

Church of God, The Eternal

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January 1988

Dear Brethren:

We are living in interesting and mysterious times. Regardless of whom one talks to, in some way a future doubt surfaces. Men are troubled. They have good reason to be worried. At some point the telling events of the last days will become manifest. Those events will influence us—both physically and mentally—in all our actions. What we, as Christians, need is a high level of faith—an unshakeable trust in God. What is the source of such trust and confidence? Self-mastery! No called person is unmindful of the requirements of God. He knows when he is faithfully fulfilling the obligations of self-examination and the subsequent crucifixion of the carnal nature. There is no chosen individual who does not know of his own weaknesses, frailties, and failures. Even so, self-deception is the greatest enemy of the called. Without a proper fear of God, a healthy element of vision—regarding the certitude of the future, and an abhorrence for the self—few, if any, will face and confess the reality of the self. From the inception of conversion such open, candid honesty is difficult. How much more problematic once the spirit has been injured. When such injury has occurred, we too often become critical, defensive, and lacking in the ability to trust anyone or anything again. Yet, there is no way to have a proper relationship with God except by faith and implicit trust. This trust must not be a confidence in the flesh. It is a required trust in the Truth given by God. Our examples are most significant, illuminating. They are the illustrious histories of Abraham, Moses, Joshua, Christ, and the prophets and apostles. In all cases, they had no trust in themselves. They gave up the carnal way of the flesh. It was the Word—the Way—of God which became their all-consuming purpose, orientation, and motivation.

In the past issues of this letter—those related to the subject, what man is by carnal nature—we have endeavored to make plain what man is and what God requires of us as His called and converted servants. This issue of the *Monthly Letter* continues that series. In all probability there will be at least one more issue—perhaps two.

The value of this material will be realized only by effecting a consistent review of the substance and a daily application of the inherent spiritual yardstick as a guide for the conduct of our lives. Knowledge is of little value unless thoroughly and personally applied. Remember, the only person you can change is yourself. But, thank God, the only person you are required to change is the self. The task of self-mastery lies before each of us.

May I recommend you to this challenging responsibility?

Continuing from the March and August, 1987, *Monthly Letters*: Let us continue to contrast man's natural inclination with spiritual obligations imposed by God. We have covered the first 21 points. We now begin with point number 22.

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

22. Man is by nature heretical.

A. ". . . the invisible [spiritual] things of him from the creation of the world . . . clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. . . when they knew God . . . became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible men. . ." (Rom. 1:21–23).

"And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind. . ." (Rom. 1:28).

Pray "that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith" (II Thess. 3:2).

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; 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, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself" (I Tim. 6:3–5).

". . . There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in [the church] 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).

"For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Pet. 2:21).

B. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark [take note of] them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17).

"For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (I Cor. 11:18–19).

Note: How can the approved be made manifest in the midst of heretical harangue? One way only. The faithful will not allow themselves to be embroiled in either the specious argument or a fraternal relationship with those who practice such carnal manifestations.

"Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Ph'p. 2:2–3).

". . . Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretic [espouses doctrine contrary to revealed doctrine] after the first and second admonition reject. Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:9–11).

23. Man by nature is a compromiser.

A. "Knowing that he that is such [a heretic] is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself" (Titus 3:11).

Note: One acting in such a vile fashion knows what he is doing and that he is wrong—just as Satan knows he is wrong and what his fate is.

"Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Heb. 12:16–17).

"No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matt. 6:24).

Note: Time and circumstances will dictate to the compromiser that to which he momentarily subscribes.

"I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked" (Rev. 3:15–17).

- B. "To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life" (Rom. 2:7).

"That Christ [the unchanging one] may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height" (Eph. 3:17–18).

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Ph'p. 1:27).

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8).

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17).

". . . And purify your hearts, ye double minded" (Jas. 4:8).

"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. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins" (Heb. 10:25–26).

"But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Heb. 10:39).

24. Man by nature is faithless.

- A. ". . . Whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

Note: Man has not natural faith. Faith is a fruit of the Holy Spirit—Galatians 5:22.

"For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ" (II Cor. 2:17).

Note: Logic says that the many here in Corinth had received the pure word. The subsequent corruption implies unfaithfulness to that which had been delivered to them (I Cor. 11:23; 15:3).

"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?" (Galatians 4:9.)

". . . Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them" (Gal. 3:10).

"Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God" (Heb. 3:12).

- B. "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand" (II Cor. 1:24).

Note: Each individual must exercise sustaining control over his own faith. The result is an unmoveable posture.

"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage" (Gal. 5:1).

"Ye did run well; who did hinder you that ye should not obey the truth? This persuasion cometh not of him that calleth you. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump" (Gal. 5:7-9).

Note: People are not led away from the revealed Truth by God who calls them. On the contrary, such departure is the consequence of allowing a servant of Satan to insinuate into our minds a seed of doubt.

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Ph'p. 1:27).

"If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached . . . whereof I Paul am made a minister" (Col. 1:23).

". . . Keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science [knowledge] falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith. . ." (I Tim. 6:20-21).

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught. . ." (Col. 2:6-7).

"Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught. . ." (II Thess. 2:15).

". . . Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6).

"Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck" (I Tim. 1:19).

"Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession. . ." (I Tim. 6:12).

". . . Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (II Tim. 3:14).

"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Heb. 3:14).

". . . Without faith it is impossible to please him. . ." (Heb. 11:6).

". . . Faith without works is dead. . ." (Jas. 2:20).

". . . By works was faith made perfect. . ." (Jas. 2:22).

"For as the body without the spirit [breath] is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).

25. Man by nature is vile.

- A. ". . . 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).

"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. 6:9–10).

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness [filthy wantonness], Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations [fiery indignation], wrath, strife, seditions, heresies" (Gal. 5:19–21).

". . . The law is not made for a righteous man [Rom. 3:10, Pss. 14:1–3; 53:1–3], but for the lawless . . . disobedient . . . ungodly . . . sinners . . . unholy . . . profane . . . murderers . . . whoremongers . . . them that defile themselves with mankind . . . menstealers . . . liars . . . perjured persons, and . . . any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine" (I Tim. 1:9–10).

"For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you" (I Pet. 4:3–4).

"Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children: Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (II Pet. 2:14–15).

"Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:19).

- B. "Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth" (I Cor. 13:6).

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners" (I Cor. 15:33).

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit [mind], perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor.) 7:1.

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient. . . . Let no men deceive you with vain words: . . . Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Eph. 5:3–7).

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Col. 3:5).

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

"That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thess. 4:6–7).

"Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (Jas. 1:21).

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11).

"That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God" (I Pet. 4:2).

26. Man by nature is wrathful.

- A. "Destruction and misery are in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known" (Rom. 3:16–17).

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Eph. 2:3).

"From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:1–2).

"For jealousy in the rage of a man: therefore he will not spare in the day of vengeance" (Prov. 6:34).

- B. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom. 14:19).

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Eph. 4:26).

". . . Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Col. 3:15).

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. . ." (Heb. 12:14).

"I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Tim. 2:8).

"For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God" (Jas. 1:20).

". . . 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. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace" (Jas. 3:17–18).

"Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts. . . . Grudge not one against another. . ." (Jas. 5:8–9).

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you. . . . As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (I Pet. 1:13–15).

"Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:11–12).

"A wrathful man stirreth up strife: but he that is slow to anger appeaseth strife" (Prov. 15:18).

27. Man by nature is deceptive.

- A. "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death" (II Cor. 7:10).

"Let love be without dissimulation. . . . Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:9–10).

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (II Tim. 3:13).

"For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh" (II John 7).

"For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision" (Titus 1:10).

"Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?" (James 4:5.)

B. ". . . Have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully. . ." (II Cor. 4:2).

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting" (Gal. 6:7–8).

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Heb. 3:13).

"That ye put off concerning the former conversion the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Eph. 4:22).

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:8–9).

"Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous" (I John 3:7).

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed" (II John 9–10).

28. Man by nature is hypocritical.

A. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of man, who hold the truth in unrighteousness" (Rom. 1:18).

"Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (Roman 2:17–21.)

"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. 1:6–7).

"Likewise must the deacons [servants] be grave, not doubletongued [hypocritical or deceptive]. . ." (I Tim. 3:8).

". . . In the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils [demons]; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron" (I Tim. 4:1-2).

"And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you. . ." (II Pet. 2:3).

- B. ". . . Let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks" (Eph. 5:3-4).

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men" (Eph. 6:5-7).

". . . My beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Ph'p. 2:12-13).

"Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned" (I Tim. 1:5).

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Pet. 1:22).

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

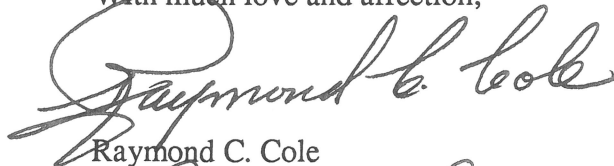
"For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5:20).

"But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God" (John 3:21).

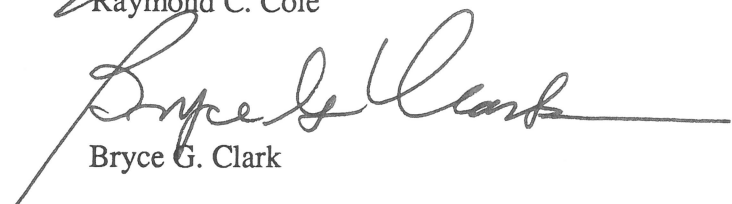
Predetermined letter length dictates the necessity of closing this issue. Its inherent value is found in personalized study and application of the imperative spiritual principles. Short of that personal effort, the labor and study will be valueless. Let us all make these issues the guiding concepts of our lives.

Next time I hope to finish the outline—points 29 through 36. With careful retention and usage we will have been supplied an adequate blueprint for hope and life.

With much love and affection,



Raymond C. Cole



Bryce G. Clark