

# Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings once again. Summer is well under way. Can anyone say this has not been an unusual year—by any standard one may wish to employ? We live daily with certain mental expectations! When will the prophesied catastrophic events of the last days commence? There is always the tendency to ask: Could the times in which we live be the actual beginning of those dark, foreboding times?

An air of certain expectancy cannot be wrong! How could one exist with the knowledge which has been revealed to us and not evidence concern and a certain generalized grasp of time? But, to yield to compelling tendencies, humanly, to set dates and make determinations which have proceeded exclusively from human minds—minds geared to conclude things which seem right—that have appropriated responsibilities, insight, and "rights" not revealed or given is wrong! Only God, who is the Author of all prophecies, can make the intent and purpose contained within those Scriptures known to His called and chosen servants (II Pet. 1:19–21).

There is a tragic side to all human preoccupation regarding prophecy. Namely, the following: Carefully observing the masses who have been thoroughly immersed in such prophetic studies, one factor becomes painfully evident. Personal mastery, overcoming, has been relegated to a very low responsibility—if a responsibility at all. The study of prophecy becomes all consuming. Of course, we should not forget both history and prophecy. *What* is significant, however, about both the past and the future is not the times, dates, and interface of the two, but the *reason* for the difficulties, curses, and scheduled events. Those reasons related to what man is and the punishment God, as man's Creator, will mete out to a recalcitrant humanity. One question looms large in any carefully considered evaluation of the above matter: Why should anyone want to become totally preoccupied with prophetic events and supposed interpretations? It should be obvious no man is going to change the intent of God contained in those futuristic portions of the Sacred Scriptures. What God *intends* is the only manifestation to be realized in appointed times.

A further question surfaces. What if some human being should actually *guess* the time of one or several specific events? Will he be perfected in character so that he may truly realize the "value" of his amazing prediction? What should be obvious is this: The called of God will stand in His presence—recipients of His love, mercy, and kindness—on the basis of developed character. They will not stand on the premise of prophetic capability—good guesses, although presumed to come from mental ability and astute study. Also, the Bible strongly emphasizes the value of faith—that spiritual ingredient which manifests consistency of character and faithfulness to call and responsibility. Israel failed because she did not possess that kind of faith (Heb. 4:1–2). The only behavior which will separate the called of God today from our

forbearers of the past is consistency of belief and an uncompromising determination to remain faithful to the Truth given. Doubt and change are two outward signs of spiritual weakness. Unless a strengthening of that lack is undertaken, one of two things will be inevitably experienced. One, the doubtful will be subjected to severe trial for the purpose of developing strength and purpose. Two, the test will force the doubtful to manifest their lack of stability and purpose—this action taken for the purpose of compelling all who have been called into one well-defined camp or the other (either the cold or hot) (II Thess. 2:10–12).

In the final analysis, what really counts is personal mastery—overcoming—and the manifestation of genuine character—faith, consistency of belief, and spiritual action. There is no greater duty and responsibility than that of working on ourselves. To him that is overcomes, we are specifically told.

To the end that we all might accomplish that personal mastery, the following study, along with the points listed in the previous study, are submitted. Do not consider these points lightly. They are the most important spiritual information which could be given to you.

Continuing from the March 1987 *Monthly Letter*: What, then, is the natural man like?

### **Natural Inclinations (A) Contrasted with Spiritual Obligations (B) (continued)**

#### 13. Man Is Naturally Impatient.

What man wants, he wants *now!* He is a part of the instant-generation.

A. ". . . The trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1:3).

". . . let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (Jas. 1:4).

Patience is not natural: "Better . . . the patient in spirit . . . than the proud in spirit" (Eccl. 7:8).

Consistency in right doing is not natural: "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7).

Impatient are uncontrolled: "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

Trials are necessary: ". . . We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience" (Rom. 5:3).

B. ". . . Called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect . . ." (I Pet. 5:10).

When we really manifest patience: ". . . if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Rom. 8:25). ". . . Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope" (Rom. 15:4).

Patience seems to wane with age: ". . . aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience" (Titus 2:2).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering [the work of the flesh is impatience] . . ." (Gal. 5:22).

C. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God . . . humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Col. 3:12).

". . . Be patient toward *all men*" (I Thess. 5:14).

". . . O man of God . . . follow after . . . patience. . ." (I Tim. 6:11).

". . . After he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise" (Heb. 6:15).

"Take . . . the prophets . . . for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience" (Jas. 5:10).

"Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass" (Ps. 37:7).

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Col. 1:11).

". . . Ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise" (Heb. 10:36).

". . . Let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Heb. 12:1).

". . . Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind [Christ's]: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (I Pet. 4:1).

"For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God" (I Pet. 2:20).

". . . The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ" (II Thess. 3:5).

"Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. . ." (Jas. 5:7).

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (Jas. 5:8).

#### 14. Man Is Naturally Unmerciful.

A. ". . . After thy [man, vs. 1] hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation. . ." (Rom. 2:5).

"For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy. . ." (Jas. 2:13).

". . . Without natural affection, implacable [hardhearted, bitter, wrathful], unmerciful. . ." (Romans 1:31.) A state of mind with those who turn from the Truth of God—Romans 1:21–25.

B. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering" (Col. 3:12).

". . . Mercy rejoiceth against judgment" (Jas. 2:13).

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7).

". . . The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy" (Jas. 3:17).

"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life" (Jude 21).

"With the merciful thou [God] wilt shew thyself merciful. . ." (Ps. 18:25).

"The merciful man doeth good to his own soul: but he that is cruel troubleth his own flesh" (Prov. 11:17).

". . . God be merciful to me [publican] a sinner" (Luke 18:13). The publican is a type of the converted.

". . . Have omitted the weightier matters of the law. . ." (Matthew 23:23.)

"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. . ." (Titus 3:5).

*Note the mercy of God:*

". . . The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth. . ." (Ex. 34:6).

". . . For the Lord thy God is a merciful God. . ." (Deut. 4:31).

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36).

#### 15. By Nature Man Is a Liar.

A. "Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:9).

". . . Out of the heart of man, proceed evil thoughts, . . . deceit, . . . an evil eye. . ." (Mark 7:21-22).

". . . The law is not made for a righteous man [see Rom. 3:10-20], but for the lawless and disobedient, . . . for liars, for perjured persons. . ." (I Tim. 1:9-10).

"Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge . . . ? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom . . . is earthly, sensual, devilish" (Jas. 3:13-15).

B. ". . . Let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written. . ." (Rom. 3:4).

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour. . ." (Eph. 4:25).

"If we say that we have not sinned, we make him [God] a liar, and his word is not in us" (I John 1:10).

"He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him" (I John 2:4).

#### 16. Natural Man Is Arrogant.

A. "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you" (I Cor. 4:18).

". . . Be not conformed to this world. . . . For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly. . ." (Rom. 12:2–3).

"Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (I Tim. 3:6).

B. ". . . God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (I Cor. 12:18).

"Be kindly affectioned one to another . . . ; in honour preferring [outdo one another in showing respect; or consider better, esteem more highly—*A Greek-English Lexicon*, Baur, Arndt, Gingrich; p. 712] one another" (Rom. 12:10).

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits" (Rom. 12:16).

"Beware of dogs [an unclean animal; therefore figuratively refers to the unbaptized, the impure], . . . evil workers, . . . the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit . . . and have no confidence in the flesh. . . . If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more" (Ph'p. 3:2–4).

"Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another" (Gal. 5:26).

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, . . . humbleness of mind, meekness. . ." (Col. 3:12).

". . . God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (Jas. 4:6).

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (Jas. 4:10).

"Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance: And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father. . ." (Matt. 3:8–9).

"Blessed are the poor [not strong willed, selfish] in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:3).

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matt. 5:5).

#### 17. Natural Man Manifests Partiality.

A. ". . . Respect to him that weareth gay clothing . . . : Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?" (James 2:3-4.)

". . . If ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are . . . transgressors" (Jas. 2:9).

"For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (Matthew 5:46.)

"And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" (Matthew 5:47.)

B. ". . . Ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion [opportunity] to the flesh, but by love serve one another." (Gal. 5:13.)

". . . As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. . . . Avenge not yourselves. . . . If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. . ." (Rom. 12:18-20).

". . . He that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Col. 3:25).

". . . Warn them that are unruly. . ." (I Thess. 5:14).

". . . The wisdom that is from above is . . . without partiality. . ." (Jas. 3:17).

"Be [become] ye therefore perfect [without partiality or respect of persons], even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

"If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well" (Jas. 2:8).

#### 18. Natural Man Is Apathetic, Indifferent.

A. ". . . Be no more children, tossed to and fro. . ." (Eph. 4:14).

". . . Ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scornors delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" (Proverbs 1:22.)

"Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come. . ." (Prov. 6:10-11).

"The slothful man saith, There is a lion in the way; a lion is in the streets. As the door turneth upon his hinges, so doth the slothful upon his bed. The slothful hideth his hand in his bosom; it grieveth him to bring it again to his mouth. The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason" (Prov. 26:13-16).

Note: A principle applicable to nearly all life's situations.

B. "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute" (Prov. 12:24).

"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. . ." (Eccl. 9:10).

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled" (Matt. 5:6).

"Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established" (Prov. 4:26).

". . . Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9).

". . . Knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep. . ." (Romans 13:11.)

". . . Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead. . . . Walk circumspectly. . . . Redeeming the time. . ." (Ephesians 5:14–16.)

". . . Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men" (Col. 3:23).

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time" (Col. 4:5).

"But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing" (II Thess. 3:13).

". . . Redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25).

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil . . . walketh about. . ." (I Pet. 5:8).

19. Natural Man Is Greedy.

A. ". . . Greedy of filthy lucre" (I Tim. 3:8).

". . . Men of corrupt minds [natural, flesh minds], and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness . . ." (I Timothy 6:5.)

". . . They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Tim. 6:9–10).

B. ". . . Having food and raiment let us be therewith content. . . . But thou, O man of God, flee these things [vs. 9–10, greed and the love of money]; and follow after righteousness. . ." (I Tim. 6:8–11).

". . . A bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God . . . , not given to filthy lucre. . ." (Titus 1:7).

". . . He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver" (II Cor. 9:6–7).

"Holding fast the faithful word *as he hath been taught*. . . For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers . . . teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:9–11).

"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal" (Matt. 6:19).

20. Man Is Naturally Critical.

A. "Death and life are in the power of the tongue. . ." (Prov. 18:21).

". . . A busybody in other men's matters" (I Pet. 4:15).

"He that . . . hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now" (I John 2:9).

". . . He that hateth [according to God: Who hates?] his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes" (I John 2:11).

"Backbiters, . . . inventors of evil things, . . . without natural affection, implacable [not capable of being appeased]. . ." (Romans 1:30–31.)

"In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin. . ." (Prov. 10:19).

B. ". . . As the body is one, and hath many members, . . . so also is Christ [the Church]" (I Cor. 12:12).

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice" (Eph. 4:31).

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Ph'p. 2:14–15).

". . . Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before" (Ph'p. 3:13).

". . . Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another" (Gal. 6:4).

"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers [quarrelsome, contentious], but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men" (Titus 3:2).

"Follow peace with all men . . .; Looking diligently [for Second Coming] lest any man fail . . .; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you. . ." (Heb.12:14–15).

"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: but contrariwise blessing. . ." (I Pet. 3:8–9).

"He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is *none* occasion of stumbling in him" (I John 2:10).

21. By Nature Man Tends to Create Strife.



A. ". . . 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.)

". . . Lest there be *debates* [strifes], envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swellings, tumults . . . and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented. . ." (II Cor. 12:20–21).

". . . They did not like to retain [those who turned away from their initial call] God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, . . . Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, *debate*, deceit, malignity; whisperers. . ." (Rom. 1: 28–29).

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; . . . Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, *variance*, . . . wrath, strife, seditions, heresies!" (Gal. 5:19–20).

"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and *strife* . . . supposing to add affliction to my [the Apostle Paul's] bonds: . . . notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice. . ." (Ph'p. 1:15–18).

". . . Servants . . . under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour. . . . These things teach and exhort. If any man teach otherwise . . . He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth . . . : from such withdraw thyself" (I Tim. 6:1–5).

B. "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge . . .? let him shew out of a good conversation [conduct] his works. . . . But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (Jas. 3:13–16).

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (Matt. 5:9).

". . . Mark [take note of] them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

"Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering [cohabiting] and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Rom. 13:13–14).

". . . As ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God. . . . For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness. He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God. . . . for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another. . . . And that ye study to be quiet; and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, . . . That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without. . .  
" (I Thess. 4:1–12).

". . . These things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they . . . might be careful to maintain good works. . . . But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law. . . . An heretick after the first and second

admonition reject; . . . he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:8-11).

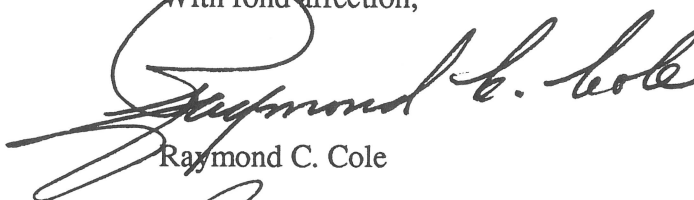
There are fifteen other points which I have catalogued. Hopefully I can finish this series of *Monthly Letters* in two more installments. A significant part of the series—the analysis and evaluation—must follow the final points. Technical knowledge is of no value except as it is understood and personally applied.

What is most important at this juncture is this: Read, hear, and apply the above material to the self. Only those who heed all the words of God will be afforded the right of everlasting life. Please do not make the generalized, however tragic, mistake of deceptively rationalizing the self away from the acute responsibility of personally applying each and every point mentioned above. Of course, no one person is significantly guilty of every bad, evil trait of carnality. We surely hope not. Yet, the fact remains, we all are guilty to some degree or another. It is a matter of the nature with which we were born. It is the reason for the intense spiritual responsibility of mastery—overcoming. Therefore, if we use tinted glasses when examining the self, if we rationalize the depth of liability away, or if we apply these concepts to others only, we are missing the personalized intent of God's Word to us and for our benefit.

Study the material of my past two letters. Review the contents frequently. For Christ said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne. . ." (Rev. 3:21). We must be about the business for which we were called—the effective evaluation of self and the indicated needs of personal mastery. Our prayers are for all. We, too, need your prayers.

Sent with much love and appreciation.

With fond affection,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Raymond C. Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryce G. Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Bryce G. Clark