

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Two Facets of Divine Revelation—Part XIII To Whom Is the Second Revelation Made—Initially?

March 1982

Dear Brethren:

Two-and-a-half months of winter have passed. And what a winter it has been for most of God's people. It is in such circumstances that God's people shine—become quite exemplary as well as greatly blessed.

No place in the Bible are we promised total avoidance of trial, test and difficulty. But we are promised a way to endure and come through such trials unscathed physically and spiritually. In such trials, if we handle them wisely and judiciously, we manifest the Spirit of God and the divine nature.

Truly this is a troubled world. Immorality is omnipresent. Violence is increasing dramatically—not only in the number of incidences, but also in the bizarreness (ghastliness) of the crimes. The occult is rising meteorically. To the trained eye it manifests itself consistently in our everyday work situations. Little needs to be said about its influence in the world of TV and entertainment. Has there been a time when rumors of war were more publicized? The threat now is that of involving the major powers. Already there are many minor skirmishes occurring throughout the world.

The above is very real and troubling to people. Yet, there seems to be a very real and more ominous current developing underneath the surface of the U.S. as well as the world populace. Because of the pressures of economics, the forced mobility of the people, ethnic agitations, double talk on the part of politicians and a host of other irritants, the people are uneasy—even militant—and are vocalizing their feelings. Many areas are virtually armed camps.

If the overall picture does not change by summer, we could be in for the beginning of the major hostilities prognosticated for our day. Ethnic flare-ups are a very real danger. Workers are more cognizant of governmental double standards than ever before.

They feel they are being pressured while the government seems to be giving every support to foreign competition.

If the American public ever puts two and two together, gaining an accurate picture of what is happening to them, watch out. The Days of the Old West will seem tame by comparison.

I cannot believe those days are too far removed. We are headed into some very deep troubles. The Bible makes that fact clear. It is just that we do not know the specific time. At this juncture, we can only know that world events are moving at an alarming note in that direction.

What can we do? Keep close to God. He has promised to protect those who trust Him. We must remain calm and faithful to His Truth, regardless of the billowing waves of turmoil. We need the love, concern and affection of one another. The Spirit must be given full sway in our lives. And perfect love—for God and one another—casts out fear, and all doubt.

The way we conduct our lives will reveal our true nature and call. God will see us through if we will it that way.

This month is again the time for continuing the series on "The Two Facets of Divine Revelation." Let us move directly into the next section of the subject.

To Whom Is That Second Revelation Made—Initially?

Up to the time of this issue of the *Monthly Letter*, we have covered subtopics of the major subject, "Two Facets of Knowledge," as follows: 1) The two kinds of knowledge are physical and spiritual; 2) Biblical Truth is spiritual knowledge; 3) Just what is the word of God, *the Holy Bible*?; 4) What is man?; 5) Natural man, born of flesh, can comprehend physical knowledge only; 6) Natural, carnal, man cannot comprehend spiritual knowledge; 7) For reason, there were times when the spiritual knowledge was codified or manifested; 8) Even when codified, man—flesh—cannot obey; 9) Though the spiritual was codified or manifested, man lived in ignorance until . . .; 10) A second revelation was absolutely necessary.

For the month of March 1982 we will thoroughly analyze and digest the natural and logical subtopic of: To whom is that second revelation made—initially?

The Creator and Sustainer of all that is made is performing an awesome work in the whole of this vast universe. The planet Earth is pivotal to that plan. Through the written Word, the Bible, the unalterable absolutes are made plain. God is an unchanging Supreme Being. Whatever patterns of operation are revealed in God's Word can be accepted in absolute faith. They will not change. They are the same regardless of the time or peoples to whom they are addressed. For the Bible is written for all mankind—regardless of the age or time.

Once all the factors of this major subject are covered, certain patterns will emerge which should of themselves be quite revealing. Major deceptive principles have been employed to delude mankind into thinking and upholding concepts which are neither logical nor Biblically supported. It is truly amazing how an arbitrary or imaginary transition from an accepted Old Dispensation to that of a New Dispensation has resulted in colossal mistakes and perverted rationalizations. Another grievous assumption is that the New Testament is written for Gentiles—an assumption which does violence to every spiritual principle in the Bible. But the assumption most significant to us for the present is: The Bible is written to specific peoples and for specific times. Such an assumption does violence to basic concepts of the Scripture. These basic concepts are: 1) Spiritual things are Eternal; 2) The whole of God's Word, *The Holy Bible*, is written for all mankind and the words of the Bible are spirit and life. Therefore, we have elected to believe God by taking His Word at face value—the Word written specifically for us and our time. It is instruction for those called at this time as it was to those to whom it was directly given.

As the following outline in the continuation of the *Monthly Letter* series, "Two Facets of Divine Revelation," is studied and analyzed, the above information will assume greater and more meaningful relevancy. Also, as noted above, the material for this particular letter lends itself to be an outline approach more than an explanatory one. Of course, copious usage of notes and comments will be utilized.

Now to the outline:

I. The Truth Was Hidden From the Beginning.

A. In the beginning the word existed.

1. John 1:1—"In the beginning was the Word . . ."

B. That word was the Truth.

1. John 17:17—" . . . thy Word is Truth."

C. The Truth was not fully known before the time of Christ.

1. Eph. 3:4–5—" . . . ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

2. Rom. 16:26—"But now [the gospel] is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets . . ."

3. Eph. 1:9—"Having made known *unto us* the mystery of his will . . ."

Note: The angels and prophets of old did not really understand. Even though the prophets were used by God to pen many significant portions of the written word they did not comprehend what they had written (1 Pet. 1:9–12). Having letter-of-the-law knowledge does not constitute spiritual comprehension. Being in positions of responsibility does not constitute nor imply spiritual capability. In some cases the prophets were instruments used of God for significant purpose, yet without real spiritual knowledge. The prophets wrote what they did not understand (1 Pet. 1:12).

D. It is called the hidden wisdom.

1. 1 Cor. 2:7—"We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory."

E. It is hidden in God.

1. Eph. 3:9—" . . . the fellowship [stewardship] of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God."

F. A mystery hidden for generations and ages.

1. Col. 1:26—" . . . the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but NOW is made manifest. . ."

G. Hidden from the beginning (from time of its existence—John 1:1).

1. Rom. 16:25—" . . . the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began."

H. How was the Truth hidden from men?

1. 1 Cor. 1:21—By human wisdom God's Truth cannot be understood.

2. John 14:17—The Spirit of Truth is unseen. Men accept only what they can see, handle, observe and evaluate.

I. The Truth is spiritual: hidden from the wisdom of men.

1. Matt. 11:25–26—" . . . hid these things from the wise and prudent . . ." What? Father and Son are synonymous with Truth—John 14:6. God is Spirit—John 4:23–24.

Note: Men are created flesh. They cannot naturally comprehend Spiritual things. By a miracle God must reveal them to men.

2. Luke 10:21–22—The Truth is hidden from the sagacity of men.

3. Col. 2:2–3—God the Father and the Son are Spirit. In them is hidden all spiritual knowledge. This being a demonstrable fact, any human understanding can come only at their will, and to whom they reveal it.

Note: The Apostle Paul, by the Holy Spirit, understood how this fact (Truth hidden, necessity of revelation) made deception possible (see vs. 4).

J. From whom is the Truth hidden?

1. Matt. 16:16–17—All flesh and blood—carnal, natural men. By contrast who is Christ? (John 14:6).

2. 2 Cor. 4:3–4—Those who have turned away from the Truth.

Note: The above text as given in The Greek New Testament: "But if also is veiled our glad tidings in those perishing it is veiled; in whom the god of

this age blinded the thoughts of the unbelieving, so as not to beam forth to them the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is [the] image of God."

Comment: God's Word is Truth. That word has been hidden in God from the beginning until the first coming of Jesus Christ. Being hidden it must be revealed in God's own time and to whom He pleases. No man of himself (intellectual prowess or capability) can understand the Bible—God's Word.

II. To Understand, Truth Must Be Revealed.

A. The world by its own capability cannot come to a knowledge of the Truth—no one minister or lay-member.

1. John 1:10—The world was made by Christ but they did not know him.
2. John 1:26—Even those baptized by John the Baptist did not know Christ—until a later revelation.
3. John 3:12—"If I [Jesus] have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, *how shall ye believe* if I tell you of heavenly things."
4. John 6:36—Physical observation or study does not result in spiritual understanding. Jesus Christ was not merely a written or codified form of the Truth; He was the Word—the Truth—in living animated form. Yet, those who observed Him did not know who or what He was.
5. John 6:44—Regardless of the individual, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him . . ."
6. John 8:43—"Why do ye [Jews of Christ's day] *not understand* my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word."

Note: Were the Jews any different from all other peoples of the world? Jews were of their Father, Satan the Devil (John 8:44). But so is the rest of the world (Rev. 12:9 and 2 Cor. 4:3).

7. John 8:55—Regardless of religious conviction, the Jews did not know the Father. Christ said, "Yet ye have not known Him [the Father]." Therefore, they were devoid of salvation (John 17:3).

8. John 9:39—Presumption will lead to future embarrassment, But those who are honest will have the Truth revealed (Please read from *The Living Bible*, also). Jesus said: "For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see . . ."

9. John 10:26—Those who are not Christ's called sheep cannot believe. Only the called sheep can hear the voice of Christ.

B. Only those taught—who heard the Word and learned the Truth—can come to God.

1. John 6:45—The prophets wrote: "they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."

Note: Remember verse 45, Jesus said, no man of himself can come to God—to a knowledge of the Truth.

Compare: Isaiah 54:13.

2. John 3:31–34—Christ, as the Truth, came from heaven. Only those chosen to understand could comprehend and believe His words—hear Him.

3. John 3:27—Only those called to understand can receive the message sent.

4. John 4:23–24—Only those sought out by God can worship Him in Spirit and Truth.

5. John 6:37—God must choose the servants and give them to the Son before spiritual understanding is possible.

6. John 6:40—Only those called to see and believe will have everlasting life.

7. John 8:47—Those called of God can hear the Word of God—a revelation. Those not called cannot hear.

8. John 9:39—Jesus made it possible for a spiritual revealing of the Word.

9. John 10:27—His [Jesus] called sheep hear His voice and follow Him.

Comments: No man of himself can come to God. Only those called and chosen will know and understand the Truth. With minds receptive, eyes open and ears unstopped, the called can be taught the Truth. They will learn the spiritual way of life. How they hear and learn will be made plain a little later in this outline.

C. How do God's servants receive the words of life?

1. Eph. 3:3–4—The mystery of Truth is made known by revelation.

2. Matt. 16:17—Spiritual knowledge is not acquired by fleshly capability. It must be revealed by the Father.

Comments: Thus far, we have come to understand that Truth was mysteriously hidden until the time of Christ. Knowledge of it, in Christ's day, came by revelation. As a steward of God's Truth, He taught the people of His day. Only those called and chosen of God heard His voice and responded. From His day forward how did the people receive the Truth? To understand it is necessary to see how God has conducted His business from the beginning. He is an unchanging God—the same yesterday, today and forever.

III. How God Has Operated Throughout the Ages: To Whom Is an Initial Revelation Made?

Comment: To understand thoroughly this facet of the subject, the whole scope of God's dealing with man must be included. There are seven categories given. They are: 1) Patriarchs; 2) Levites; 3) Prophets; 4) Christ; 5) The apostles; 6) Last-day servants; 7) The teachers in the kingdom.

Let us analyze each category separately.

A. Patriarchs.

1. Gen. 1:28–29—God addresses Adam and Eve relevant to their responsibility in the recreated Earth.
2. Gen. 2:16–17—God commands Adam regarding the ways of life and death.
3. Gen. 3:9–19—God instructs Adam regarding the consequences of sin, the procreation of children and the sorrows of life.
4. Gen. 6:9, 13—God uses His servant Noah to teach and warn the people. Note: 2 Pet. 2:5—Noah was a preacher of righteousness.
5. Gen. 7:1—God directly works and reveals His purposes to Noah.
6. Gen. 12:1–4—Abraham called to be a servant of the Eternal. Through him were to come future chosen servants—vs. 3.
7. Gen. 15:1–4, 13–16—God makes known the acceptable lineage. Also, He prophetically reveals (letter-of-the-law application) the future of that lineage.
8. Gen. 17:15–22—Reconfirmation of the true lineage—of God's will.
9. Gen. 18:17–19—God worked directly with Abraham as His servant. Why? Because he would be a faithful servant.
10. Gen. 21:12–13—God uses Abraham as a prophet of the future.
11. Gen. 26:2–5—God continues to deal with the chosen lineage: Abraham's son, Isaac.
12. Gen. 32:24–28—Next in that lineage, chosen of God, was Jacob.
13. Gen. 35:2–3, 11–12—Jacob, as God's chosen servant, receives instruction from God. He instructs his household.

14. Gen. 46:2–4—Again God instructs Jacob, his name now changed to Israel (overcomer).

15. Gen. 49:1–2—Jacob, as God's chosen servant, reveals the future of his sons.

Comment: God chose the men who He willed to use. They were chosen to teach the ways of God. They were the recipients of considerable prophetic knowledge. The people, all family members, were to listen and act on the basis of these instructions. God did not deal directly with every man, woman and child. He instructed them through the patriarchs, His chosen servants.

B. Levites and judges.

1. Num. 1:47–51—The Levites were chosen by God and appointed by Moses over the Tabernacle.

2. Num. 3:6–13—The Levites were appointed to be the administrative assistants to Aaron, the Priest. No other people were to appoint themselves for this service of God.

3. Num. 8:9–11, 14–19—The Levites were appointed by God and accepted by all the congregation of Israel. They performed all the service of the Tabernacle. They belonged to God, not to the people.

4. Num. 18:1–7—The Levites chosen as God's servants to conduct the Tabernacle service. At the same time God imposed limits on them.

Note: From this text alone, it is obvious that a called servant of God cannot by virtue of his appointment exceed the limits imposed by the One who ordains and commissions.

5. Deut. 17:9–13—The people must be responsive to those called and ordained of God. As those called of God must be responsive to the One who chose them.

6. Deut. 24:8—The Levites bore charge—but only within the confines of God's previous instruction.

7. Deut. 4:9—The responsibility of each individual who is in charge of a household.

C. The prophets.

1. Ex. 20:1–2, 18–21—God spoke His law directly to the children of Israel. Due to fear, the people petitioned Moses to communicate with God and then, in turn, come to them *with the words* which God had delivered.

2. Deut. 5:22–28—God spoke only the Ten Commandments to the children of Israel. "He added no more." They petitioned Moses to listen to God and bring His instructions to them. They promised to obey. God heard and accepted their request. From that day to the present, God has used that means of conveying His messages to the people.

Christ came, as we shall soon see, in the literal fulfillment of that request. In turn, Christ commissioned New Testament ministers to continue the work He had begun.

3. Ex. 25:22—Concerning the request of the people, God arranges for a means of regularly communicating His purposes and instructions to His people.

4. Deut. 18:15–22—Moses, as a prophet, foreshadowed Christ. The actual office of Christ was a literal fulfillment of the request of the people. It was NOT an abrogation of His system of communication: God to chosen servant thence to the people whom He had chosen.

5. Heb. 1:1–2—The appearance and commission of Christ is the perpetuation of a system of communication established by God. That system continues under Christ.

6. 1 Pet. 1:10–12—The instructions and commands of God given by the prophets were written for us today—*not for the people who lived in their day*. Note carefully the chosen servants of God, the prophets, received these words and recorded them. The chosen ministers of our day are to preach this same word. This is the way by which God has chosen to convey His messages to His people.

7. 2 Pet. 1:20–21—What God's true prophets conveyed to the people was the Word of God—the Word which they had received. Those words are not subject to individual interpretation. God's will is contained in them. Only the mind of God through the Holy Spirit can comprehend the intent and make the meaning clear to others.

Comments: God has dealt with many peoples. Always, however, He has used the instrumentality of His true chosen servants. They, then, in turn, are held accountable for faithfulness.

Initially God made His will known through specifically chosen Patriarchs. Next He elected to use the Levites for religious service.

Following this, although the office of a prophet existed before the time of Levi, He used a long line of prophets—a succession of chosen servants culminating in the advent of Jesus Christ. Christ, too, was a chosen Messenger through whom God delivered His will to *His chosen people*.

D. The Apostle of our faith—Jesus Christ.

1. Deut. 18:15–22—The prophecy of Christ and His office of responsibility—responsibility to God, the Father, and the people chosen to understand.

2. Luke 4:18—The ordination and commission of Jesus Christ. The limits and bounds of that commission.

3. Luke 10:17–22—The commission of Jesus. The bounds of His responsibility. Training others to walk in His footsteps—they were sent (commissioned) by Him.

4. John 3:2—Nicodemus recognized Jesus Christ as a servant (teacher) come (sent) from God.

5. John 3:34—"For he [Christ] whom *God* hath *sent* speaketh the words of God . . ."

6. John 5:24—" . . . He that heareth my word, and believeth on *him that sent me*, hath everlasting life . . ."

7. John 6:29—What is the real work of God? To believe on Him and the message sent. How many times did Christ say to the people, it is not the name or personality of the individual but the message which makes the difference. Christ was sent by God, the Father, not to aggrandize the self but to convey the will of the Father. Christ was an example for every servant subsequently chosen by God.

8. John 12:48–51—One commissioned bears the message of the one who sent him. Remember the note under point 7 above!

9. John 17:17–18—" . . . thy word is truth." With that Truth Jesus was sent (commissioned) to the world.

10. John 20:21—How many times did Jesus emphasize that He was sent? At this same time the message—the words— were given to Him. That message cannot change or be altered. To believe in change makes God fallible.

Comments: Jesus continued in the footsteps of His predecessor Moses. For that reason he said: ". . . had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me; for he wrote of me . . . *If ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words* (John 5:46–47)?"

Jesus Christ was faithful to all His responsibility (Heb. 3:1–6). He was faithful to the word given to His commission. He walked in the tradition of God's system of spiritual and letter-of-the-law communication throughout the ages.

Christ was Faithful! What about those whom He appointed to carry out the same responsibility?

E. The chosen apostles of Christ.

1. John 17:18—The twelve apostles were chosen and commissioned by Jesus Christ! How and with what? "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." In like manner—with the same message, responsibility, authority and limits.

2. John 20:21—Jesus repeats the commission to the "12 apostles."
3. Acts 8:21—No man may presumptuously assume an office ordained of God. Only those called and commissioned by God.
4. Acts 9:15—God chooses Saul (later named Paul) to proclaim the gospel to the Gentiles.
5. Acts 13:2–5—Even the specifics of the commission are determined by God.
6. Acts 22:14–15, 21—Paul repeats the scope of his commission and responsibility.
7. Heb. 2:1–3—The message proclaimed by Jesus Christ is the same message given to the apostles.

Note: God gave the words of life to Jesus and sent Him to the earth with that message. In turn the same message was given to the chosen apostles who were then commissioned to proclaim it. The people received that message as a result of the preaching of sent servants.

8. 2 Pet. 1:15—What the apostles taught—given by Christ—was recorded for future generations—a written record.
9. 1 John 1:1–3—What the apostles had seen, heard and received they taught to the people.
10. Eph. 3:8–9—The Apostle Paul called to receive the message which was hidden from the beginning of the world.

F. God's last-day servants.

1. 2 Cor. 3:6—God chose to use a ministry to proclaim the Truth. The Truth has to be revealed to these ministers regardless of era or time!
 - a. 1 Cor. 1:21—It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

2. From time of apostles forward God's servants were chosen and commissioned.

a. John 17:18–20—From the apostles preaching others would believe.

Note: God is unchanging (Heb. 13:8). The written word is for all peoples at all times (Matt. 4:4). Those servants who followed the apostles also had to be chosen vessels and commissioned.

3. Whom God calls and commissions—regardless of purpose—must be received. To reject these servants is to reject God and Christ.

a. John 13:18–20—"I know whom I have chosen: but that the scripture may be fulfilled . . . He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me . . . he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."

Note: 2 Thess. 3:4—This is someone who knew the Truth.

4. How did the unchanging God organize the Church?

a. 1 Cor. 12:24–28—" . . . God hath set them in the Church . . ." How? vs. 18

5. Why did God establish specifically chosen individuals in various offices of responsibility?

a. Eph. 4:11–12—" . . . For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ."

6. For how long were these offices to continue?

a. Eph. 4:13–14—"Till we all come in the unity of the faith . . . unto a perfect man . . . the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ . . ." When? At the time of the change—from mortality to immortality.

7. The function, order and purpose of the Body (Church) will continue unto the Second Coming of Christ.

a. Matt. 28:19–20—" . . . I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." When? See Matt. 24:3, the Second Coming of Christ is synonymous with the "end of the world."

G. Servants in the Kingdom.

1. Jer. 3:15—"And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding."

Note: Considering the context, the above text can only refer to the time of the Millennium and forward.

2. Isa. 30:20–21—" . . . yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: And thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it. . . "

Note: Could this be any time other than the Millennium?

3. Jer. 23:4—" . . . I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them."

Note: Consider the condition of Israel—vss. 1–3.

4. God will appoint teachers of the Law—to be responsible during the Millennium.

a. Isa. 2:1–4.

b. Micah 4:1–2.

5. How have these teachers come to know the Law and become capable administrators?

a. Eph. 3:3–5.

6. These are the people who will rule over the physically restored kingdom (Israel and Judah reunited).

a. Ezek. 37:20–28—David king over Israel.

b. Matt. 10:27–28—Twelve apostles over individual tribes.

c. Matt. 19:29—Others bear responsibility.

d. What? Luke 19:11–27.

7. Before all can teach and rule they must be called, trained, and qualified.

a. Rev, 3:21.

b. Rev. 5:10.

c. Dan. 2:44.

d. Dan. 7:9, 22–27.

Comments: To instruct His people God called and used the Patriarchs, the Levites, the Prophets, Jesus Christ, the Apostles and will so use His chosen servants during the Millennium. Why should an unchanging God employ any different system during our day? The conclusion is inevitable. He did not change. He uses a ministry today as He has in the past and will in the future. All the faithful of today, as also those of the past, will be used as His instruments in the major work of the Millennium.

There is much more to include on this subject. Our letter and time limits will not allow for its completion this month. We will continue with this subject next time.

In conclusion, we send along our feelings of affection and love. How desperately we desire to be with you more frequently. You are far removed but never forgotten.

How deeply and profoundly we *must* be praying for one another. There are substantial indications that the economic situation will grow much worse—through the year of 1982—before it begins to show any marked improvement.

Our God has given us promises. He is faithful. He will see us through the darkness of these last days. Be patient. Make your faith strong. It is never too late for God. Trials are essential for the development of faith. And faith is absolutely essential for entrance into the Kingdom of God. Let us allow faith and patience to have their perfect works in our lives.

Let us all pull for one another. With love and understanding for God and for each other we cannot fail.

Until next time. Keep in good health. Keep the faith strong.

Much love and warmth,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a large initial 'R' and 'C'.

Raymond C. Cole