Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings from all here in Eugene. We do trust and pray that all are well and greatly blessed of God. Though trials of test are essential, we do have the promise of God that He will intervene in our lives before the trial destroys us. God is a perfect character builder. He knows how much we can endure. Real, genuine faith cannot be built by any other means. Severe trials and tests are necessary. We must accept them on the basis of intent and purpose. If we complain and in other ways reject the purpose of those trials, we will have suffered in vain.

How long does God want us to endure the trauma of trial? Just as long as it is essential to produce within us the necessary character — a part of which is acceptance in a right spirit and attitude. Remember, God requires that we accept such situations joyfully. Attitude is of immeasurable importance to God. It is evidence that we do accept our lot as human beings. What if we received what we really deserved? Let us always be grateful for the magnificent, merciful, and kind way in which God has dealt with us.

Since this month's *Letter* will be a little different and potentially rather long, I will omit the usual introductory comments. We will move directly into the subject for this time.

Are You Acting on Knowledge Which You Already Possess?

At the time of man's beginning he was created flesh, carnal (Gen. 2). Designed and built within that flesh is a nature which is in total opposition to God — called carnal or flesh nature (Rom. 6:12-14, 19-20; 7:5, 15-20, 23, Eph. 2:2, Jas. 4:5). It is a rebellious nature against God (Rom. 8:7).

Human nature was designed and created by God. It, therefore, must have significant purpose. It is the catalyst in the creation of character. For character is the will and determination to live in accord with *principle* rather than to allow that carnal nature to have unbridled sway. However, man cannot lift himself by his own will — he is subject to his own nature until an outside influence is provided. And that influence and power of mastery is granted, not on the basis of the desire of man, but according to the plan and will of God.

At an acceptably appointed time, man must be called by God. He, as a human being, is called to understand things which are otherwise beyond his comprehension. His call is a miraculous intervention on the part of God (Eph. 1:4-5, I Cor. 1:2, 9). The purpose of that call is to make him (man) responsive to the Truth — Truth hidden from all mankind until the call (I Cor. 2:9-11, 14, Eph. 1:9, 13-14, 18; 3:4-5).

Truth must be *revealed*. What is that Truth which cannot be naturally understood by men?

First, it is a call to know God (Matt. 11:25-27, John 17:3). Second, it is the revelation of what man is, his helpless state — a state of wrath and contempt. Third, it is a revelation of the Way of peace — the perfect Way of life — which man of himself cannot know. Fourth, it is an opening of our eyes to the necessity of change, the mastery and overcoming of the self which was also initially revealed. And finally, it is the revelation of promissory help. Since man cannot of himself change, God made a provision for this inherent weakness. For, through the Holy Spirit, a gift to dwell within us, we are blessed with the power to overcome all the carnality which resides within us naturally.

The logical conclusion of the above facts is this: God now expects us to overcome, to master all carnal, natural weaknesses — weaknesses of character, but powerful influences within us. In many ways that requisite action is stated. A few are listed in the following texts (Rom. 8:13, I Cor. 5:6-8, Eph. 4:22-23, Col. 3:5-8; 3:10-12, Jas. 1:22, II Pet. 1:3-10).

What follows is a cross-section of the natural inclinations of the flesh and mind which God requires that we overcome. By no means is the following list complete. Yet, if we master those points mentioned we will have made great spiritual strides toward the perfection which God requires of us.

The approach of this *Letter* will be given in an outline fashion. It will require your personal study and above all the determined effort necessary to live up to those expectations of God. Remember, what follows will be used as a part of the standard by which you will be judged at the time of Christ's second appearance. Does not diligent action at the present time make sense?

Welcome to an inspirational study with rewarding results.

Natural Inclinations (A) Contrasted with Spiritual Obligations (B)

1. Man Is Physically Oriented

A. "... they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh ... to be carnally minded is death ... they that are in the flesh cannot please God" (Rom. 8:5-8).

"For after all these things [food, drink, clothing] do the Gentiles [the uncalled] seek..." (Matt. 6:32).

"... the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him..." (John 14:17).

"But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. 4:29).

- B. "... we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen..." (II Cor. 4:18).
 - "... we commend not ourselves... that ye may have somewhat to answer them which glory in appearance, and not in heart" (II Cor. 5:12).

"Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? . ." (II Cor. 10:7).

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Col. 3:2).

- "Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thess. 5:22).
- ". . . that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety. . ." (I Tim. 2:9).
- "... O man of God.... follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness" (I Tim. 6:11).
- "... Take no thought for your life, ... eat, ... drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? ... Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness. ... Take therefore no thought for the morrow. .." (Matt. 6:25, 33-34).

2. Man Is Subject to Physical Mind

- A. "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man..." (Prov. 16:25).
 - "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes. . . " (Prov. 16:2).
 - "... they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:3).
 - "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's" (Ph'p. 2:21).
 - "... beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (II Pet. 3:17).
 - "I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not; if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive" (John 5:43).
- B. "Let no man deceive himself..." (I Cor. 3:18).
 - "Wherefore, my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" (I Cor. 10:14). Remember: Idolatry is the idolization of men's mental concepts.
 - "... though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:3-5).
 - ". . . as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (II Cor. 11:3).
 - "... walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, ... the understanding darkened, ... alienated from the life of God ... because of the blindness of their heart..." (Eph. 4:17-18).
 - "... be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world.... For if these things be in you... they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:4-8).

"... beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness" (II Pet. 3:17).

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols. . ." (I John 5:21).

"I [Christ] can of mine own self do nothing . . . I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

"How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44.)

"... I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).

3. Man Is Gullible

- A. "... be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (Eph. 4:14).
 - "... in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons]..." (I Tim. 4:1).
 - "... beguiling unstable souls..." (II Pet. 2:14).

"For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness. . ." (II Pet. 2:18).

"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).

- "... lest any man should beguile you with enticing words" (Col. 2:4).
- ". . . who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:11).
- B. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing. . ." (Matt. 7:15).

"Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matt. 7:20).

- "... whosoever heareth these sayings of mine [the revealed and delivered message], and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man..." (Matt. 7:24).
- "... that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written. .." (I Cor. 4:6).
- "... let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able..." (I Cor. 10:12-13).

"Neither give place to the devil" (Eph. 4:27).

"Let no man deceive you with vain words. . . . Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph. 5:6-7).

"... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness..." (Eph. 5:11).

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8).

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18).

"... I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain" (I Thess. 3:5).

"Let no man deceive you by any means. . . " (II Thess. 2:3).

"Moreover he [a bishop] must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Tim. 3:7).

"Be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace. . ." (Heb. 13:9).

4. Man Is Self-Justifying

- A. "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers" (I Cor. 6:6).
 - ". . . when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you. . ." (I Cor. 11:18).
- B. "... there is utterly a fault among you, ... ye go to law one with another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded? ... ye do wrong, and defraud, and that your brethren" (I Cor. 6:7-8).

"Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law" (Rom. 13:8).

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves: . . . Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus . . . [who] made himself of no reputation, . . . he humbled himself. . ." (Ph'p. 2:3-8).

5. Man Has an Uncontrolled Tongue

A. "Being filled with all unrighteousness, . . . full of envy, . . . debate, . . . whisperers, backbiters, . . . boasters. . . " (Rom. 1:29-30).

"Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations" (Rom. 14:1).

"... I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be ... a railer ... with such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11).

"And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; ... the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison" (Jas. 3:6, 8).

B. "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" (Eph. 4:29).

"Let your speech be alway with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Col. 4:6).

"And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands. . ." (I Thess. 4:11).

"For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (II Thess. 3:11-12).

"If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain" (Jas. 1:26).

"For in many ways we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body" (Jas. 3:2).

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (I Pet. 2:1).

"Who [Christ] did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:22-23).

"For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (I Pet. 3:10-11).

"But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil" (Matt. 5:37).

- 6. Man Is Ostentatious and Desires Personal Acceptance
 - A. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15-16).
 - B. "But let a man examine himself..." (I Cor. 11:28).

"But of these who seemed to be somewhat, (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person:) for they who seemed to be somewhat in conference added nothing to me" (Gal. 2:6).

"If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:25-26).

"For if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:3-4).

"As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised; only lest they should suffer persecution for the cross of Christ" (Gal. 6:12).

"But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Gal. 6:14).

"Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ" (I Thess. 2:6).

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).

"Whose adorning . . . let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price" (I Pet. 3:3-4).

7. Man Lacks Self-Discipline

- A. "But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11).
 - "... Why do ye not rather take wrong? ... suffer yourselves to be defrauded? ... Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:7-10).

"Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21).

"Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous" (I Tim. 3:3).

B. "And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things . . . so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Cor. 9:25-27).

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Gal. 5:24-25).

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:13-14).

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18).

"Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Ph'p. 3:19).

8. Man Is Hateful/Revengeful

A. "Now the works of the flesh are manifest . . . Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies" (Gal. 5:19-20).

"He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love" (I John 4:8).

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth" (Col. 3:8).

- B. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:32).
 - ". . . forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Ph'p. 3:13).

"Put on therefore . . . bowels of mercies, . . . Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Col. 3:12-14).

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you" (I Thess. 3:12).

"But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another" (I Thess. 4:9).

"... a bishop must be blameless, ... not selfwilled, not soon angry, ... a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Titus 1:7-8).

"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings" (I Pet. 2:1).

"Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:11).

"If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (I John 4:20.)

9. Man Is Suspicious

- A. "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings" (I Tim. 6:4).
- B. "Charity . . . Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13:4, 7).

"Unto the pure all things are pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:15-16).

10. Man Is Judgmental

A. "Therefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou art that judgest: for wherein thou judgest another, thou condemnest thyself; for thou that judgest doest the same things. But we are sure that the judgment of God is according to truth against them which commit such things" (Rom. 2:1-2). What things? See verses 29-32 of chapter 1.

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?" (James 4:11-12.)

B. "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel" (Rom. 2:16).

". . . with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God" (I Cor. 4:3-5).

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (II Corinthians 13:5.)

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Ph'p. 2:3).

"Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead. For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit" (I Pet. 4:5-6).

"And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (I Pet. 4:8).

"Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye: and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (Matt. 7:1-5).

"Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).

11. Man Is Competitive

A. "Now the works of the flesh are . . . Envyings . . . and such like: . . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19, 21).

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind" (Col. 2:18).

"... faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (I Tim. 1:5-7).

"For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:26).

B. "That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it" (I Cor. 12:25-26).

"Envyings . . . and such like: . . . they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:21).

"... with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.... be not weary in well doing. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed" (II Thess. 3:12-14).

"O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called" (I Tim. 6:20).

"Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge" (Jas. 4:11).

"Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door" (Jas. 5:9).

"Use hospitality one to another without grudging" (I Pet. 4:9).

12. Man Is Divisive

A. "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" (I Corinthians 3:3.)

"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:15-16).

"For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies" (II Thess. 3:11).

"A bishop then must be blameless, . . . no striker [not combative], . . . not a brawler [quarrelsome]. . ." (I Tim. 3:2-3).

B. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10).

"That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another" (I Cor. 12:25).

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (I Cor. 14:33).

"I... beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:1-3).

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing..." (I Pet. 3:8-9).

In the interest of brevity and letter-length criteria, this *Letter* will be limited to the above 12 concepts. The remainder of the study will be submitted in future issues.

Please keep this study for handy reference. Much time was spent compiling the material. With the addition of the future issues, you should have a very good basic outline of spiritual obligations — obligations which God will use in our future judgment.

The above material will be of little value unless it is studied carefully, remembered, and put into practice in our daily lives. At the conclusion of the concept outline, a number of texts stating exactly what God requires will be given. Until that time, let us encourage you to apply diligently the concepts presented in this *Letter*.

Application is not an easy duty. It will require self-censure, a will to obey, and a strong supplication to God for the necessary help. But remember, God has imposed upon us nothing we cannot do with His help. It basically is a matter of whether we will to perform; or, whether we will justify failure by some specious argument.

Brethren, let us be the children of God. To make claim of being the children of God is one thing; actually to be the living, manifested children of God is quite another. Our love and prayers are with you.

Much love always. We do sincerely enjoy serving those whose spirit is right and who truly desire to be taught.

Raymond C. Cole

With fond affection.

Bryce G. Clark