

# Church of God, The Eternal

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Dear Brethren:

Though the principles employed in the philosophy of this world are of general significance, it is our intent to restrict our concern to the one issue of nutrition and health. In this context may I presume to give to you a short resume of my early education and as a continuing interest? In this section of the letter I will resort to the "first person" usage. That is, I will be using the pronoun "I."

For a number of reasons, I, once again, want to interrupt the series of *Monthly Letters* being written on the subject of *Why the Written Word of God*—the Scriptures, the Bible. This is a very special letter—an urgent one. Please read it carefully and prayerfully. I do not want my motive and purpose to be misconstrued. Therefore, let me predicate this letter on this assertion: I love, admire, and respect the people of God with my whole being. They are my spiritual brothers and sisters in the common faith. It is my fond hope and trust that I would make any sacrifice necessary for their well-being. They are, and have always been, my life.

The world does not comprehend the truth of God. The way of life is anathema to them. For this world belongs to our archenemy—Satan. All mankind is deceived. Their systems and orientations are totally of this world. And the foundation of this world is that which seems right to the natural—flesh—mind. From those natural minds have come all the professions, institutions, ways, concepts, and practices taken for granted in society. Yet, when one really understands spiritual things, he is forced to recognize that such ways and concepts are diametrically contrary to things which proceed from God. A love, admiration, and respect for this world makes one an enemy of God.

Though called of God, the chosen yet live in the flesh. They are struggling against the temptations, allurements, desires, dictates, and pulls of that flesh. When cornered, troubled, or caught in their own vices some will react in a carnal manner. That is, they will manifest the natural traits and/or characteristics of the flesh. Only those who by conviction, knowledge, and purpose—will—have the ability to resist the demand of the flesh to react carnally.

In these very troublous times of the last days many who believed themselves to be spiritual will resort to the ways of the flesh. Just take a good look at how many turned from the truth which they once accepted and thought was a priceless gift from God. They will manifest contempt for others, denigrate and belittle those of the common faith, threaten those of the household of faith, refuse to humble the self, arrogantly insist on avenues of self-justification, and in general manifest many, if not all, the worst characteristics of the flesh. These conditions will grow in intensity and severity. These conditions will exist within the body of Christ, the Church. It is within such conditions and circumstances that the faithful must endure unto the end.

### **Times in Which We Are Living**

It is not my intent to make this a textually replete letter. An analytical and instructive approach is assumed. However, it is imperative to give a basis for that analyzation. Allow me to quote the Apostle Paul by way of introduction. To Timothy he wrote: "In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth; And that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will. This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy. Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; *from such turn away . . .* Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be *manifest* unto all men . . ." (II Tim. 2:25-3:5, 7-9).

These are the last days. The conditions defined above are destined to occur within the Church, not outside of it. The faithful of God are instructed to be aware of any and all who practice such vile traits and to avoid them. Such action imposes upon the children of God an unusually demanding responsibility. Such judgment must be accurate. For the truly called must also bear the burdens of the weak. Discernment between the calloused of mind and those who are only manifesting weaknesses of the flesh is imperative. Closeness with God in prayer, fasting, and much Bible study are requisite. Faith and implicit obedience of the called is, and will continue to be, tried to the ultimate degree. The called of God have little time to be indifferent to their call and the discharge of responsibility as imposed upon them by the God who is working all things after the plan and purpose of His own will. For significant reason, God has allowed those of a wrong spirit and orientation to gain entrance into and to remain within the body. The wise must, therefore, be as harmless as doves but

at the same time as wise as serpents. They must love all people. But, they must not condone and/or support those who are wrong. To do so makes them equally guilty.

### **Avenues of Concern**

Since this world, in its entirety, belongs to Satan, he is greatly concerned with what is taught, believed, and practiced. He does not possess a democratic spirit. His intent is to destroy everything which is contrary to his philosophy. And many elements of that evil philosophy are significantly surfacing in all parts of the world today. Man in his carnal state has a very strong affinity to that philosophy. For the very carnal nature of man, so abundantly in evidence today, originated with Satan. When God created man He took the nature of defiant and rebellious spirit beings and infused it into a body of flesh—made of the dust of the ground. Man, therefore, by nature, responds to the dictates and pulls of that orientation. Issues of law and government are of and belong to God. Issues of nutrition and health belong to God. Issues of race and the structure of society belong to God. Issues of education and work belong to God. Yet presumptive man has arrogated to himself specific domains of responsibility, and to ensure that no infringement can occur he has attempted to restrict admittance legally, socially, or by many other human devices.

While yet a very young man, I had an avid interest in the medical profession. I wanted to be a physician. At the same time, however, I had acquired a tendency to check the foundation or the philosophy behind concepts and practices. When subjecting the medical profession to the spotlight of honesty, integrity, and a humanitarian orientation I was disgustingly surprised. Greed, avarice, and selfishness have generally ruled—generally with respect to the profession itself, not to the people served. Some doctors are truly motivated by a desire to help humanity. Yet such credit cannot be given to the institutional embodiment of that professional practice. I have voluminous amounts of material, written by a host of different authors, who have indicted the profession.

The contempt did not, however, destroy my interest in the human body and the mechanisms by which it lives and functions. Very early I had begun reading and studying health and nutrition. This avid interest has continued to this day, modified only by a very early interest in the truth of God. More than most people can, or presently allow themselves, I firmly believe that the Bible relates to all endeavors of men. Specifically, the orientation of health, diet, and healing are broadly addressed in the Word of God. Yet, the philosophy of those professions is an alarming 180-degree turn from that which is truly revealed in that Word. For nearly fifty years I have studied the truth of healing, health, and diet from the perspective of God's Word. It is an orientation which virtually no one has either understood or practiced. It is an orientation which comes only by divine revelation. It is an orientation which is practiced only by those who truly fear God and sincerely want to live by every word

of God. By those who respect the whole of His word and want their bodies to be fit temples of the Holy Spirit. To live that way of life requires much more than most people are willing to give to God, their Creator. It requires faith—faith in something that cannot be seen. Faith is beyond the machinations and justifications of men. The fruits borne are most revealing. At the same time, it is imperative that those called of God understand the arduous means by which human beings learn faith and have the ability to truly practice it in their own lives. The just shall live by faith. Surely, that requirement enormously exceeds what most people are inclined to call faith today. But the called need not live in doubt. Our fruits are revealing. They are precise indicators for those willing to look and who are sufficiently courageous and honest to accept that which is revealed, made known. For real help we must look willingly into the glaring reality of that image which we can see in the mirror of truth. Regarding the self, what do we see? How do we stand before God?

### **How We Come to Godly Knowledge**

Children are begotten knowing nothing. (There is some evidence that fetuses acquire certain information.) They rapidly acquire information from the very first moment they come into being. Learning that first year of life is more rapid than any subsequent year they will live. All that learning, however, is of a physical nature. What about things spiritual? Since spiritual things are from God they must be received from God. How has God willed that lowly man learn those higher principles?

No man may decide of himself that he will become a minister. That office is a creation of God. It is staffed by those only who are chosen of Him. Once chosen continuity and faithfulness are required. Due to many and diverse reasons, Mr. Armstrong recognized the need to teach and train a ministry for the work of these last days. Though there were some men ordained as local men to assist Mr. Armstrong in the 1940's, the first ministerial ordinations took place in 1952—after graduation from Ambassador College.

I was one of the first seven ordained. Most of us had already received duties and assignments in which we were active even before the ordination. It was a kind of proving ground (I Tim. 3:2–10). All those first seven ordinations were to the office of Evangelist (Eph. 4:11–12). Positions and responsibilities are determined by God (I Cor. 12:18). Determined by God, yes, but the visible agent was and is a human being. Paul ordained Timothy and Titus, as well as others. The only ones directly responsible to God are apostles. These are called and commissioned by God. They as chosen human agents select, train, and ordain any or all below them in office and responsibility.

What are the duties of the ministry? When writing to the young Evangelist, the Apostle Paul emphatically stated: "Preach the word . . ." (II Tim. 4:2). Preach, yes, but how



and in what manner? Continuing he said: ". . . be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." The Bible is the Word of God (II Tim. 3:16). Once the veil of blindness is removed and understanding granted (compare I Cor. 2:14, II Cor. 4:4 and Luke 24:45), the chosen minister of God must use the Scriptures as the basis of his preaching. He must unequivocally and authoritatively teach revealed truths—the principles of the written Scriptures. That is, those ways of life which are unalterable, absolute—those things revealed by God Himself to His chosen servants.

To understand and thereby become empowered to do the will of God it is imperative that the servant of God recognize this fact: This world—social structure—does not belong to the Creator God. It is the making of the god of this world—Satan. The systems, practices, orientations—everything—are not those of the real God of this universe. In *all* aspects this world belongs to Satan and his cohorts—demons. Yes, the creation, including all physical things, is of God. Even the mind of man is a creation of God. Tragically, however, the orientation given to that mind is not of God the Father but of Satan. This fact affects broadly the entirety of the subject at hand—food, nutrition, diet, health, and healing.

What is contained in those Scriptures? Though there are many things to which I could make reference, the principle subject of concern at this moment is that of food, nutrition, diet, health, and healing. These are areas of expertise and understanding which rightly belong to the ministry. Wait! Before anyone becomes too troubled, allow me to continue. I am not addressing the practice of medicine. That is a part of the system of this world. It does not belong to God. It is a part of that which He gave to man, allowing him to develop systems, practices, and ways which are a reflection of that which seems right to him (I John 2:16, Pro. 21:2). Uncalled man has no other alternative. He will turn to whatever seems to offer some hope, solution, freedom from pain, extension of life, as well as that which pleases and "caters" to the unconverted tastebuds. Remember your tastebuds are just as unconverted as other parts of your human body. Just take a good look at the world and you cannot miss a plethora of evidence. Unwanted weight, multitudinous illnesses, pain and suffering, as well as many other problems—all stemming from abuse of responsibility as related to the care of the human body and mind. Though I am intending to write a rather extensive article on the subject of health and healing, I must address a few imperative aspects of the subject here.

Man is the creation of God. The body designed is a marvel beyond human comprehension. After many years of study and reading on the subjects of anatomy and nutrition, and the broader significance of biochemistry as it relates to man, I am still startled and amazed at the intricacies and magnificence of every aspect of the human body. In order to avoid the pangs of conscience as related to his many endeavors, and ways, man has constructed a philosophy of life and belief which encompass a rejection of the supernatural. In this way he has felt free to alter, change, manipulate, abuse, and in ways restructure nearly everything which was created by God.

Immediately prior to the creation of man, God designed, planted and caused to grow food substances which He pronounced good. Good for what? They were created for the express pleasure and benefit of man. He clearly, in the Scriptures, spelled out what was good and what was not good for human consumption. Whose duty is it to proclaim those facts? The ministry! My concern is this: Preaching the necessity of eating that which God created, not that which has been altered, changed, enhanced, or whatever, by men. When God said that certain items were good He was speaking of man's need. That which was designed to fulfill all the requirements of that body over which each one of us has been given a responsibility. That which was pronounced good was that which God had created. It did not include anything which man has altered, changed, redesigned, polluted, or in some other way desecrated. Tragically, so many human beings see that which is produced from the hands of men and they are mesmerized, pronouncing the product excellent, a gourmet's delight, or some other approbation that signifies unusual acceptance. Present that which comes from the handiwork of God and it is looked down on with disdain, contempt, subject to ridicule or some other form of condescension. As it is in the spiritual realm, so is it within the domain of the physical. Man hates the ways of God. This, the converted seem to understand, until the subject turns to that which affects his palate or physical cravings. We will, if truly converted, endeavor to circumvent the lusts of the flesh. Yet, at the same time, we will satisfy the cravings of the tastebuds and the mind and consider that to be acceptable. Where is the difference? Is not the one the pull of sin, human nature, just as much as is the other? An endless array of information is slated to come in the article. Page and time constraints will not allow an exhaustive coverage within the scope of this letter. The purpose of this writing is specific and limited. The comprehensive subject will come later.

Violation of the above cardinal rules is sin. And God said that the price of sin was first, illness and pain, and then ultimately death. Do you know of any physician who has taught that the difficulties his patients are experiencing are a result of wrong thoughts, eating forbidden foods, consuming altered, enhanced, and/or changed food stuffs? Hardly! And even more incomprehensible to the world is the fact, obedience to the Ten Commandments and/or other laws, statutes, and judgments of God could have anything to do with the health of the people. What does the keeping of a Sabbath, a holyday, have to do with the health of anyone? A concept totally preposterous to one of this world. Yet, as men must ultimately come to learn, keeping the ways of God has much to do with the health and orientation of the people.

It is God who pronounced curses—the generation of diseases, diseases which did not initially exist. For if they did they could not have been the consequence of sin. Sin did not come into existence in the human domain until after the creation of man.

Whose right is it to teach those causes and to inform the people of the only real source of help? Indeed, there are many "wonderful" things which men have thought out and have

been able to accomplish. But, there are two significant factors which must be remembered. First, if we have correctly digested the above material we know that accomplishments of men cannot eliminate sin. Sin must be forgiven. And that can be accomplished by God only. Second, it must be remembered that those "brilliant" ways of the flesh belong to the uncalled. God is allowing them to do that which seems correct to the flesh. The chosen are called out of that way of existence and life. If we can but comprehend He has called us to something vastly superior. We are called to experience the abundant life and to experience genuine healing—not just improvement for a temporary period of time. Too often we are like Israel.

One of the great blessings, for those who truly understand, is the gift of a true Teacher, Helper, Healer, Benefactor, etc. The world and its contents were given to natural, uncalled, man (Deut. 4:19). Until called of God they can employ whatever skills and knowledge that are available to them. For those called, the situation is quite different. We are called to God. He becomes the One and only One to whom we look, and in whom we have confidence. God does not want us divided in our allegiance. If we trust this world, than we should resort to it. If we are the called, we should put our total trust in Him. That trust is called faith. More about faith later. And it must be understood that true and genuine faith is not coercive. It must proceed from our own love of a marvelous way of life. And a fear of God. It is individualized—for real faith is that which proceeds from our own hearts and minds. Physicians and other health-care providers use the element of fear—fear of death—to intimidate (Heb. 2:14–15). Even more devastating is our own fear of death. It is terribly intimidating, driving us to do those things which we would not otherwise accept. Any form of action which is predicated on physical fear cannot be called faith (I John 4:18). It would be coercion. But, further, it must be remembered that only those who manifest and live true and genuine faith will enter into the Kingdom of God. Tests and trials are allowed as a means whereby we are made aware of our deficiency of faith. Faith is not easily developed. As human beings we will find avenues whereby we can compromise real faith and allow ourselves to believe that we have yet faithfully obeyed God. Such an orientation is probably the greatest threat to spiritual progress. In such an orientation we will fail to recognize our problems and commence to make necessary adjustments in our lives. Why should we change that which we accept as approved of God?

Please remember, all human beings are weak. We make mistakes. We sin. An ultimate test requires ultimate faith. How many of us possess that degree of faith and confidence? It does not behoove anyone of us to ridicule or even make comments about another. We know, and then only temporarily, what we would do only after we have been subjected to severe trials and difficulties. Even so, the failure of one does not justify another. God's way is absolute and incontrovertible. It is of faith—a manifestation in the unalterable promises He has given to us. God promised to heal (Ex. 15:26, Psa. 103:3). What is the procedure? (Jas. 5:14–16) Ministers are not physicians. They do not practice medicine. But they do practice the truth of God and they are the ones through whom God practices His

healing art. Some have avoided specific ministers because they did not want to change their lifestyles. But, God is not mocked. He knows and reads all hearts and minds. Going to God must not be a mere ritual. We will receive our petitions only if our minds and hearts are right and if we have come to recognize the need to change—to change what has caused the problem in the first place. Healing is the forgiveness of sin (Mark 2:5, Jas. 5:15). It is absolutely imperative that we recognize the causes of our difficulties (Deut. 28:45–47). "Signs" are for the purpose of identifying. What we are experiencing is indicative. We must thoroughly evaluate our lives and come to requisite conclusions based on the revealed knowledge of God. He will reveal to us the causes if we will seek from Him the answers.

Ancient Israel, who had long been subjected to tyranny, left Egypt with a "high hand." They were elated to be getting out of that country. However, it was only days until they were accusing Moses of deliberately taking them out into the desert to kill them. They were wrong on every count. Moses did not take them out of Egypt. They were being redeemed from the house of bondage. And, finally, they were to be the recipients of awesome blessings—not to be killed. Similarly, when things are going well with the chosen of God today, we are all smiles and the personification of happiness; then a trial comes along and we seek some one to blame. We start accusing. I wonder when we will literally manifest the orientation of I Peter 1:6–9? Could it be that God is determining who are His as this process of trial continues? We need not fail due to weaknesses. Let us always recognize the fact of our personal weakness, seek the forgiveness of God, and then press forward with the ultimate development of faith and conviction. We have not lost our privilege and opportunity of life until we turn away from the truth and begin to construct another philosophy which is not of God. Let us never justify our weaknesses. Let us always recognize the need to grow and become stronger in faith. Let us stand tall and firm in our own convictions—convictions which are predicated on that one and only unalterable faith which God delivered to us in these last days.

### **The Chosen of God**

The called know who they are. Equivocation and doubt are not characteristic of the truly called. At the same time arrogance and conceit are far removed. Christ knew who He was. He had no doubt. Was He arrogant? Of course not! Knowing something is not to be equated with arrogance. In the same manner as meekness is not to be equated with weakness.

You are the people of God. How can that fact be known? Do any of you have doubts about the existence of the Church of God in these last days? Either the work done by Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong was the work prognosticated in these last days or it was not. If it was the work, then it possessed the truth as given by God. That truth remains inviolate. And I

am not saying that Mr. Armstrong possessed all truth. Was that which Jesus Christ taught the twelve apostles the unalterable truth? Indeed, it was. Yet, was it the sum total of all knowledge? Of course not! Did not Christ say that the apostles were to receive other things which had not yet been revealed? Let us get the picture straight. As evidenced by all who heard and responded to that call, the Church of God did exist in these last days. The tragedy that most turned away from the truth and fabricated their own concepts does not change that fact. On the contrary, the apostasy is a cardinal proof that both the unalterable truth was given and the body does exist in these last days.

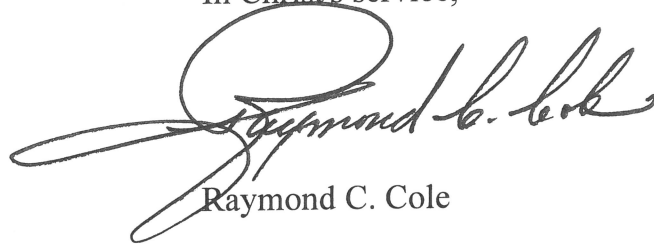
As the people of God you are going to be tried regarding your faith. How many of us really possess faith? Words mean nothing. The acid proof is in how we respond when faced with crisis. To whom do we go when struck with a real health or dietary problem? The answer will tell you much. If attitudes remain acceptable we can learn much from such trials. We can know where our weaknesses are. We fail only if we seek justifications for our human actions and do not go to God begging for His mercy and an increase in faith. We all still need a great improvement in that faith. Why? Before we are ever permitted to be a part of His Kingdom, we all must still pass the test of absolute faith. The just shall live by faith. Make no mistake about it, we have been given many opportunities to know just where we stand. The problem is not in knowing, but the will and determination to stand strong in that faith and conviction. What if we do die? Many of our brothers and sisters of the past have paid with their lives. They chose to die rather than compromise their convictions.

The purpose of this letter is twofold. One, I wanted to give you a rough indication of the need for an article and to address in a broad fashion the general concepts of that forthcoming article. Two, to let it be known that henceforth, I will personally be giving little direct and personal help. Threats of lawsuits do not inspire me to want to help. And remember, when I say help, I mean help from the Biblical premise. There is no profession of this world—which will give the knowledge which you need to live the genuine truth and above all to avoid the terrible catastrophic plagues of the last days—for all belong to Satan and are a part of his way. This world is filled with "experts." However, I have noticed that misery and troubles still reign. I wonder why? Is it not about time to reevaluate our lives and the philosophy by which we live them? It is your life. What will you do with it? Will you surrender it to God, wholly? Or, will you retain control over it and be forced to learn the sad consequence at the time of the final judgment? The choice is the responsibility of each one of us. As for me, I have already decided, long ago, I want no part of this world or any of its ways. By subscribing to many of the world's concepts I can gain a few years of physical existence. I have never even remotely implied that we cannot gain some temporary "advantage" by pursuing a physical orientation. I choose not to pursue that way. My life belongs to God. I want to live it in harmony with the revealed way—that way which as initially taught instructed us that we should completely trust God for our healing and that our first physical obligation is to alter our lifestyle so that it fulfills the will and purpose of God.

Few in these last days will manifest that kind of faith and conviction. Will you be among that number?

God helping and inspiring, the article will be written. For the present, let us keep one factor, and one factor alone, in mind. If we do not have sufficient faith for healing, we can *know* we do not have the required faith necessary to inherit everlasting life. Yet, like an unskilled diver, engineer, or whomever, we must not act foolishly on the basis of presumed faith. As Christ said, it is according to your faith. Know where you stand; then act accordingly. The next step is to exercise your faith—through prayer, fasting, and taking advantage of each incremental step in the development of the faith required for salvation. Let us evaluate the self, then get about the business of growing in faith.

In Christ's service,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial 'R'.

Raymond C. Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Bryce G. Clark". The signature is fluid and connected, with a large initial 'B'.

Bryce G. Clark