Bible Student's Notebook™

The Herald of His Joy!

Showcasing all humanity finished in Christ Jesus. Colossians 1:28 Volume 46 Issue 1129

There is still much light to break forth from the Scriptures. A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

The Final Word

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Part 1 of 3

by — Darson Buckner

Introduction



This series represents the culmination of many years of personal study, prayer, and careful reflection. I offer it not as an argument against anyone, but as a testimony to what I have seen in Scripture regarding the sovereignty and love of God.

I grew up in a Baptist tradition that loved the Bible and treated eternity with seriousness. I am grateful for that foundation. What follows is not a rejection of Scripture, but the result of testing what I inherited against the whole counsel of God.

My prayer is simple: that these reflections would drive readers not toward my conclusions, but toward the Word of God itself – and toward a deeper trust in the character of the One Who declares the end from the beginning.

The God Who Declares the End from the Beginning

At the church I attended, the Scripture was taught with sincerity. Heaven and hell were spoken of plainly. Salvation mattered. Eternity mattered. God was holy.

And like many in that tradition, I was taught the doctrine of eternal conscious torment – that those who died outside of salvation would endure unending punishment. I believed it. I defended it. I assumed it was the only faithful way to read Scripture.

But the belief carried something else with it. I was also taught that salvation could be lost – that at any moment, through failure or falling away, a person could forfeit eternal life.

That combination shaped my understanding of God more than I realized.

Eternity felt fragile.

I believed that God was powerful, yet I also believed that His purposes could be permanently frustrated in countless lives – perhaps even my own.

That theology was in my bones.

For decades I did not question it. But something began to trouble me – not emotionally at first, but scripturally.

Isaiah declares that God is the One Who is,

(continued on page 9457)

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Bible Student's Notebook™
Paul Our Guide – Christ Our Goal
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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 joy (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 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 unprophesied, 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 saints 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).

We're just presenters, not persuaders. – Steve Martin
We are always open for discussion, but never for disputation. – André Sneidar

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> *Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things that are not yet done, saying, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure"* (Isaiah 46:10, *NKJV*).

That is not the language of a God reacting to history. That is the language of a God authoring it. But His sovereignty is not only Cosmic – it is personal.

David writes,

> *Your eyes saw my substance, being yet unformed. And in Your book they all were written, the days fashioned for me, when as yet there were none of them* (Psalm 139:16).

Before I took my first breath, my days were already known. Not guessed. Not adjusted. Written.

That realization began to unsettle me.

If God declares the end from the beginning, and if my days were fashioned before one of them came to be, then history is not unfolding outside of His intention. It is unfolding *according* to it.

The Apostle Paul writes that God works "*all things according to the counsel of His will*" (Ephesians 1:11, *NKJV*).

All things.

Not some things.
Not most things.
All things.

Revelation speaks of *"the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."*

Before there was sin, there was a plan for redemption.

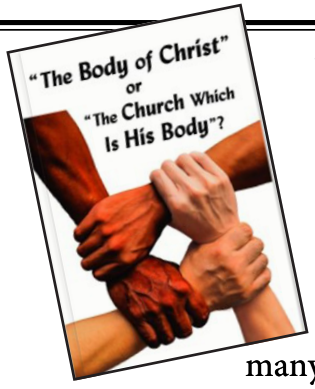
Before there was death, there was a purpose for resurrection.

Before the disruption of the world, God had already purposed redemption in Christ (Ephesians 1:4-10; I Peter 1:20).

The cross was not an emergency measure. It was woven into the fabric of His eternal counsel. Before history unfolded, its end was declared.

This realization did not immediately dismantle my previous beliefs. In fact, it unsettled me.

(*see* **WORD**, *page 9459*)



"The Body of Christ" or "The Church Which Is His Body"? A Compilation on the "One Body" of the Current Administration

In the Pentecost Administration, during the Acts period, there were many ecclesias, in the plural – "all the ecclesias" (Romans 16:4, 16; I Corinthians 7:17; 14:33; II Corinthians 8:18; 11:28, CV). Each of these ecclesias were, in and of themselves "the body of Christ" – an integrated "one body," while today in the Secret Administration there is but one single ecclesia, in the singular – "the Ecclesia which is His Body" (Ephesians 1:22-23, CV). This ecclesia is universal and not local. This ecclesia of the Secret Administration has no bearing whatsoever on locality, and is of necessity, the only "One Body" universal (Ephesians 4:4). This "One Body" of Ephesians and Colossians (Ephesians 2:16; 4:4; Colossians 3:15) is the Post-Acts "church," of which Christ alone is Head (Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15; 5:23; Colossians 1:24; 2:19). This is the only Ecclesia of the Secret Administration. This short compilation has works from three authors: Tom L. Ballinger, G.J. Pauptit (1889-1962), and Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr. 49 pages.

Tantalizing Tidbits from the Book of Philippians

Click here to listen to this article

by — Mark D. Vogt



The epistle from the Apostle Paul to the church at Philippi is a very unique letter in that it stands at the threshold of the Secret Administration that Paul was commissioned to reveal.

There were things that God was revealing to Paul that were not part of the Acts Administration. God had given Paul a glimpse of the future Secret Administration and of the incredible truths no one could have ever imagined before. One can almost sense the angst in Paul's voice as he is writing this letter, for he knows that God has great things that have been revealed, and other revelation to reveal to him, and our apostle figuratively is "dying" to have these things shown to him.

There are several references to God doing a work and being faithful to accomplish it until the Day of Christ. (Philippians 1:10-11; 2:16). That is the day in which Christ will rule from Heaven and the prophesies of Israel will begin to be fulfilled after having been delayed because of this upcoming new administration.

Paul expresses the conundrum he is in. He knows that he is on the precipice of this grand revelation, but he must have been weary from all of the sufferings he experienced and therefore he had this desire for death and resurrection.

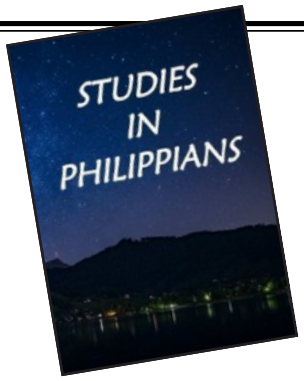
Paul also was acutely aware of being needed to minister in the churches (Philippians 1:25). Paul's reference in Philippians 1:23 as having a yearning for the *"solution"* is because he is pressed out of two things, two things that tore at his heart.

One was the need for him to remain with the local churches because of their need of his work and leadership, and secondly, his desire to depart in death in anticipation of his resurrection and to be with Christ.

Remember, as King Solomon said in numerous places in the book of Ecclesiastes, the dead know nothing. Their thoughts are lost and they have no consciousness of time passed. A person who died a thousand years ago has no more realization of the passing of time than the person who died yesterday.

The "*solution*" that he desires is resurrection so he can be with Christ Jesus, but the problem is that one has to go through the process of death. We are all dying, but the "rubber meets the road" when faced with our termination at the end of the death process.

This book of transition and the glorious truths that will be revealed can be seen in Paul's attitude about his life and the status he once held. It is impressive, but it is useless and worthless.



Studies in Philippians

by — A.E. Knoch (1874-1965)

"Philippians, almost more than any other epistle, must be considered as a unit. Its truth is so little known or practiced, and so distinctive in character, that a passage outside its context, or severed from the main theme, may suggest a thought quite contradictory to its message." — Knoch. 116 pages, facsimile paperback.

In Philippians 3 Paul gives an impressive list of things that he once held in high esteem because of his position in the Jewish community, which included his birthright and his previous position as a Pharisee. Paul then goes on to make an astounding declaration which would have been unheard of during his Acts ministry when he was a priest to the Nations (Romans 15:16) while still allowing for the superior spiritual position that the Jews still held over the Nations.

Paul states in Philippians 3:4-15 that those things that were "*gain*" to him, he now considers as rubbish or as the *KJV* states, "*dung*" (or manure). Much of Christianity is mired in dung. Their teaching is about the terrestrial (Jesus' ministry on Earth – *i.e.,* "*earthly things,*" Philippians 3:19).

Because of their focus on Christ's earthly ministry, their teaching is concerned with performance and trying to obtain God's favor. Blessings and cursing under the Old Testament law, while being denied openly, is the underlying theme of Christianity. One who teaches the *performance* of the believer in any capacity is an enemy of the cross of Christ (Philippians 3:18).

Paul is agonizing about being conformed to Christ's death and the intense desire to know the heavenly Christ Jesus (not the earthly Jesus Christ), the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of Christ's sufferings and being conformed to His death.

Paul then adds something new when he states that, through this experience, he would somehow attain to the resurrection that is *out from among the dead* (Philippians 3:11). This is the first time that this "out resurrection" is mentioned in the Scriptures. This is new to Paul and certainly new to the people of God.

This resurrection is not part of the resurrections mentioned by Paul in I Corinthians 15. This *out resurrection* was not a part of prophesy and revealed only in Colossians 3:4, so it was outside of anything made known in the Old Testament or the New Testament.

Without explanation, Paul's letter to the believers at Philippi puts it at the doorstep of the entrance to the Secret Administration and all of the glorious revelations that Father would give to Paul. While Philippians is not part of that Secret Administration, Paul set the stage for its revelation in Philippians with some tantalizing tidbits not found in his earlier letters, and this in turn should set us up, as it did with Paul, in anticipation for these glorious truths unimaginable just a few years earlier. BSN

NOTE: For further study see:

- "Philippians: Reaching Forth unto those Things Which are Before," Tom Ballinger, (Tidbits of Truth) *Bible Student's Notebook* 946
- "Philippians: Paul's Pivotal Letter Pressing Toward the Mystery," Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., *Bible Student's Notebook* 788
- "Stretching Forward to what Lies Ahead: A Further Look at Philippians," Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., *Bible Student's Notebook* 1025

TOPICS:
Major: Philippians; Secret Administration
Minor: Prophecy; Revelation

WORD *(continued from page 9457)*

If God truly works all things according to the counsel of His will, then His purposes cannot ultimately fail.

If He desires all to be saved (I Timothy 2:4), and if His counsel shall stand, then His desire cannot be eternally frustrated.

To even consider that felt dangerous.

And yet, for much of my life, I lived as though the most important things – eternal destinies – ultimately rested on fragile human will.

That tension began to grow inside me. If God truly works all things according to the counsel of His will, then His purposes cannot ultimately fail.

For nearly three years, I wrestled. I felt guilt, as though I were betraying something sacred. Questioning eternal conscious torment felt like stepping outside of a boundary that I had never imagined crossing.

(see WORD, last page)

Editor's Desk

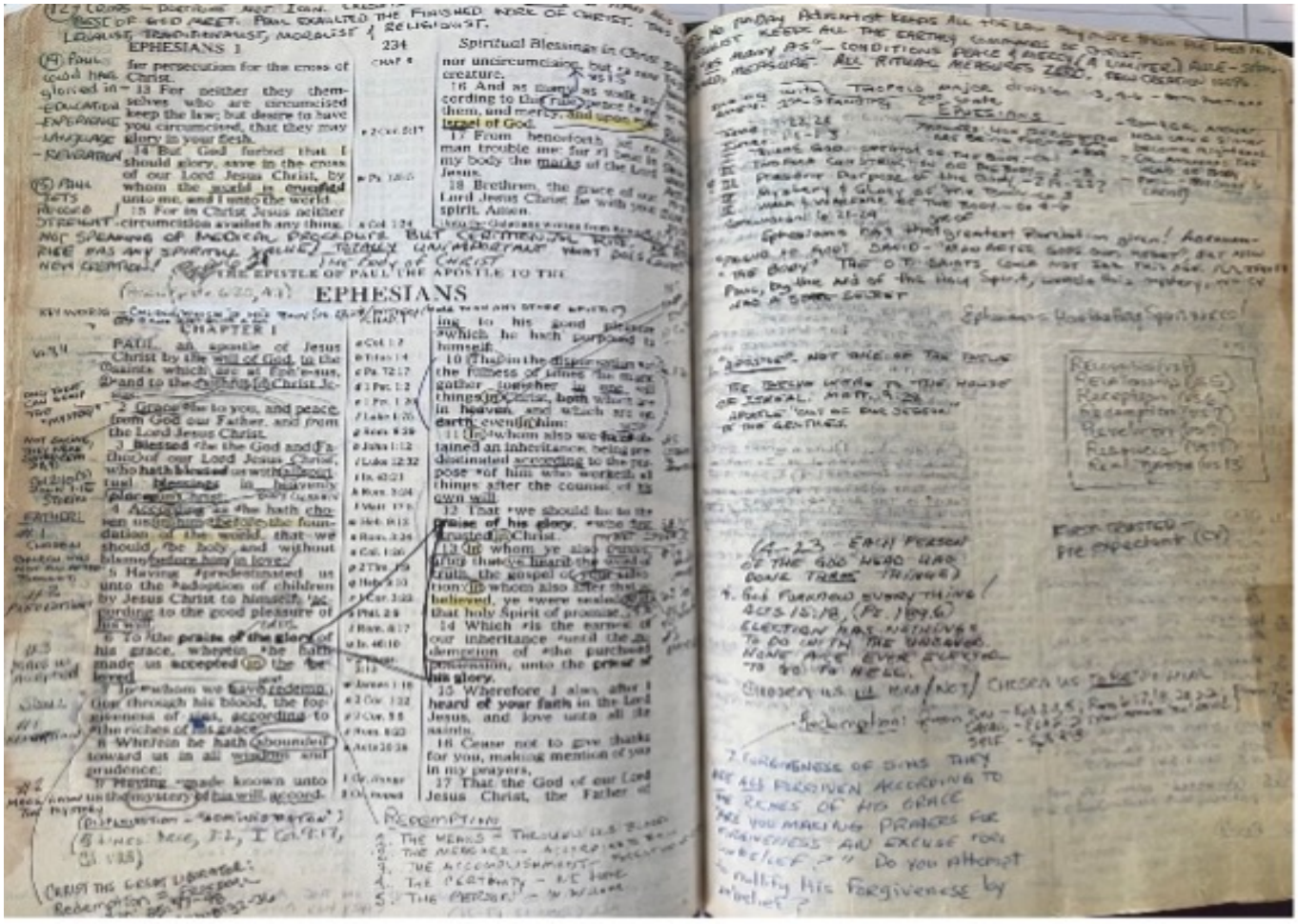
In My Element!

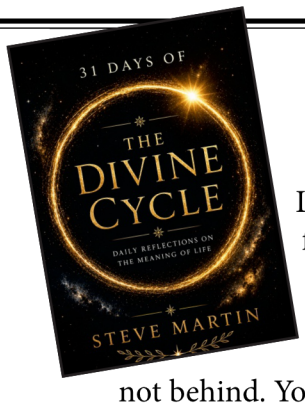


For the past few months, I have been in my "element," devoting myself to studying and working on the STUDY BIBLE PROJECT.

I easily can see how my entire life has led me to this crucial work.

Over a half-century of aggressive study of the Scriptures, Ephesians in particular, has brought me, and our associates, to this beautiful place.

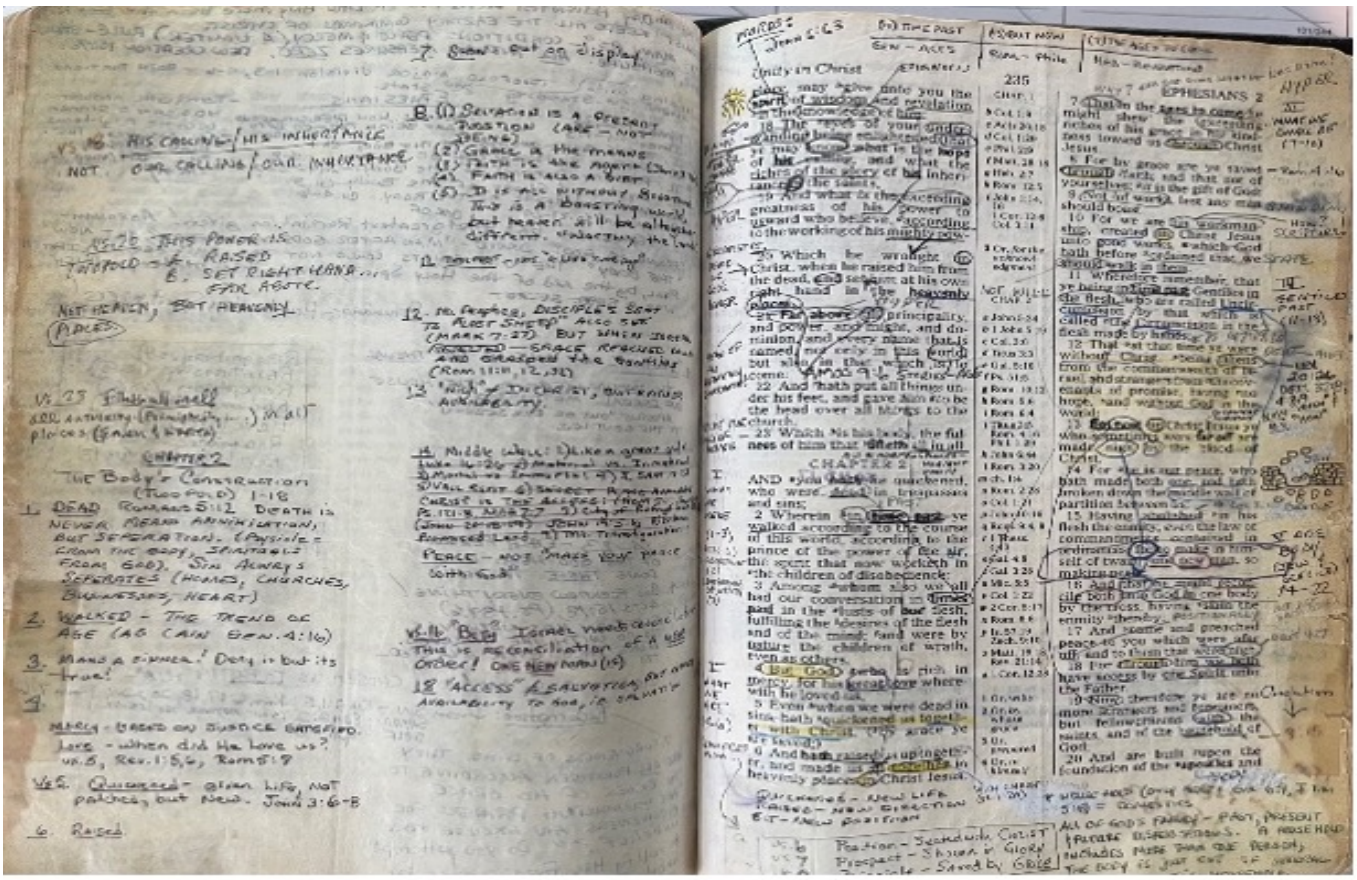


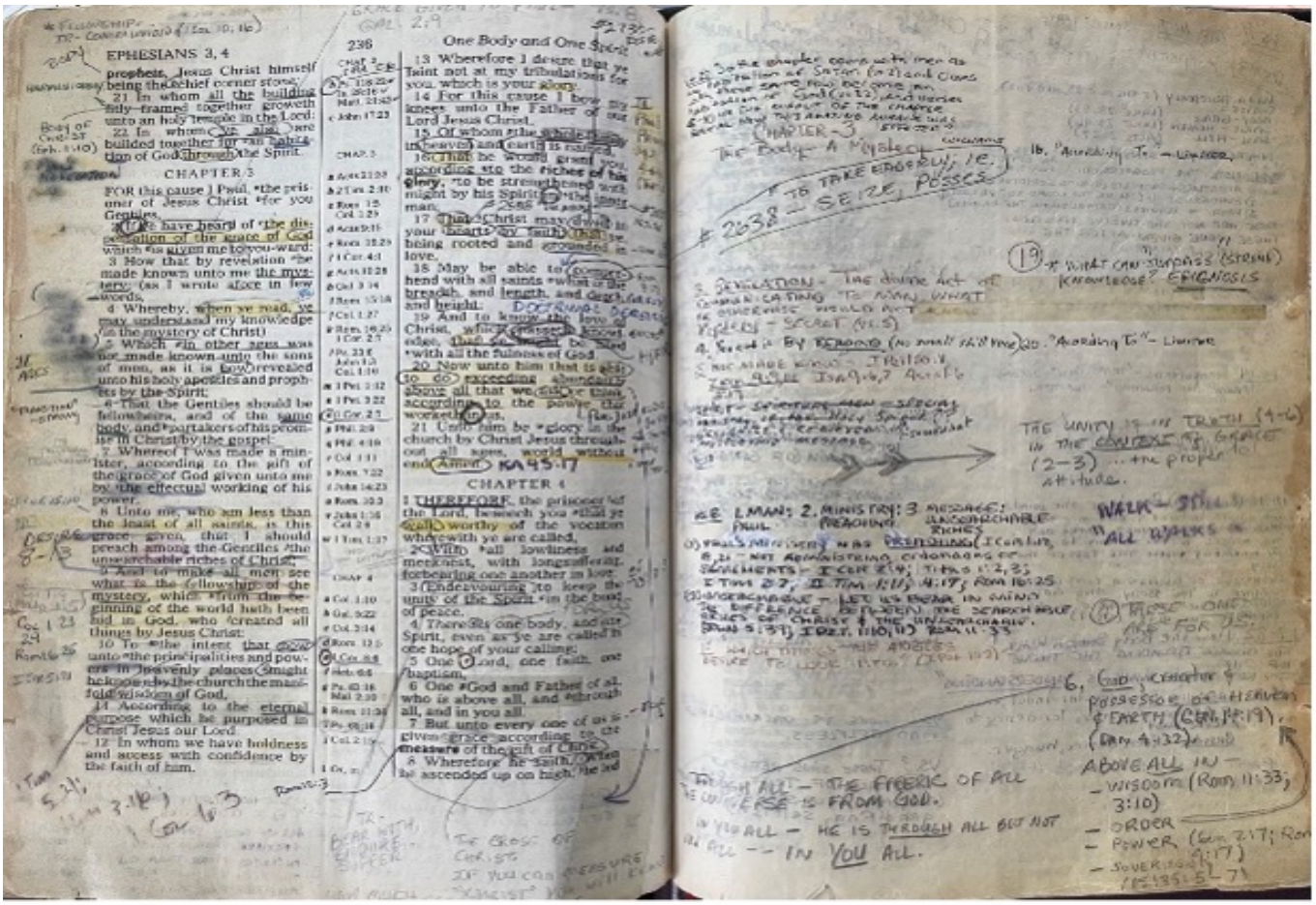


31 Days of the Divine Cycle

by — Steve Martin

Life can feel confusing, unfinished, and sometimes unfair. Dreams change. Plans fail. We wonder if we missed our chance or took the wrong path. But what if life is not a test to pass or a race to win? In these 31 daily reflections, Steve Martin invites you to explore life as a Divine Cycle – a journey shaped by purpose, contrast, growth and love. Every joy, every struggle, and every season has meaning. You are not behind. You are not forgotten. Your story is unfolding exactly as it should. Take the journey. One day at a time. 84 pages.





(*concluded next page*)

Word *(continued from page9459)*

But I did not move quickly. I returned to Scripture again and again – Not to prove myself right, not to disprove someone else; but to seek truth.

One question at a time.
One answer at a time.

The more I tested my inherited beliefs against the whole counsel of Scripture, the more something unexpected began to happen.

Sovereignty stopped feeling threatening. It began to feel steady.

If God is truly sovereign,

- History is not teetering on human will.
- Redemption is not an attempt – it is an accomplishment.
- The story is not uncertain.

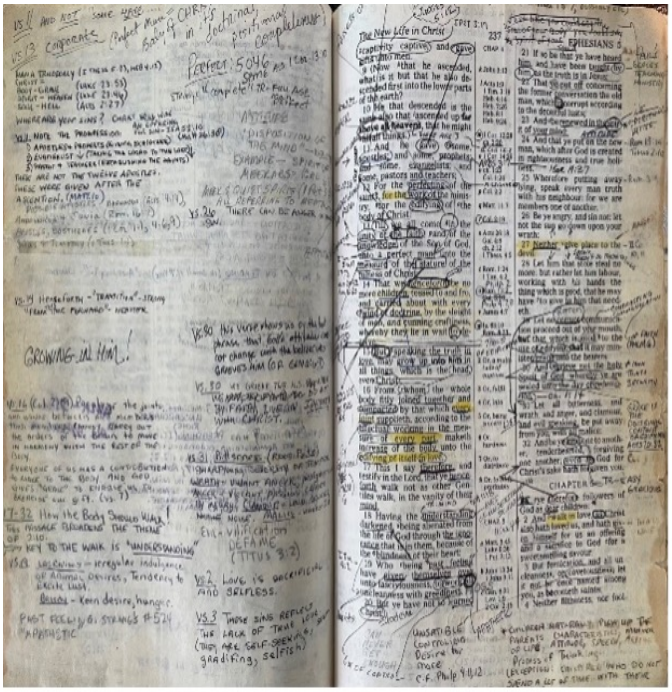
And if that sovereign God is love, then the end of the story cannot contradict His character.

If He declares the end from the beginning, then we must ask:

What is that end?

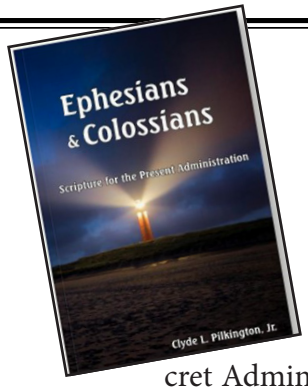
(to be continued)

Topics:
Major: Sovereignty
Minor: Growth; Study



Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

> *Beneath the disorder of Earth's affairs there is an order which only the enlightened eye of faith can perceive.*
>
> – Alan Burns (1884-1929)



Ephesians & Colossians: Scripture for the Present Administration

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Ephesians and Colossians are the present truth for the current dispensation. Ephesians introduces the Secret Administration in which we live, while Colossians, its companion epistle, completes the Word of God. There are no other Secret Administration letters beyond Ephesians and Colossians. A look is also made into the nature of the book of Philippians, the gateway epistle into the Secret Administration. 76 pages.