

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

April 1989

Dear Brethren:

Are we in the calm before the storm? Though it might be somewhat difficult to put one's finger on specifics at the moment, it certainly is abundantly manifest that strange things are happening. More and more generalized events of the last days emerge in a recognizable form. The surfacing of modern Babylon continues unabated. Politically and governmentally, the form this corrupt power is to take is identifiable. Those who read broadly are aware of the aspirations, plans, and purposes the mysterious powers destined to dominate in the resurrection of this system have laid down and even broadly circulated in select areas. When those plans actually transpire, they must be faced as reality, not as a mere fluke or a cleverly designed concept of anyone—whether generally accepted or not. When reality surfaces, it becomes an undeniable fact.

In the above context, the structuring of the universal geo-political system is emerging. The design is to divide up and then synthesize each area into a governing and trading entity. The design involves ten areas which will encompass the whole earth. More will be said about the emerging superstructure in the future. Much material is presently available. This analysis will probably be made in the *Announcement Letter*.

Another area in which alarming events are occurring is the relationship between government and religion. Traditional Christianity is under severe attack. Many very damaging judicial decisions have been made, as well as legislative actions taken, to restrict or otherwise impinge upon religious liberty. Government bureaucrats are quick to comment about religious interference in the political process. Yet, they never recognize how unabashedly they usurp that which belongs to the church—the matter of race, the abortion issue, remarriage, homosexuality and other "alternative" lifestyles, the matter of faith versus medicine, care of children, and education. These are religious issues. They do not belong in the arena of politics. True religion is a way of life. It is not a mere confession of some empty-headed faith in a superior power or Being. The true God is a reality. One who has determined what is right and what is wrong for His created subjects.

The time is not far removed when the true servants of God are going to be tried and tested severely for their faith and trust in their Creator. Serious choices will need to be made. Of course, we all understand how temporary obedience to "the powers that be" is a divine command. We must willingly obey them as long as we are not required to violate the laws, statutes, and judgments of God.

In January of 1988, I wrote the third letter of the series on the subject of our natural inclinations contrasted with spiritual obligations. Hopefully, I can complete this series in this April 1989 issue of the *Monthly Letter*.

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

29. Man is naturally covetous.

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

". . . Any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or *covetous*, or an idolater, or a railer, . . . with such an one no not to eat" (I Cor. 5:11)

B. "For neither at any time used we flattering words . . . nor a cloke of *covetousness*. . ." (I Thess. 2:5).

"Let your conversation [character or moral disposition] be without *covetousness*; and be content with such things as ye have. . ." (Heb. 13:5).

30. Man, by nature, is untrustworthy.

A. "Without understanding, *covenantbreakers*, without natural affection . . ." (Rom. 1:31)

". . . There are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: . . . teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake" (Titus 1:10–11).

B. "*Holding fast* the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:9)

"Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip" (Heb. 2:1).

"Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house" (Heb. 3:2)

". . . Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Heb. 3:6).

"See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain" (Heb. 12:25–27).

31. Man, by nature, is selfish.

A. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

"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. Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (Jas. 4:1–3).

"But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (I John 3:17.)

- B. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me" (Rom. 15:1-3).

"Even as I please all men in all things, not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (I Cor. 10:33)

"Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (I Cor. 13:4-7).

"Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:1-2).

32. Man, by nature, is unteachable.

- A. "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits" (Prov. 16:2).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 4:3-4).

"In meekness instructing [the ministry, v. 24] those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (II Tim. 2:25)

- B. "(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. 10:4-5).

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; 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 man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:11-13).

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Eph. 5:21)

"Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thess. 3:6).

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

"They are of the world; therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error" (I John 4:5–6).

"*Endeavouring* to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3)

33. Man, by nature, is doubtful.

A. "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Tim. 3:7)

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

Note: Great care must be exercised in feeding spiritual infants. If we create doubts in their minds when they are of insufficient age to handle demanding circumstances or problems, we will be held accountable for an unnecessary failure.

"Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded" (Jas. 4:8).

"But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (Matthew 6:23.)

B. Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Ph'p. 1:6)

"For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know" (I Thess. 3:4).

"But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief. Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (I Thess. 5:4–5).

"Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompence of reward" (Heb. 10:35).

"Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye *know* that I am he, and that I do nothing of myself; but as the Father hath taught me, I speak these things" (John 8:28).

"For I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have *received* them, and have *known* surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me" (John 17:8).

34. Man, by nature, is exclusive.

A. "They profess that they know God; but in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

Note: What is the good work of God? The creation of the body of Christ. That body has but one mind. Therefore, the real work of God is the purging of self and the putting on of the character of Christ. The evidence of that character is oneness—oneness of mind, heart, attitude, direction, and doctrine. Surely no one with the Spirit of God would accuse Christ of having a split or multiple personality. Yet this is just what most "Christians" do. Because they justify division, differences of opinion doctrinally, and Biblical "interpretations"—all

supposedly coming from the same mind of Christ. Could these be the ones who deny Him?

". . . Oppositions of science [*gnosis*, 'knowledge'] falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith [those who once forsook the natural mind and implicitly trusted the divinely revealed Truth]" (I Tim. 6:20–21).

- B. "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).

"That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without . . ." (I Thess. 4:12)

"Moreover he [a servant of God] 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).

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (I Tim. 4:12).

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you. Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men" (Titus 2:1–12).

35. Man, by nature, is vindictive.

- A. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:1–3).

"Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (I John 3:12).

Note: If we would always be honest with ourselves, how many times do we respond hatefully to others because of their obviously superior character and attitude? Contempt usually springs from deep-rooted resentment toward a manifestation of character and/or standard of life. Evil cannot coexist with good.

- B. "See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men" (I Thess. 5:15).

"Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully" (I Pet. 2:18–19).

"Who [Christ], when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously" (I Pet. 2:23).

"Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation [conduct] in Christ" (I Pet. 3:16).

36. Man, by nature, is irresponsible.

- A. "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee" (Heb. 5:4-5).

"But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; . . . that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. . . . sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; . . . beguiling unstable souls: . . . who loved the wages of unrighteousness" (II Pet. 2:10-15).

"But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse then an infidel" (I Tim. 5:8).

"But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth" (I Tim. 5:6).

- B. "But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God" (I Tim. 5:4).

Widows: "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work" (I Tim. 5:10).

Ministry: "Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God" (II Cor. 4:1-2).

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Cor. 4:2).

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

". . . Ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives. . . . Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife. . ." (I Pet. 3:1, 7).

Undoubtedly, there are other areas of carnality which afflict us all. Sufficient, however, is given to enable us to make positive decisions regarding our lives and commence or bring to completion requisite self-mastery. No knowledge is of value unless remembered and employed in achieving positive results. Knowing the Truth is not enough; we must live it—the exercise of that abundant life Christ promised us if we would yield and obey.

Like the Apostle Paul, we desire to see the fruits of fulfillment in the lives of all called by God (Ph'p. 4:17). In the final analysis, those who achieve the hope of their spiritual endeavor will be they who do "the will of my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 7:21). They will be "fruitful in every good work [self-mastery], and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power. . ." (Col. 1:9–10). With long and arduous struggle and determined purpose they will "have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him. . ." (Col. 3:10).

Further, they will be those who heeded the admonition, "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God . . . and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Rom. 6:12–13). We are promised that "sin shall not have dominion over [us]" (Rom. 6:14). What we desire above all else is the perfection of the people called to be the children of God (II Cor. 13:9).

If we really believe and have willed obedience to God, we can know that the old self will be destroyed and that from this point in time on into the future we do not need to serve our sinful nature. We can be masters, overcomers—with the help now promised by God (Rom. 6:6). We can avoid rebuilding the carnalities which we buried at baptism (Gal. 2:17–18). It is all a matter of faith in God, and a heartfelt convicted resolve—a struggle to death if need be. Remember, we have not yet resisted unto blood.

Peter was inspired to put it this way: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former [prior to conversion] lusts in your ignorance" (I Pet. 1:14). Now belonging to Christ, we "have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). From this point in time on, we can, because of previously acquired knowledge, "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Col. 1:9–10).

If we are truly called of God, all we need to do is recall the past to be revitalized and motivated to personal mastery. Recalling when "we ourselves were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another" (Titus 3:3).

What should we do? It is all spelled out in Ephesians 6:10–18. Read and commit to action. When you live these precepts, they become a part of you—living, animated principles.

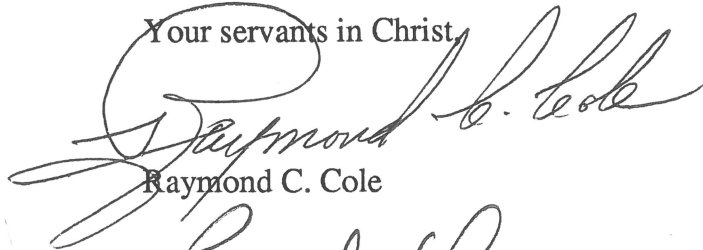
In conclusion, let us all take to heart the admonition of James, ". . . to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

One Final Comment

My apologies for this outline *Monthly Letter*. I did want to complete the series which I had commenced. Henceforth, we have decided that the *Monthly Letter* should be just that—a letter. It should not be a study. If and when we decide to present studies, they will be written in a correspondence course format. The original intent of the *Monthly Letter* was that it should be used as a medium to submit to the members explanations of broad spiritual concepts or principles. Hopefully, we will be able to give you both a *Monthly Letter* and good, well-designed correspondence course format in the future. Until this is possible, we will stick with the *Monthly Letter* format for the present.

Again, much love and respect to you all. It is such a pleasure to serve those who truly love the Truth of God. Thank you for allowing us the privilege of carrying out the commission which God gave to us.

Your servants in Christ,

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