in Christendom that results in their failure in "rightly dividing" or "correctly cutting" the Word of Truth (II Timothy 2:15).

— Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Divine Speculator? or Divine Investor?

[Excerpt:] Theology views creation as God's *speculation* which makes an eternal torture-house, or else an eternal tomb, out of a portion of His Universe. It would seem to be the inevitable cost of any gamble. [However,] God's *investment* in creation will yield Him large returns!

— [Alan Burns](#) (1884-1929)
Unsearchable Riches, Volume 11 (1920)

There Is No Conscious Existence in Death

[Excerpt:] The Bible is clear that there is no conscious existence in death.

For in death there is no remembrance of You; in the unseen, who shall acclaim You? (Psalm 6:5, CV).

For the living know that they shall die, but the dead know nothing whatsoever; there is no further hire for them; indeed remembrance of them is forgotten... All that your hand finds to do, do with your vigor, for there is no doing or devising or knowledge or wisdom in the unseen where you are going (Ecclesiastes 9:5,10, CV).

The giving up of life is the giving up of the soul.

Men who give up their souls for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 15:26, CV).

Seeing that because of the work of the Lord he draws near unto death, risking his soul that he should fill up your want of ministration toward me (Philippians 2:30, CV).

Apart from resurrection, those who have died have perished.

Now if Christ is being heralded that He has been roused from among the dead, how are some among you saying that there is no resurrection of the dead? Now if there is no resurrection of the dead, neither has Christ been roused.
(see **TIDBITS**, last page)



624 pages

See [order form](#) under
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Paul the Apostle: His Acts and Post-Acts Ministries

(A Comprehensive Compilation)

This ultimate dispensational collection of 97 works by 28 authors spans over 130 years. It is an extensive reference work that is essential for every library. Authors include: Sir Robert Anderson, Oscar Baker, A.E. Bishop, Robert C. Brock, E.W. Bullinger, J.J.B. Coles, E.H. Clayton, Vladimir Gelesnoff, Stephen Hill, Richard Holden, M. Jaegle, Win Johnson, A.E. Knoch, Adlai Loudy, William Mealand, D.L. McCroskey, William R. Newell, Alan Reid, Danny Russino, John D. LaVier, Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., Frank Neil Pohorlak, A.A. Sandoz, R.B. Shiflet and Charles H. Welch.



Reader's Question Box #78

A Sense of Humor

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

[Click here to listen to this article](#)

and vileness and stupid speaking or insinundo, which are not proper, but rather thanksgiving (Ephesians 5:4, CV).

Q: I would really appreciate your help with Ephesians 5:4. ... I specifically worry because I am someone who loves witty jokes. It's simply my sense of humor. ... My mom says that I'm the family comedian when we're on holiday, since I love making jokes and making myself and others laugh. ...

I think humor is really useful in dealing with negative situations. Hence, I feel like I'm clearly breaking Paul's advice, of which he says that these jokes should not "*be named*" amongst us (:3). At the same time, I cannot imagine Paul really banning all banter, since that is the foundation of happy, joyful times and friendships. ...

As you said previously, if something doesn't seem to be compatible with pure grace, it probably isn't correct. This is why I need your help, I cannot figure this out! I either beat myself up over making jokes with friends, or I don't make the jokes and that feels even worse. – **D.R.**

A: Thank you for your great question. You must know that, even though I find tremendous value in the *Concordant Version*, the bottom line, however, is that it's the work of men, as are all translations. This means that it's prone to influence by tra-

dition and human (mis)understanding. Ephesians 5:4 is such a perfect illustration.

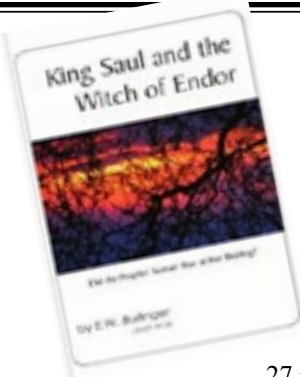
Having been granted an understanding of *absolute* grace, we are more easily made aware, in our hearts and minds, when such grace has been *violated*. Again, Ephesians 5:4 is a perfect example.

and vileness and stupid speaking or insinundo, which are not proper, but rather thanksgiving (CV).

What is remarkable to note at the outset concerning this verse is that each of the three words in bold font are used only **once** in the entirety of Scripture. These three Greek words appear **only** here in Ephesians 5:4,

αἰσχρότης (*aischrotēs*) G151 (SEC)
μαρολογία (*mōrologia*) G3473 (SEC)
εὐτραπεία (*eutrapelia*) G2160 (SEC)

Long ago, the early English translators of the Greek Scriptures fixed these words with a very "sober" and "moral" tone. Sadly, as a result, nearly all translators since have simply followed suit. Religious piety set a code that prohibited certain language as "taboo" – even frowning on lighthearted humor as being "un-



King Saul and the Witch of Endor:

Did the Prophet Samuel Rise at Her Bidding?

by – E.W. Bullinger (1837-1913)

This is a short read, yet full of intriguing and perhaps controversial ideas for you to consider. It also includes an appendix "The Witch of Endor," by A.E. Knoch (1874-1965).

27 pages

See [order form](#) under "Bullinger."



spiritual.” (Heaven forbid that we should laugh!)

Note the rendering of Ephesians 5:4 in the following early English translations:

Ethir filthe, or foli speche, or harlatrye, that perteyneth not to profit, but more doying of thankyngis (Wycliffe, 1385).

Nether filthynes nether folishe talkyng nether gestinge which are not comly: but rather gevyng of thankes (Tyndale, 1525)

Neither filthinesse, neither foolish talking, neither iesting, which are things not comely, but rather giuing of thankes (Geneva, 1587).

These early English translations clearly fixed the tone for this verse. These words were translated into a certain religious tradition, of some Puritans and reformers, that held the impropriety of humor in general. At best, lightheartedness was viewed suspect, at worst, contrary to their perception of spirituality.

When we study, a key element in defining words is to trace their usage throughout the rest of Scripture, the reason being that usage defines meaning. Herein enters the dilemma with these three words: since this verse is their only use in all of Scripture, there are no such resources available to us, outside of the immediate context. So, our only meaningful help can come from the direct context of Paul’s final revelation itself.

Whatever all these of words mean, two things are certain:

- (1) they all are absolutely unique to the Secret Administration of Grace, and

- (2) they all stand in stark contrast to this broader context of “*grace*,” and within the narrower context of “*thanksgiving*.”

and vileness and stupid speaking or insinuating, which are not proper, but rather thanksgiving (CV).

So, in other words, what we know *contextually* about these three words is that they are distinct, by contrast, from (1) *grace*, and (2) *thanksgiving*.

Whatever these class-of-words are, they are incompatible with grace and thanksgiving. They are words contrary to them. They are *ungracious* and *unthankful*.

Thus, Ephesians 5:4 is prefaced by Paul’s statement only seven verses earlier:

Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers (Ephesians 4:29, KJV).

Whatever this “*corrupt*” language is, of which Paul writes, it stands in contrast contextually to that which is “*good to the use of edifying*” and that which “*ministers grace*.” “*Corrupt communication*” is that which is *unedifying* and *ungracious*. Thus, it is words that are “*hateful*” (MLT), i.e., “*harmful*” (ALT). These are “*corrupt*” because they are *unkind* and *unloving* words.

The book of Colossians also sheds light on the nature of the language that we use. It is Paul’s companion epistle of the Secret Administration.

But now, put off all such things as anger, rage, malice, slander, abusive language from your mouth (Colossians 3:8, NET)



Spirit, Spirits And Spirituality

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

Most of the material centers on Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, with such topics as our spiritual blessings among the celestials, the sealing and earnest of the spirit, and the unity of the spirit. Spiritual warfare is discussed, as well as matters concerning the human spirit and the Holy Spirit of God.

157 pages

See [order form](#) under “Knoch.”



This “*abusive language*” is that which has *anger, rage, malice and slander*. Thus, Paul’s final word on speech is,

Your word being always with grace, seasoned with salt, perceiving how you must answer each one (Colossians 4:6, CV).

“*Always with grace.*” There’s our *north star*¹ – our steadfast guiding truth. Grace is always the abiding principle during the Secret Administration. After all, what else would we expect for “*the Dispensation of the Grace of God*” (Ephesians 3:2)?

Notice that Paul does not, in this verse, instruct “**WHAT** you must answer,” but, “**HOW** you must answer.” How? – graciously, thankfully, kindly, lovingly. This is always in harmony with who we really are.

Thus, additionally, another word, back in Ephesians 5:4, is used only three times in all Scripture. Not surprisingly all three occurrences are found in Paul’s last three epistles: Ephesians 5:4; Colossians 3:18; Philemon 1:8. The word is ἀνήκω (*anēkō*) G433 (*SEC*), translated “*proper*” in the *Concordant Version*.

and vileness and stupid speaking or insinuating, which are not proper, but rather thanksgiving (CV).

The *Concordant Keyword Concordance* gives us the makeup of the Greek word *anēkō* as, “UP-ARRIVE.” In agreement with all of these verses, Paul encourages the use of language that brings us and those with whom we speak UP, so as to ARRIVE at a higher plane. Our words are never to be contradictory to the truth of our higher allotment. Could humor be contradictory to grace? It could be. But it need not be.

Do *ungracious* and *unthankful, unkind* and *unloving* words contradict grace? Always.

Does *slander, mockery, disrespect, reproach, gossip* – *sarcastic, divisive, angry and insulting language* – contradict grace? Always.

Surely there is nothing wrong with *wit*. In fact, we are told that “*a merry heart*” can be a great benefit in day-

to-day living (cf. Proverbs 17:22). After all, “*There is a time to laugh*” (Ecclesiastes 3:4).

Truly, a *sense of humor* can, indeed, go a long way. As J.R. Miller (1840-1912) wrote,

There is no inconsistency between holiness and laughter. ... Wit has a blessed mission. Life is so hard, so stern, with so many burdens and struggles, that there is need for all of the bright words we can speak.²

So, is Paul even addressing humor in this and similar passages? We think not!

Again, whatever Paul is referring to throughout his passages concerning the nature of our language, it is in harmony with his companion comment in Colossians 4:6:

Let your speech be always with grace (KJV).

Thus, we might render Ephesians 5:4 accordingly,

nor³ unkind,⁴ nor divisive,⁵ nor slanderous⁶ words which are not uplifting⁷ – but instead thanksgiving. **BSN**

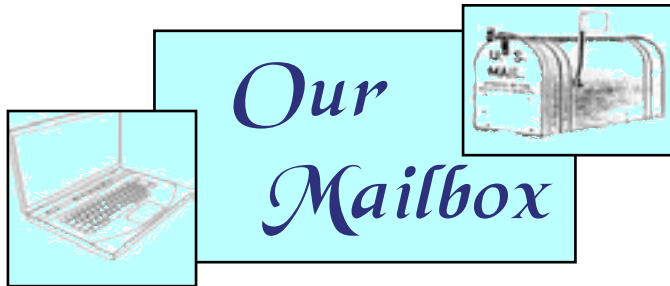
TOPICS:

Major: Edification; Ephesians 5:4; Grace; Laughter; Q&A; Thanksgiving

Minor: Colossians 4:6; Love; Religion; Secret Administration; Study; Tradition; Translation

2. [The Best of J.R. Miller, Volume 2](#), on the [order form](#) under “J.R. Miller.”
3. “Nor” throughout (KJV, ASV, JWNT, PNB, TCNT).
4. “Ugliness” (CL); as my mother would say if I were to speak unkind words, “Don’t be ugly.”
“Shamefulness” (G150; SEC). The idea here may be that these are words that are spoken that, if they were made publicly known, one would be ashamed of having uttered them.
5. “Words of division” (MLT).
6. “Scurrilous-talk” (GSNT; MNT; MLT); “scurrility” (TGL); “... used in a bad sense meaning a scoffer, a sneerer” (CWS); scurrilous, adjective: “very rude and offensive, and intended to damage somebody’s reputation” (Oxford); “accusations or stories [that] are untrue and unfair, and are likely to damage the reputation of the person that they relate to” (Collins); “expressing unfair or false criticism that is likely to damage someone’s reputation” (Cambridge); “of a malicious or slanderous nature; defamatory” (American Heritage); “gossip” (MSG, undetermined word order).
7. ἀνήκω (*anēkō*) – G433, from G303 (ἀνά – *ana*) meaning “up,” and G2240 (ἵκω – *hēkō*) meaning “to arrive, that is, be present” (SEC); “UP-ARRIVE” (CKC).

1. The North Star is a navigational guide used by sailors before modern technology. As fixed in position relative to other stars, it thus symbolizes direction, guidance, stability and purpose.



I wanted to let you know I really, really loved [BSN 1024](#), especially the article [by Steve Martin on “Chill-axing.” It’s really nice to hear from a fellow believer regarding relaxing outside of Scripture, and just in God’s presence. Really awesome stuff, it helps me understand I’m not slacking by not studying Scripture that much myself. ... [When] I don’t feel that calling at the moment, and that is fine, God is working in me, nonetheless. ... Take it easy, I love you and feel at peace ... Much gratitude towards you and Father for working in you. – *Netherlands*

I have to say I feel like a kid in a candy store. My wife and I love it all and are growing each and every day. God’s truth is healing us both. We’re growing out of the old dogma we endured most of our lives. All for a purpose as we know. If someone would’ve said to me a couple of years ago that we would be buying all these books I would’ve laughed. These books are priceless. – *WI*

The notes on the I Corinthians 15 study [BSN 1022] is so insightful to explain the many coming roles associated with the varying resurrections and their assigned positions and duties, and the fact that expanding governance of Christ has no end ... wow! Isn’t

it amazing how relevant the glossed over passages become the more understanding Father allows us to grasp? I will have to have a new body because I’m getting tired just thinking about all that we will be involved in. – *IN*

I just passed 77 years of age and have come to the conclusion that the Father’s goal for me is to ultimately praise and glorify Him. In this life I have been exposed to many teachers who think they have the absolute truth on everything. They do not. ...

Keep up the work you do in offering your Study Shelf books and booklets, I have learned so much from that resource. – *OH*

I’m a huge fan of the Bible Student’s Press, and have made many purchases over the years, having found most items unavailable elsewhere. – *NJ*

I’ve been listening to Clyde since 2016. I love his teaching. – *WV*

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! May God continue to bless you and use you as a vessel to get the truth out. People may get a taste of the Word of God, but we are eating the whole meal. I love happy meals! – *PA*

I am still studying the Salvation of all, and a seemingly new piece of these puzzles is fitting. Thank you for sharing your studies online, which is helping to get this understanding. – *UK*

BSN

Sharing Your Story

It is profoundly inspiring to hear accounts of individuals’ spiritual journeys towards the realization of God’s boundless love and grace. Observing the unique ways in which divine intervention manifests in different lives to fulfill His purpose is both uplifting and affirming. It serves as a comforting reminder that we are part of a larger community that shares our faith.

We invite you to share your own transformative experience. Rest assured, the process is designed to be as seamless as possible for you. You may choose to submit a written account, which our editorial team will be pleased to refine in collaboration with you.

Alternatively, if you are more comfortable speaking about your journey, we offer the option of conducting an interview. Our team will then transcribe and craft your story. In either case, you will have the opportunity to review and approve the final version prior to publication.

We eagerly await your contribution. Please feel free to reach out via email or phone. Your story will undoubtedly serve as a valuable source of inspiration and encouragement to our community.

Steve Martin
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TIDBITS (continued from page 8653)

Now if Christ has not been roused, for naught, consequently, is our heralding, and for naught is your faith. Now we are being found false witnesses also of God, seeing that we testify by God that He rouses Christ, Whom, consequently, He rouses not, if so be that the dead are not being roused. For, if the dead are not being roused, neither has Christ been roused. Now, if Christ has not been roused, vain is your faith – you are still in your sins! **Consequently those also, who are put to repose in Christ, perished.** If we are having an expectation in Christ in this life only, more forlorn than all men are we (I Corinthians 15:12-19).

— J. Philip Scranton
Unsearchable Riches, Volume 92 (2001)

The Death of Humanity and The Death of Christ

There is sorrow in the death of those near us, family, companions, friends and especially of fellow believers, and there is loss in the death of every human being. Death is the big evil. But that evil of the death of God's Son nearly two thousand years ago produces the greatest of all goods.

The death of Christ in faith and obedience unto the cross gives us joyful and peaceful expectation of the death of death and end of sin. ... Thus, we read in Romans 4:25, [that] Jesus our Lord,

is given up because of our offenses. And He is roused because of our justifying (CV).



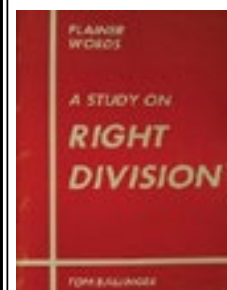
60 pages

Ultimate Liberation: Beyond Forgiveness (The Justification from and of Sin)

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Many people labor under a heavy weight of guilt and shame. The answer is to be found only in the total provision that God Himself has already provided!

See [order form](#) under “Pilkington.”



A Study on Right Division

by — Tom Ballinger

“Tom Ballinger has endeavored to faithfull set forth clear studies in plainer words which could be used by believers to help them press on as ‘unashamed workmen.’” – Steve Crichlow (1975)

70 pages. See [order form](#) under “Ballinger.”

In this,

We **rely** on the living God Who is the Savior of all human beings (I Timothy 4:10, CV).

“Rely” and “expect” are the same word in Greek.

— Dean H. Hough
Unsearchable Riches, Volume 115, No 1 (2024)

BSN

TOPICS:

Major: [The Concordant Version:] Concordant Version, History of Revisions; Translations [“The Lake of Fire”:] Lake of Fire [Divine Speculator or Divine Investor:] Sovereignty [There Is No Conscious Existence in Death:] Death [The Death of Humanity and The Death of Christ:] Death

THE CHANGE
FROM CREATOR TO
FATHER IS THE
GOAL OF THE EONS.

A.E. KNOCH (1874-1965)