

Church of God, The Eternal

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A warm greetings brethren:

In "Rome" (the present society) it is a new year. In reality it is the beginning of Winter — the time when God's people begin anxiously looking forward to the dawning of Spring and the coming of the early holy days, Passover and the Days of Unleavened Bread.

In the eyes of the world, a new year is here! Will it be any different than 1981 — a year fraught with terrorism, assassinations, economic ills and many other problems? Are we really prepared (spiritually) to endure the adversity and trials of these times? Mental preparation is half of the battle. A resolve to remain faithful, regardless of the cost! A determination to walk in the ways of God no matter what may transpire!

The Bible clearly shows the surfacing of much doubt, fear, mis-giving and even outright contempt and hate among those once called — manifested against other called ones who have determined to remain faithful. Indeed, it is amazing how contemptuous some can act toward those who obey only that which they themselves once believed and practiced.

Even in such circumstances, God requires that we exhibit only love and understanding. So many have been caught up in the spirit of defiance and rebellion. They do not know what they do! God has promised to liberate them in due time from all shackles of bondage and servitude.

What a day is coming — a day when we all can and will be reunited in heart and mind with most of our past friends, relatives, all deeply loved. How soberly, conscientiously and fervently we must be praying for them as we should be praying for each other in this time of dislocation.

I have seen, lately, several documentaries revealing and impressing upon my mind the horror and brutality of man against man. Tribulation is going to be no picnic. It is terrible — brutal, horrible. Thanks to God, there is a way of escape for a small number (Ezek. 5:3; Luke 21:36; Isa. 16:3-5; Isa 33:16-17) who will to obey God. From God's Word, it is obvious that the faithful of God are obedient to the revealed Truth of God — not to men or organizations, except as they walk in that same revealed way.

Regardless of the hour of human existence or the time of our personal sojourn, it is urgent that we make our calling and election sure. We know what to do. It is now simply a matter of stirring up the will to perform. Overcoming is a difficult task. Aggressive determination is essential. For most, I am sure you will prevail. Why? Because God did not keep you faithful only to fail in the end. But do not become complacent. Only the determined will achieve.

For this month, we will continue the series on "The Two Facets of Divine Revelation." In November, we gave the first half of the sub-topic, "A Second Revelation Necessary." The last half is given this month.

Have a profitable study.

A Second Revelation Necessary — Part II

What is Truth?

Ask this question of any group of a dozen people and you are sure to get a dozen different answers! All people "know" what the Truth is: each his own particular belief. So strong is this vain conception that people will brutally fight for it.

Circumstances were no different in the historic day of Jesus Christ! He was elaborating upon basic spiritual principles. He was explaining his origin, from heaven, and at the same time stating that humanity is of this world. So disconcerted did they become that spontaneously they responded, ". . . Who art thou? . . ." (John 8:25).

What simple, straightforward answer did Jesus give? ". . . Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning" (John 8:25).

What was Christ? He emphatically stated, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life . . ." (John 14:6). He was the Word of God made flesh (John 1:1, 14).

These Jews of John 8 heard these dogmatic statements. Yet how contrary to their own individually cherished beliefs. If they knew the "truth," how could this "man" be correct?

But they had carried a doubt within themselves for some time. Its bewildering essence came out in their response. "Who are you?"

Jesus' purpose had not changed! The Truth (and way of life) had not changed! That priceless commodity had been a part of Him before He came

to the earth. Regardless of the preconceived ideas of men, Jesus knew what had been delivered to Him by the Father. So, without hesitation He again responded, "Even the same that I said unto you from the beginning."

Here Jesus could have "witnessed" to those demanding explanations of Him for what He was teaching and what He was doing. But He did not!

For what reason?

In verse 26 of John 8 Jesus explains. He said He had much He could say to the Jews who were standing there but He would not for, ". . . he that sent me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I have heard of him." That is, to the world, Jesus spoke only those things which the Father had given to Him. In essence He was saying, "I will not reveal the Father nor myself to you. The Father has told me what to say and do. And His will does not include enlightenment for you at this time."

Next Jesus tells them, in language which they did not comprehend, that when they extolled the Son of man they would understand the Truth — the Truth of who Christ is and that all proceeds from the Father (vss. 28-29).

As Jesus taught those things delivered to Him, some began to respond. They were called — called to the knowledge of the way of life. But an initial enlightenment is insufficient of itself. To be a part of the "chosen," Christians must continue in that way of life to which they are called. Jesus said to them that had begun to believe on Him, ". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

If not called of God, human beings cannot know who He is nor understand the binding authority of the message given. In fact, if not called, they will resent the obligatory nature of the message, for men want their own opinions to be equally acceptable. But Jesus said the truth can come only from the Father. When that message is made comprehensible, it becomes obligatory upon those called for the rest of their lives. Truth cannot change! It is not subject to human revision or interpretation. If not called, carnal human beings will ask the people called and who are obedient, "who are you?" As much as they did Christ in His own day.

Only those called will understand and KNOW the Truth. There will be hundreds of philosophies held by those who presume. It was as true in Christ's day as it is in our own day. But religious and philosophical assumptions on the part of men do not make their beliefs and practices acceptable and pleasing to God.

To know Christ is to know the way (John 14:4-6). Christ is the way! He is the Truth. The way of life is the way of Truth. That Truth proceeds

from the Father. It is absolutely impossible for anyone to come to the Father except through His Son Jesus Christ (John 14:6). Christ announced to His chosen disciples (later, apostles) that they had been called to know (John 14:7-9).

Then Jesus revealed an important principle. That principle is manifested in the concepts of Faith, Trust, Belief. The disciples had seen Christ! They had accepted Him as a personal human being — but it required a special spiritual revelation to believe His true origin (John 14:10-11). To believe Him was to accept His message — the Truth which God had given Him. Christ said, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake" (John 14:10-11).

Jesus clearly told the disciples they had been called to know and understand (John 14:7). Yet, at this particular juncture, the disciples were hearing and seeing without any real depth of understanding (Luke 24:45).

Reading the Scriptures does not of itself constitute understanding. Even hearing the Word proclaimed and explained by the Master Teacher Himself, Jesus Christ, did not result in understanding. Only at the appointed time did Jesus open the disciples understanding whereby they could comprehend the very words which they had often read.

Concerning mankind in general, the Apostle Peter said, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord [both knowing the Father and Son as well as the spiritual knowledge which they possess], According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature . . ." (II Pet. 1:2-4).

Only the called are given that priceless knowledge. Seeing Christ physically did not make the Truth (words of God) comprehensible. The disciples did not understand what Christ was teaching until the appointed time. Men cannot will to understand the Truth of themselves. Only the called can understand. All others presume. The difference between these two categories will become awesomely apparent in the day of revelation — the day of Christ's return.

A cardinal principle needs to be restated once again. For in that principle is locked up the significance of this whole subject we are presently covering in this Monthly Letter.

Eternal Life Is to Know the Father and the Son

Jesus was given power over all flesh. Of all humanity God had specifically allotted a certain number for life eternal at this time. Jesus clarified the concept of eternal life. He said, ". . . this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" (John 17:3).

Who can know the Father and the Son? How do human beings come to know those Beings who dwell in the spiritual realm? Human presumption does not make such knowledge available! Since man is limited to the domain of the physical, he cannot ascertain any knowledge of the spiritual.

How, then, does man come to know God?

Jesus gave a specific example (Matt. 11:25-27). He was teaching in the cities. The hearts and minds of the people were hard and indifferent. It was at that time Jesus said, ". . . I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matt. 11:25-27).

Life everlasting is to know the Father and the Son. Yet no one can know them unless they are first revealed by Themselves. One must be called, his blindness removed and a specific spiritual revelation given before any human being can come to the knowledge of the Father and Son (Matt. 11:25).

Can it be more clear? Only the called can know the Father and Son. These are specifically called to comprehend the spiritual domain — the realm of the Father and the Son as well as the way of Truth. Christ is the way and the Truth. He was that way physically manifested. Those to whom that revelation has been given will walk in precisely the same footsteps Jesus Christ did — for He never changes. Truth cannot change. It is always the same.

What about Men Today?

As sinners we must all die. This is the price we pay for violating the will of God. By the provision of baptism, those called of God are afforded the opportunity of laying their physical lives down in the symbolism of death. Those so called of God are offered the hope of everlasting life by

the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit. We must all humanly and figuratively die. Then the Holy Spirit will take up its abode in us. By the Spirit, Christ and the Father lives in us (I John 4:12-16).

By the Spirit we have eternal life dwelling within us. Notice how John explains this. "And this is the record, that God hath given to us [those called only] eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (I John 5:11-13).

To know the Son, the Father must first reveal Him. To know the Father, the Son must reveal Him. To have everlasting life we must know both the Father and the Son.

For us to know the Son, we must crucify the old self. Then by the power of the Holy Spirit — promised as a result of baptism — we can have the life of Christ living within us. By the life of Christ, we now are able to do that which we could not accomplish by our own strength and might. Those called, the recipients of the Holy Spirit, KNOW who they are. All others do not really know. There are the many who presume.

Baptism is a beginning. By it we die to the old self. Through the Holy Spirit, Christ takes up His abode in us. How then do we grow and come to know all things?

How the Called Come to Know Spiritual Things

In I Corinthians the second chapter, Paul clearly explains this whole subject. He said, ". . . Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him" (vs. 9). Succinctly Paul stated: Man of himself cannot come to know Truth. In fact, it does not even "dawn upon him" — "Not entered into the heart of man." Spiritually speaking, man is blind. He cannot see until God provides the mental capacity (the mind of Christ given through the Holy Spirit) for him to see and comprehend those things which exist outside of himself — the spiritual world.

But, how can man comprehend the things of God?

Paul concisely states, ". . . God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we

have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God" (I Cor. 2:10-12).

Man's mind comprehends the things of this physical world. Man, of all the physical creation, alone can comprehend the physical. Lower creatures cannot. In precisely the same way, it takes the mind of God (spiritual) to comprehend those things which exist in the spiritual realm. Lower creatures, including man, cannot comprehend spiritual things.

For man to see and understand the spiritual eternal, unchanging principles of life requires a miracle. We must figuratively die (baptism) and a new mind must be given to us (Ph'p. 2:5 and Rom. 12:1-2).

The called of God begin to understand the things of God by the gift of the Holy Spirit — the mind of God. To those selected by God, such spiritual knowledge is freely given.

So, mere reading of the Bible will not give spiritual understanding. The endeavor of man will not result in spiritual comprehension. It requires a miracle — the "death" of the natural self and a gift of the mind of God — the Holy Spirit. The selection of those destined to understand is a prerogative of God alone.

The whole miraculous process of conversion, mentioned above, is fully, yet concisely, explained in the book of Romans. Paul was inspired to write, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body [natural self] is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Rom. 8:6-10).

The natural self — mind of man — cannot comprehend. For the natural man — including the carnal mind — must die before spiritual comprehension becomes possible. That understanding comes by the gift of a new mind — the mind of God, the Holy Spirit.

Let us take one final look at how the called come to know spiritual things.

As stated earlier, to come to know the Truth is to know Christ — He is the Truth and way. To come to know Christ is an act of revelation (Matt. 11:25-27).

What is Christ? He is the Word of God made flesh — not a part of it but the whole (entirety) of God's Word. When Christ dwells in us, the complete Word of God dwells in us. We may not understand it all initially — for we must grow in that knowledge. But, for certain, it does not change.

Remembering what Paul said to the Romans, ". . . the carnal mind is not subject to the law of God and neither indeed can be," let us carefully note what he wrote to the Corinthians. He said, ". . . no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost [Spirit]" (I Cor. 12:3).

To address someone as Lord means he is your master. He has authority over your life. Therefore, to address Jesus correctly as Lord means to deprecate the self and give your will over to Him.

The only way we can respond to the whole of God's Word (Christ living in the flesh) is by the Holy Spirit. Unless we are deluding ourselves, when we refer to Jesus Christ as our Lord, we are bending to conform to His will in all things — to the entirety of His Word. If we make any effort to avoid obedience to any part of the Word of God, we are not acting by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit.

And who receives the Holy Spirit of God?

"And we are his witnesses [apostles] of these things [events of Christ's earthly ministry]; and so is also the Holy Ghost [Spirit], whom God hath given to them that obey him" (Acts 5:32). Unless our wills are broken and we become obedient to the laws of God, we cannot receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8).

We must be called to come to a knowledge and understanding of the Truth.

Why?

There are two reasons. First, as we have seen above, there must be a change of mind — change from the blindness of carnality to the spiritual capability of the mind of God. Second, the Truth must be revealed at that time and to whom God wills.

The Truth Mysteriously Hidden from Beginning

Let us again note a text which we have used a number of times in past letters. It is greatly significant to this subject. Paul is addressing the Romans.

He said, "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but NOW is made manifest . . ." How? Continuing, ". . . by the scriptures of the prophets . . ." (Rom. 16:25-26).

Even though called of God, we can know spiritual things only in the time and to the extent God wills. They are revealed according to the will and purpose of God. The basis of that spiritual revelation are the previously recorded words of God. Obviously these words, though written, are not understood until the appointed time of God.

Letter obedience to the Law was all God required of ancient Israel — His called and chosen people, a people to whom He gave an original letter-of-the-law revelation.

The Second Revelation Required for Spiritual Understanding

The Scriptures had been written over several centuries. They had been codified — placed in a written form. Yet, as we have seen, the spiritual intent was hidden until the day of Jesus Christ. He came to reveal Himself and the Father to those called and to make the Truth known to them.

What was the nature of this increase in spiritual enlightenment?

The Apostle Paul wrote about the increase of knowledge and understanding. He said, "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it [the illness of Epaphras and his love and faithful service to the Church at Colosse], do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding" (Col. 1:9).

Letter-of-the-law comprehension and obedience had always been possible. But letter-of-the-law obedience only kills. Obedience must go far beyond letter-of-the-law conformity. It must be of the mind, heart and spirit. This kind of obedience was never possible until the day of Jesus Christ. By His life, death, resurrection, ascension and the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit, those called of Him can lay down the old carnal, physical self and thereby become the fit receptacles of that Holy Spirit of promise. Then by the indwelling presence of the Spirit, a genuine spiritual comprehension becomes possible.

Make no mistake about it. No one can achieve such understanding short of a specific call from God. It is based on the will and purpose of the Father. It is achieved by the gift of a new mind — the spiritual mind of God.

That mind is received through the gift of the Holy Spirit — the Spirit promised to those who have decided to obey Him in all things.

God is the builder of perfect character. We, if Christians, are the work of His hands. Human experience has taught us that physical education is a life-long process. It is not achieved by fiat. In exactly the same way we must grow spiritually.

Truth Revealed at Times and to the Degree Willed by God

Jesus spent three and one-half years teaching and instructing His chosen disciples. Yet, they did not comprehend the meaning of what He taught until a specific time had come. At that specified time Jesus performed a miracle upon the minds of these chosen servants. He opened their minds to receive and comprehend spiritual things. He said to them, ". . . These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures" (Luke 24:44-45).

They were called of God at the beginning of Christ's ministry. They had the most capable teacher. Yet, they did not understand the Scriptures until the appointed time.

We — true Christians — can understand only those Scriptures which God reveals at any given time, even though called of God and possessing the Holy Spirit. For this reason, there are many Scriptures which will not be understood until some future date. Any attempt to interpret them would be presumption. In this category are prophecies relating to the future — events which we will understand only when those activities come to pass.

Knowledge is periodically revealed as the called Christian develops in faith and character. Growth in knowledge of spiritual things is not to be confused with change. Any belief in the idea of change of doctrine makes God's revelation of Truth defective. What God has revealed at any given time is absolute. Truth is absolute and unchanging. Change only indicates arrogance or presumption on the part of anyone espousing it.

Concerning growth in spiritual knowledge and character, Paul explicitly wrote to the Church at Philippi, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect [an exhaustive study makes it clear perfection is wholly living what God has at that given time revealed], be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained [the level of what God had already revealed], let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing" (Ph'p. 3:15-16).

Revelation is not a blanket concept. God works with individuals. This requires working with each one on the basis of his individual capacity and growth capability. Therefore revelation through His called ministry is the way by which proclamation is made. The ears of the called are open to

hear. Response comes on the basis of conviction. Following this is spiritual growth — growth which must continue until the day of Jesus Christ's return (Col. 1:9-10).

Revelation is at the discretion of God. The scope or extent of that revelation is also His prerogative. To the Romans, Paul wrote, ". . . that which may be known of God [scope] is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them" (Rom. 1:19).

In many places, the Bible clearly shows that the called and chosen of God know all things. This can only mean: They have both spiritual and physical (carnal) capability and knowledge. (Compare the following texts: I Cor. 2:14-15; Rom. 15:14; I Cor. 15:34; II Cor. 10:5.)

God must call. He must reveal the Truth. What part do we, as co-laborers with God, play in this spiritual operation?

Revelation Necessary: But Acceptance Is a Matter of Personal Volition

People can hold the Truth in unrighteousness (Rom. 1:18). They can resist the will of God.

Revelation of spiritual things is essential — even imperative. Yet the part man plays in this operation of God is very significant. The essential nature of character demands that the called of God will response and obedience to that call. To the Colossians Paul wrote, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ" (Col. 2:2).

With carnal nature being assertive and the diabolical influence of Satan and his demons, it is possible for the called man to reject the will of God. As Paul pointed out to the Colossians, there must be an acknowledgement of the revealed mystery. With this beginning, spiritual progress becomes possible. Indeed, acceptance of God's call and subsequent spiritual growth are a matter of personal volition. But man by nature is carnal, weak! Of himself, obedience is not possible. How can he live up to the call and inherent expectation of God?

How Obedience Is Made Possible

God knows that we, by nature, are dust, flesh and very weak. He did not call us to fail. What provision did God make by which to overcome this inherent weakness in man?

Peter wrote, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit . . ." (I Pet. 1:22).

God calls those whom He pleases. By the external influence of the Holy Spirit those called are convicted of their sins — the acknowledgement of the natural way of life. By this same influence they bitterly repent of their past and are baptized. Then, by the will of God they become the recipients of the Holy Spirit. With this power in us, the Truth is made known, obedience is made possible and spiritual growth can take place. This is the operation of God — the spiritual creation.

As we have already seen, the Holy Spirit is given to those who will to obey God. It could never be given to any who would abuse it. For it is an awesome power.

At the present, very few have been afforded the privilege of call, knowledge of the Truth and capability of obedience. What has God purposed for the majority of mankind?

Ultimately God Will Have All to Come to the Knowledge of the Truth

Only a small percentage of the world's population has heard anything about the true God let alone know the real Truth. What is in the future for them?

God is not a respecter of persons. It is His will that all will be given a chance to know and obey. To Timothy the Apostle Paul wrote, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Tim. 2:4). John, the Apostle, wrote, "That was the true Light [Christ], which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9).

It is God's purpose that all mankind be given an opportunity to understand the Truth. However, not all will be called and understand at the same time. These are appointed times. Only a few are prophesied to respond in these days — from the time of Christ's first appearance until the second coming. Those who physically live on into the millennium and those who are born at that time will have that knowledge of salvation revealed to them. Then, finally, all who have died prior to Christ's second coming without saving knowledge will be given their opportunity. Yes, it is God's will that all be given that knowledge, but each in his own time (I Cor. 15:22-23).

The Bible makes it very clear; few are afforded saving knowledge at this particular time. Even some of those will not remain faithful.

Why?

Response of Those Who Truly Love the Way of Life

Remember, the carnal mind is enmity against God and His way of life. Even though called of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit, the

natural mind can surface all too frequently unless we maintain a very close relationship with God and His Son Jesus Christ. Isaiah wrote of this. He made it plain that a particular attitude toward the Word of God was essential to continuity of belief and purpose. He wrote, ". . . to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word" (Isa. 66:2). We must stand in awe of God's Word. To fear that Word gives us the necessary conviction to live up to it. No one else will so respond.

In verse 5 of Isaiah 66, we are told of the benefits of faithfulness to the Word of God in the last days. We read, "Hear the word of the Lord, ye that tremble at his word; Your brethren that hated you, that cast you out [the faithful are outside of the Body — not in it] for my name's sake, said, Let the Lord be glorified: but he shall appear to your joy, and they shall be ashamed" (Isa. 66:5).

In the last days the faithful are found estranged from the Body. They chose to be faithful to God — to fear and tremble at His Word. In due time, God will greatly bless them; whereas, the people who stayed in the apostate Body will be ashamed. They will come to see the Truth in due time.

Even though called of God to understand, some will not fear the Word of God and will elect to turn away from the faith once delivered. A rejection (on the part of the called) of God's Word and way of life is possible.

The Called Can Turn Away

To the Galatians Paul wrote, "Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" (Gal. 4:8-9).

If faith and conviction are not kept active, rejection of the very revealed Truth is possible. When this happens, the called turn back to the terrible circumstances out of which they were initially called.

In conclusion, let us note a few examples of those who knew God's Truth and turned away from it.

Those Who Knew the Truth and then Turned Away

Satan the Devil: "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him . . ." (John 8:44).

That Wicked One — last days: "And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:8-10).

The Incurable of the last days: "That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away [apostasy] first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; . . . Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:2-3, 9-10).

False Prophets and Teachers: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of" (II Pet. 2:1-2).

The gifts and calling of God are without repentance (Rom. 11:29). God calls exactly once. He gives us the Truth — the most priceless possession we will ever have. By faith we must endure the trials encountered because of that faith. But if we fear neither God nor His Word we will forsake that way of life to our eternal regret.

Brethren, we are recipients of that Truth. Do we have the necessary faith, courage and conviction to see us through to the end? No one can take that Truth from us. We alone have been made responsible for our actions. By faithful endurance we can reap the greatest of all rewards — the gift of salvation, to be born into the glorified divine Family of God.

Once again, we convey all our love and affection, Our thoughts are with you daily. Let us continue to walk in brotherly love. If we can really see and understand, there is nothing too great for us to bear.

Faith and conviction will see us through. Have confidence in the promises and assurances of God. We are His workmanship. What He has

commenced He can and will bring to a completion. We alone can interrupt or thwart that awesome purpose of God. By keeping our eyes on Christ and the goal of life we will not allow ourselves to turn. God has already willed! He cannot fail.

What assurance to all who really trust Him!

With warmest affection,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial 'R'.

Raymond C. Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryce G. Clark". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial 'B'.

Bryce G. Clark