

Church of God, The Eternal

P. O. Box 775
Eugene, Oregon 97440

Switzerland
Case Postale 2 701
CH 1002 Lausanne

Canada
P. O. Box 76946, Station "S"
Vancouver, B.C. V5R 5T3

January 1985

Warmest Greetings Brethren:

It is Monthly Letter time for me again. I never realized two months could pass by so fast. It makes me wonder just where all the time is going. No wonder God used many expressions to suggest the rapid transit of time -- ". . . life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time . . ."; "Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not"; "Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth . . ."; ". . . a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again"; "we spend our years as a tale that is told" (Jas. 4:14, Job 14:1-2, Ps. 39:5; 78:39; 90:9).

With this rapid expiration of time, individually, each man (or woman) has so little time to effect the required changes essential for this inheritance of life. Can any of us afford to misuse even a day? For those who have the vision to see, the courage to admit need, and the honesty to recognize fact, the answer is a resounding "No."

On the other hand, is it not marvelous that God requires so little expenditure of time -- days of adversity -- to qualify for Everlasting Life? What a benevolent and compassionate Father we all have. He chose us to be His children. As David once said, "it is all too wonderful for me." The magnitude of that love and mercy is humanly incomprehensible. But, this is not the subject for this month. At times, when I stop and reflect upon the love shown, I am overcome with my own unworthiness. My respect and love for God, and His Son Christ, is awesome. Then, too, my appreciation for your love of God's Truth and for us as His unworthy instruments is very great. How greatly we need the love, understanding, patience, forgiveness, and compassion of one another.

This Letter is being written here in Switzerland, en route home from Nigeria, West Africa. It must be ready for secretarial work at the office shortly after my return to the United States. Therefore, it is being handwritten rather than typed into the computer. The office girls will perform that feat for me.

In September, 1984, I commenced a two-part explanation of how God requires us to view weaknesses, mistakes, and actions of one another. In that first issue of the subject, September, 1984, I rather comprehensively covered the actions required on the part of the

faithful against any who are called brothers when they manifest an attitude of contempt, willfulness, and "spirited" arrogance. Such an attitude does not even begin to reflect an understanding of what man is, what the purpose of God is, and the awesome chasm existing between the two.

For this month, we want to explain as thoroughly as possible the attitude, action, and forgiving spirit God requires we manifest toward one another's weaknesses in the true Body of Christ -- weaknesses that are distinct from willful contempt or the arrogance mentioned above. Without this forgiving spirit we can never be privileged to be born into the God family that manifested love great enough to give up a Son so that human beings could have an opportunity to be born into it. We certainly were not worthy of life! To the extent to which we impute righteousness to ourselves, we will manifest a kind and benevolent attitude toward others. For God plainly said, "... he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20.)

If, as we said in the September issue of the Monthly Letter, there are things (actions, behavioral patterns, etc.) we must not tolerate in the Body of Christ, there must be other actions and mental aberrations which we are obligated to overlook -- but not condone. What are these conditions we are expected to tolerate -- actions which manifest the true Christian spirit?

WHAT CHRISTIANS ARE REQUIRED TO TOLERATE

At the outset, we want one principle well understood. In no way does a tolerant spirit and attitude manifest compromise and/or acceptance of the actions taken by others -- if indeed they are wrong in the sight of God. The term "toleration" implies only this: Recognizing our own weak, wretched natures and the proclivity to judge from imperfect knowledge as well as the human tendency to base evaluations on what is seen, not the heart, we must manifest a forgiving and understanding spirit. That principle and that principle only is implied.

Humanity forms a society -- divided by race, geography, creed, locale, and other applicable factors. No man really lives to himself. The thoughts, actions, attitudes, and demeanor of a single individual impact upon the lives of others at times. And above all, each mortal is not a forgotten entity to the One with whom we all have contact. The Apostle Paul put it this way: "For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord [God is cognizant of all]; and whether we die, we die unto the

Lord [He is aware of even life which passes]: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living" (Rom. 14:7-9).

Christ arranged to have a unique experience with all mortals regardless of their estate, time, or condition. Should we do any less for those whom we know and with whom we come into contact daily? But being mortal, possessing all the weak tendencies of the flesh, we usually like to evaluate, judge, and stratify humanity. There are two underlying problems involved in this behavioral pattern. One, we do not belong to one another -- but only to God our Creator. Two, the tendency to judge is based on imperfect knowledge and then, in its partiality, is tainted with the prejudices of the one judging.

Let us allow the Apostle Paul to continue. Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit he said, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? [A very good question, considering our own imperfections!] or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? [Make inferior by judgmental inference!] for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess [Why? Does this not imply guilt on the part of the one who presumed to judge another?] to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12).

Judging and criticizing one another is not our lot, our responsibility. In His day, even Christ did not judge. Though by appointment, Christ is the ultimate Judge, the time appointed for that judgment had not come. He came -- His first appearance -- to live a life exemplary of duty and responsibility incumbent upon called and chosen human beings of this era of time. He lived that example perfectly. We can do no better than to try to walk in those perfect footsteps. And what a privilege it is to emulate Him.

What are some of the specific areas of life and circumstances in which we are obligated to manifest tolerance as defined above?

1. Human weaknesses: Sins not of will

Carnal weakness is a universal trait. There is no human being who does not possess the weakness of carnality. A part -- and an important part at that -- is the recognition of that fact. The Apostle John at the time of the conclusion of his ministry said, "If we [Christians, including John himself] say that we have no sin, we deceive [refuse to face the reality of fact] ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8). From this statement, it would appear that the one condemning stands in greater jeopardy than the one accused. The

implication is strong. When the Truth resides in us, we not only see ourselves for what we are, but we refrain from pointing a finger at another.

John states, "If we confess [admit] our sins [violations of God's Law and statutes based on weakness], he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

The one who willfully sins has no such forgiveness. Obviously, then, this sinning party has found himself the prey of his own wretched nature. Recognizing this fact, the offending party who is not willfully sinning seeks the forgiveness of God by first admitting his weakness and then asking for the forgiveness of God.

This text, however, demonstrates a much greater problem inherent in the condemnation of another. Such action cannot proceed from the indwelling presence of the Word of God. That Word knows our natural estate. If by condemning another we deny the reality of our own estate, we make God a liar. How pitiful for man not to recognize his own low estate and the imperative need of help and mercy. And when that Word abides in us which recognizes such human need, it is equally aware of those needs in others. Let us never accuse God, by virtue of His Spirit dwelling in us, of schizophrenia -- the act of condemning in others what we refuse to recognize in ourselves or at best overlook with a hope that God will be merciful. John stated: "If we say that we have not sinned [acting in accord with the dictates of self -- not the orientation of the Spirit], we make him a liar [How? By refusing to recognize, as God says, all have sinned], and his word is not in us [Why? Because Truth is the absolute knowledge of our culpability, our carnal nature of weakness.]" (I John 1:10).

Simply stated, Truth is knowledge of absolutes -- the perfection of God, the weakness of man. If that Truth resides within us, it recognizes not only sin in others, but it sees the self for what it is. Therefore, an attitude of forbearance toward someone, or toward self, is not a justification of the wrong, but a recognition of a lack due to weakness and carnality. Truth knows the condition of all humanity. All are sinners with a very great need of mercy, forbearance, kindness, forgiveness, and love. Condemnation and a judgmental attitude stem from human arrogance, not from the affectionate regard of the Spirit in us.

James said, "For in many things we offend all [center reference, we all stumble]. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (Jas. 3:2). It is human to err -- to stumble. That is the nature with which we were born. Until the perfection of God is achieved -- at the time of our

change -- we will occasionally trip, stumble, and fall over the Truth of God. That is expected. But the man who habitually criticizes another is not on the pathway to perfection. For the first and requisite step to perfection is control of speech. When we unadvisably speak, by criticism or condemnation, we lose all the forces of the body and mind. Conversely, when we control the thought patterns prior to speech we have already perfect control over the whole body.

Maybe we can begin to understand how serious is any verbalization of criticism, judgment, or contempt for others. Silence does not mean we do not see. It does not mean we are not aware of weaknesses and problems. What it does mean is that a called individual has seen himself, recognizing his own particular need, and refuses to be absorbed in the responsibility of another -- namely Jesus Christ. In such situations what is needful is prayer, not meddling.

Here the advice of the Apostle Paul is trenchant. To the Corinthians he wrote, ". . . every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things . . ." (I Cor. 9:25). Are we not striving for ultimate mastery? But mastery over what? The whole ramification of carnality, including that most serious weakness, critical usage of the speech mechanism. With control of it we can bring the whole carnal body under control. It does seem to us that speech is a very good area to begin our personal mastery and overcoming. For this very reason we have said as much as we have about this very vital need.

2. Levels of faith and spiritual growth

Not all people have the same level of faith. Some are mere babes in Christ. Others are hopefully more mature -- striving for maturation equal to that of Christ. Still others manifest different levels of faith and conviction due to divergent experiences. What appears easy to one may be difficult to another. The level and direction of our training is a distinct responsibility of God (Jer. 17:9-10). At the same time, the time in life when God tenders the requisite call to see and understand remains uniquely His sole responsibility.

Criticism and judgment, in a sense, shout to others the message, "Why are you not even as I?" How can anyone who sees himself as he is say, even in principle, "Why are you not as I"?

Instead of being critical, the righteously oriented will voluntarily bear the burden of those suffering by their own actions (Rom. 14:1). However, usually, men are not anxious to bear the weight of another's problems. How many of us are willing to relinquish "rights" we hold dear in a manifested interest of concern and compassion for a weaker brother or sister? Have any of us given up

meat -- for life? What about drinking? Or other equally important things to us? Human beings are expert in the area of censure or criticism. But to bear the weight of another's weaknesses we are most frequently recalcitrant.

The responsibility of instruction, correction, and spiritual help falls squarely upon the shoulders of the ministry. Considering the foibles, difficulties, and fluctuations of the members of the Body of Christ, the Apostle Paul was inspired to write that the ministry was given "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect [mature, full-grown] man; unto the measure of the stature of the fulness [living by every Word] of Christ; That we henceforth be no more children [babes in Christ who need special attention, consideration, and mercy], tossed to and fro [at times living less than completely faithful lives], and carried about [too easily persuaded by cunningly devised fables] with every wind of doctrine [concepts proceeding from the minds of men], by the sleight [stealth, hypocrisy, or insincerity] of men, and cunning craftiness [treachery, dishonesty], whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:12-14). Only the gullible listener is deceived. The "deceiver" usually knows exactly what he is doing. His intent is to make merchandise of you -- use you for his own personal advantage.

Christians begin as babes in Christ. All babies are initially helpless. They require much loving attention and care from benevolent parents. As they grow they acquire experience rapidly. This experience forms a type of spiritual DNA (the patterned, programmed cell substance of physical life). Through these experiences alert, well-trained children will form a set of "dos and don'ts." In like manner, we develop spiritually. It is not the responsibility of one child to teach, instruct, and correct another. That duty was given to a father and mother. However, it is the duty of one child to bear the weakness and need of another. Human beings, as children of God, so often, like their counterparts -- young physical children -- confuse their responsibilities. Oh, the perversity of man!

Though ministers are called to act as the custodians of care and help for the called children of God, even they cannot take matters into their own hands. Paul meaningfully explained this concept. When exercising the necessity of correction, he wrote to the Corinthians, "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith [not coercion, force, fear] ye stand" (II Cor. 1:24). Has not the past trauma in the Church revealed the failure of fear, force, or coercion to keep servants faithful? To many, these human traits did not even keep them faithful to the physical dimension

of the Body, let alone inspiring them to maintain faith in the Way of Life -- the once revealed Truth.

We must not forget, God calls us at the time He pleases -- whether at the first hour or at the eleventh hour. Those called at the eleventh hour are certainly not going to have the same level of maturation as those called at the first. How, then, should the first called behave toward their infant brothers and sisters? Let those of us who have borne the heat (experience) of day manifest the knowledge presumably acquired through this long experience. The proof of our growth is manifested in how we treat the young and weak in the Body.

3. Personality differences (quirks, mannerisms)

Who among us has the perfect personality? Is there a perfect one? If so, why did God create such a variety of traits and mannerisms? One cannot help but wonder if God deliberately created such a variety of manifestations as a caldron of emotions in which to try the very souls of us all. Did we not earlier learn that in many ways we all offend one another?

We all think we know what perfection is, what is right in the sight of God. Just ask us! Every man is a law unto himself -- the epitome of right, character, honesty, integrity. For all the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes (Prov. 16:2). But, there is one problem with this assessment. Each individual disagrees with all other individuals. Now we are back to square one. Once we begin to recognize this vicious cycle, perhaps man can stop long enough to ask a few objective questions about himself. Who made me the judge? Why should I be the "pronouncer" of right? By what standard of judgment did I come to the conclusion I am right and others are wrong? Do I have sufficient knowledge on which to predicate a judgment, decision? Am I reading the heart or only the outward appearance? What right of judgment do I possess, in the first place? Is my life completely exemplary?

Here just a few thoughts will suffice. We must not be a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34). This must surely refer to personality as well as station in life.

Further we are told, regarding personality and station: ". . . Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith . . . But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors" (Jas. 2:5, 9). In Romans 13:10 Paul emphatically states, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour" Who is your neighbor? The only possible fulfillment of these awesome charges is to evidence much tolerance and forbearance.

Let us not by criticism of others leave the impression that we are satisfied with our own demeanor and personality. For, sometimes the problem experienced with others may be generated by the self, not by the objects of our contempt or disdain.

4. Opinions, ideas which are personal

All people apply instructions, knowledge in different ways. What is very important to one is not significant to another. These are not ideas in opposition to the gravity of God's Law and Words of Life, but ideas and thoughts which reflect levels of conviction, variant interpretations, items of conscience or emotional definition. These rooted feelings must be respected. To do violence to them is to show contempt for one for whom Christ died.

How well we should remember the circumstances of Romans 14. Here were people in the same Church who strongly espoused different ideas about food, about special diets and days, and about drinking. Paul made no attempt to sort out the conflicts, evaluating each and then rendering a personal decision on relative merits of the various arguments. On the contrary, such action was not the solution God deemed essential. Under inspiration, he made it abundantly clear that the problem was in the fact they did not respect the feelings of one another. Becoming judgmental was exactly the wrong thing to do. And any action on the part of an individual which was precipitated out of fear, anger, or coercion was not a response based on faith. What is not of faith is sin. When experience, inspiration, and spiritual growth -- maturity -- precipitate the change it will be accompanied by a manifestation of the essential ingredient of faith. Faith is fundamental. With faith the inspired individual will remain steadfast, loyal. Anything less than that kind of faith leaves the individual subject to change and a formation of new emphasis. Such action denies the unchanging nature of God, Truth, and His personal involvement with those called to receive life. Any action of value demands conviction and belief from the heart, from the individual so involved.

To compel another to respond to cherished opinions -- interpretations or emotional convictions -- implies an unwarranted confidence in the views of that human being. Only the revealed Way of God is absolute. Any concepts from the mind of man are subject to doubt. This is the first principle God teaches to any called individual. This is called conversion -- the act of changing from the arrogant mental orientation indigenous to man to that of a distrust for anything which proceeds from the heart and mind of man. Following this conversion process is the necessity of repentance -- a candid admission to God of one's defective nature. Once this process has commenced by the action of God, the initial element of faith is generated by the

operation of the Holy Spirit. That is the faith which must be kept alive at all cost. The evidence of its viability is seen in one's refusal to depart from the ways -- doctrines -- initially taught. To depart therefrom leaves any individual subject to two possibilities. One, he will forever wander in suspicion and doubt -- never certain of anything. Or, two, he will manifest a confidence in his own intellectual capability -- confidence in his own personal grasp of what is written in the Word. Both are equally distressing and injurious.

The foundation of our confidence must be the doctrine once delivered. Put no confidence in the flesh -- the mind (Ph'p. 3:3, II Cor. 10:3-5). The Jews had great confidence in their own opinions -- opinions which they had attached to the Truth which God had originally given to Israel, at the time of Moses. Confidence in the revealed Truth, however, is the root element of faith. Such confidence is absolute (Eph. 3:12, Heb. 3:6, 14; 10:35-36).

Many seem to have intense difficulty understanding what confidence in the flesh really means. Why? Because they put great confidence in their ability to read and comprehend the written Word of God. Yet, the command of God remains: put no confidence in the natural mind of man.

That which binds us together is the revealed Word of God. Opinions, thoughts, ideas, and traditions of men, those not contrary to the revealed Word of God, are to be tolerated. The operation of God, through experience, trial, and circumstance will bring the converted child of God to the conviction essential for the inheritance of life.

5. The conscience of others

How many of us are so conscious of the feelings of others that we could and would avoid any natural liberty we cherish in order to avoid injury to a weaker brother or sister of the faith? In reality the weakness of a brother or sister is not nearly as great a mistake as is a demand to exercise one's "rights." Paul made this principle quite clear in I Corinthians 8:7-13. To wound the weak conscience of another who is also called of God is sin. We are our brother's keeper in every sense of the word. If we consider ourselves strong spiritually we need to exercise this demanding responsibility. Just remember, God knows who is who. True, to some extent spiritual age has something to do with the matter. For Paul said there comes a time when we should mature and manifest the attributes of age, not youth (Heb. 5:12-14). No one can forever remain spiritually weak or an immature beginner. We must grow and age spiritually with time. The ultimate expectations are the stature and fulness of the character, resolve, and control of Christ (Eph. 4:13).

Nowhere does the Bible give us the right of determination regarding time and rate of growth. That responsibility belongs exclusively to God and His Son Jesus Christ.

Let us be more cognizant of the feelings and needs of others. Let us put on the nature and character of Christ, who sacrificed all to redeem us from a hopeless situation. Let us emulate this example determined by Christ and manifested in the life of the Apostle Paul (I Cor. 8:13; 10:31-33, Rom. 14:19-21). We can do no better than to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. Take cognizance of the feelings of others. Do not be hard and indifferent. With such an attitude of hardness and indifference we cannot be the recipients of the amelioratory, kind, and benevolent Spirit of God.

6. Acts based on fear

Man by nature is fearful -- a composite of many phobias. Every phobia is predicated upon the ultimate fear of death (Heb. 2:15). That fear is a form of bondage which enslaves every possessor. It regulates the things human beings do. It controls our emotions, thoughts, and beliefs. Such enslavement is tyrannical. A tyranny to which we are subject all our lives -- until we are called and God begins to break the hold of that fear through faith and confidence in His promises and assurances. Our ultimate liberation from such confining fear is at the resurrection -- the time of change from flesh to spirit.

The beginning of that change, however, is at the time of call, baptism, and the receipt of the Holy Spirit. That Spirit is not a spirit of bondage and servitude -- even as some may fear (Rom. 8:15). With that spirit we are begotten into a new life orientation -- a time when the natural fears are being systematically and orderly eliminated from our consciousness.

The fact that this transformation does not occur instantaneously says loud and clear to the thoughtful person that ingrained fear is not overcome in a day. It requires time. Such time necessity dictates the urgent need for patience and understanding until the day of full realization comes.

Many people do things out of a sense of terrifying fear -- operations, certain compromises, and various actions taken. They are afraid of the loss of job, loss of life, loss of family. With the deceptive subtlety of mind the fearful individual will cleverly create a justifying explanation to satisfy heart and mind.

Actions taken on the basis of fear are not right in the sight of God, but they most assuredly are understood. He knows our frame, our

heart, and nature. He is well aware of the awesome need in our lives. To begin fulfilling that need, He gave His Son Jesus Christ and then followed up with the gift of the Holy Spirit, the power by which we can begin to live lives completely contrary to the nature with which we were born. We can begin to overcome indigenous phobias. While that process of mastery is being carried out by God, He does not accept any interference on the part of others who have the same needs, though manifested in different areas of life, perhaps.

Christ was made to suffer so that He could succor -- help -- those who have comparable need. In like manner, when we, through the presence of the Holy Spirit, see our own infirmities and weaknesses as they really exist, we are made capable of understanding the needs of others. We then are in a position to help -- giving of our empathy in terms of compassion and mercy. To God, only the defiant and rebellious -- willful sinners -- are inexcusable.

We must not condemn the fearful. This ultimate judgment will be passed by God (Rev. 21:8). Until that time of appointed judgment, opportunity to overcome and grow spiritually is guaranteed by God. By action or word, will we take exception with God?

7. Supposed wrongs

Man by nature is critical, pessimistic, and condemnatory of others. Is this trait pursued so that he might feel completely justified in his own eyes? When we condemn others we feel spiritually superior -- or, at least, more in tune with the will of God. In our own greatness we are ever ready and willing to point out the weaknesses, fallacies, and problems in the lives of others. Men generally are like the Pharisees, who though they think to themselves, infrequently will they put such thoughts into words, "I fast, I pray, I would never do the things these other people are doing." What hypocrisy! Are we sure we are not doing things much worse in the sight of God?

By maximizing the sins of others in our own eyes, are we not attempting to minimize our own sins? Jesus Christ clearly delineated this problem in the parable of the mote and the beam (Matt. 9:1-5). From our vantage point we see the mote in our brother's eye. We are most cognizant of his foibles. But, Jesus Christ implied that our vision was obscure due to a gigantic problem which we had not recognized -- a beam (huge sin) in our own lives. Until we remove those personal problems, how can we see clearly to aid our brother in the removal of his mote? God here prioritizes responsibility. First work on the self! For how long? If effective mastery is not until the Second Coming of Christ followed by the change from flesh to spirit,

then does it not follow that it is not possible for us to judge acceptably and judiciously our brother until that same time? The beam of distortion makes it impossible for us to judge honestly, rightly, and intelligently any other person. Therefore, our duty is to commence the removal of the beam of sin in our own lives. The only person any one of us is capable of accurately judging -- by the help of God through His Spirit -- is the self.

The sequel to the above parable is found in Luke 6:36-37. By command, Jesus emphasized the duty of man in his interpersonal relationship with others of his own kind. He said, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven."

Mercy rejoices against judgment. It is logical, then, that judgment may be employed only when it is the ultimate manifestation of mercy. Two situations are brought to our attention. Tribulation and punishment required to effect necessary changes in the life or lives for whom the correction was intended, and the final destruction of humankind defiant and rebellious, fixed in the way of wretchedness and misery. The determination relevant to these two conditions can proceed from God only. That leaves one area of judgment only -- the area of one's own personal life. We are required to examine, judge, and correct our own selves.

Above are given seven areas in which mercy, kindness, patience, forbearance, and tolerance must be manifested. How we handle these areas of responsibility will in large measure indicate what ultimate level of duty we will be given in the Kingdom of God. A part of our training is the necessary adoption of the benevolent, loving, forgiving, compassionate, and tolerant nature of God. He has the power and capability of destroying all human beings instantly. He could eliminate every mortal who does not do His will. Why does He not do it, now? Could it be that such action would be contrary to His own Plan and purpose? If the interruption of required experience is contrary to the Plan of God, should men attempt to preempt God?

We have already revealed those areas which must not be allowed to exist in the Body of Christ. In each of those cases, it involves a matter of attempting to influence adversely and mislead others. In the areas we are required to manifest tolerance, patience, and understanding the involvement is a matter of personal weakness. Since we all are weak and deficient, we need compassion and mercy. In order to obtain these necessities we must first exhibit them toward our fellow men.

Let us, in conclusion, note just a few of the reasons why we must manifest mercy and compassion. Understanding these reasons will enable us to live successfully the Way of Life to which God called us.

First, it is God who calls and grants opportunity to have life. He alone is working in the lives of those chosen. He actually surrendered the life of His own Son for them. He tests and gives direction to their lives. If, then, God is so ardently for them, should any of us be against them? Can we legitimately lay anything to the charge of God's own elect? Surely we would do well to remember that it is Christ who died for them, and God who was willing to give up the life of His Son in the interest of those chosen, as well as the One, and only One, who justifies (Rom. 8:30-34).

Second, no human being has the capability of reading the hearts or gathering together all the necessary information. We see in part, we know in part only, regardless of the frequent manifestation of so-called superiority and "wisdom." The very fact a specific day of judgment has been established is manifest evidence that God has afforded all time for purpose. That purpose can be none other than the affording of opportunity to change. At the end of the allotted time all factors will be brought to light, including the hidden concepts and attitudes of hearts and minds. Then and only then will the final judgment be made by the One appointed to make such decisions (I Cor. 4:5, Acts 3:19-21; 17:31).

If each individual stands or falls on the basis of Christ's judgment, what is the purpose for any human judgment at this time? Does it not appear to be an attempt to preempt Christ?

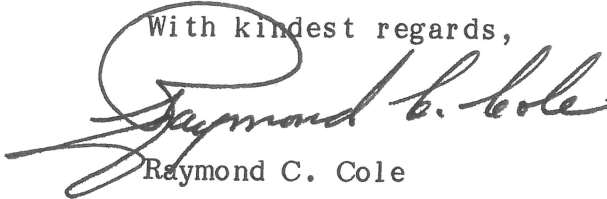
Third, what right does man have in assuming any part in the purpose of God regarding His chosen children? Choosing those to be called and afforded the right of life belongs to God only. If He purposes to work with specific individuals, what right does another child of His have to correct or disapprove (Rom. 9:15-16)?

The greater responsibility of helping others -- not the matter of judging others -- is spelled out in several texts. Note just a few: Romans 14:13-23; 15:1-3, Galatians 6:1-4; 5:24-25, and James 5:19-20. Let us all see if we can live up to that exalted and high responsibility. To help others first requires a manifestation of the character and nature of God. By a brilliant example, each of us can be powerfully influential in the lives of others. It takes a lot more energy, character, and spiritual purpose to live a light than it does to censure others. Why not assist others by living the light, by setting an impeccable example?

Joy and happiness come from living the principles of the Truth of God. Let us evidence great concern for one another. Let us criticize, judge, censure, and change the only life over whom God gave us a charge -- the self. Strangely enough, with this orientation comes the full, abundant life.

Our love and prayers always. Please remember us in the ever-expanding duties which befall us. We remember you fondly and affectionately always in our prayers.

With kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the text "With kindest regards,".

Raymond C. Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryce G. Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the signature of Raymond C. Cole.

Bryce G. Clark