

# Church of God, The Eternal

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## Should Christians Expose the Sins of Others?

September 1980

Dear Brethren:

Imagine, just one month until the faithful brethren of God's Church will convene for the Feast of Tabernacles! Where has the past year gone?

Moving as rapidly as time are the revealing events of the last days. Can anyone escape the conclusion that these truly are the troubling, frightening, perplexing times indicated by Jesus Christ almost 2,000 years ago?

National and international events are alarming. But another arena of action is even more troubling and mysterious. Jesus made it very clear that events *within* the church of the last days would be more telling than would all those transpiring outside of the Body. Far too many are going to be found looking the wrong direction at the time of unfolding of the meaningful prophetic events of these days. Unless one knows what to look for, the effort to watch world events will be merely an exercise in futility.

Pious and sincere-sounding rhetoric will not be sufficient. We must be found faithful: faithful to the truth God revealed to us at the time of our calling. Notice, in Jesus' statement, the condition upon which we will be substantiated as the true servants of God—"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed" (John 8:31). Jesus emphasized the need of continuity. Why? Because man's problem, as indicated several places in the Bible, is the tendency to change. Humans cannot manifest continuity—a character trait which proceeds from God. The Bible says God changes not; there is not even the shadow inclination of turning, on His part. We are being tested regarding the truth which God revealed to the called. For, that revelation is the only way to know or understand the Truth. Therefore, be faithful and receive the promised reward.

Once again, we must interrupt the series of *Monthly Letters* covering the subject "The Two Facets of Divine Revelation."

## **Why This Letter Needs To Be Written!**

Many books, articles, and other writings are flooding the country. Will readers be able to evaluate this material? Or will they be swayed into wholesale acceptance, because of their own emotional involvements?

As a pendulum swings from one extreme to the other, so do people who have not learned the "art" of emotional control and objectivity. And the worst part of the process is this: The people who are emotionally involved are repeatedly hurt—manifesting hate, contempt, distrust, ridicule, and every other bad and damaging characteristic.

Because of the accelerating increase in "exposés," it is essential to develop an outline by which we can properly evaluate. For, evaluation is a must—unless our original faith is sufficiently strong so that, knowing what we believe from the heart, we do not find it necessary to read all the material spewing forth.

To cover the subject, let us reduce our approach to a series of questions which require answers. Then, on the basis of the questions, a number of thoughts from the Bible will follow. How each of us individually evaluates the problem, and the response each manifests, will be the basis for future judgment. It behooves us to think soberly and seriously, weighing all matters carefully!

## **Why Do Men Feel Compelled To Expose Others?**

There are causes and reasons for all human behavior. In order to properly understand these human manifestations (behavior patterns), it is imperative to understand the underlying nature of man.

To illustrate, when man becomes angry, it is not because he thought about it and decided he wanted to manifest anger. On the contrary, some carnal stimuli agitate the nature, generating the anger response. Thus it is with the whole gamut of human emotions—manifestations of the physical nature.

In analyzing the above question, we must reasonably understand these stimuli which cause the manifested responses. That is, what are the unseen stimuli which cause men to feel compelled to ridicule, expose the sins of others, and denigrate?

First, could it be that a sense of superiority dominates their thinking? Surely, in their own minds they feel they have not committed sins nearly as heinous as those they are

exposing. Arbitrarily they categorize the laws of God. And they determine the degrees and magnitudes of sin. They believe the sins committed by others are of much greater magnitude than are those committed by themselves—if they admit to any sin at all.

Can this attitude be equated with the spiritual requirement, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Ph'p. 2:3)? To the Romans Paul wrote: ". . . in honour preferring one another" (Rom. 12:10).

Uniquely, the one exposing feels spiritually superior. He should therefore, logically, be more accountable to God: accountable for greater spiritual response to the Truth. Why, then, do not those who expose live up to *all* the spiritual principles imposed by God?

Second, is not the act of exposing a manifestation of carnality? The carnal nature demands the right to censure, judge, expose, evaluate, and ridicule others, while insisting upon the right of safeguarding the self. Carnal nature, for many and varied reasons, sadistically enjoys verbally torturing some other person. The very act shouts to the rational public, "I think I am clean—no one has anything on me. I am faultless." However, we shall see the subtlety of that concept.

Third, is it possible that men censure, ridicule, and show contempt for others to cover their own guilt? The Bible clearly states there is no man who sins not. If *any* expose is in accord with the will of God, then *every* human being should be exposed! Would not this be a wonderful world if all men were aggressively—by book, letter, tape, or whatever—exposing one another? Remember, the hypocrite is the man who hides his *own* sin, not the one who conceals the errors of others!

As indicated earlier, a deep subtlety is involved. The act of exposing is often a way of absolving personal guilt. Yet, at the same time, the intent is to assure other people that the accuser is not guilty—that he is contemptuous of error and would never think of permitting any form of sin in his own life. This is what Jesus called self-righteousness. It is the kind of sin which is most deeply rooted. For, Jesus Christ made it clear that the adulterers, adulteresses, fornicators (harlots), extortioners, and self-seeking individuals (publicans) would enter into the Kingdom of God before the self-righteous (Matt. 21:31–32). This is because these people usually see themselves for what they really are. On the other hand, the self-righteous cannot see themselves as God sees them. They have deceived themselves. They cannot comprehend the need for repentance and therefore will not come to that state of humility until long after those involved in the "basic" human weaknesses have done so.

When we deceive ourselves, it is most difficult to come to a *genuine* knowledge of sin. Covering our sins, instead of candidly admitting them, is a form of self-deception. It is the kind of self-deception usually seen among self-styled religionists. People of the "world" generally know what they are; that is, they are aware of their lifestyles. Repentance does not come as difficult for them.

Last, is the "exposé" the result of personal injury or injury of one close to the individual? The natural tendency is to retaliate when injured. Accuracy of information and objectivity, in any presentation based on this reason, is at best a secondary consideration. A person so hurt is harder to convince or change than is the planned destruction of a city. The volatile emotion of anger is aroused and deeply entrenched in the mind. It cannot be satisfied short of complete destruction (either physical or verbal) of all who happened upon the unfortunate experience of having contact with the individual.

How can one so injured possibly evaluate objectively any situations which interfaced with his life? For, the tendency is to orient all concepts to the "necessity" of revenge. And such an individual generally refuses to face his own personal liability. He is completely exonerated in his own eyes (Prov. 16:2).

Unless the person presuming to evaluate assumes his fair share of the responsibility for any given situation, his writings and comments *should not be taken seriously*. They are at best a biased version. As Solomon said in the book of Ecclesiastes, there is no one who does not sin. There is none wholly right and none wholly wrong. And in the caldron of confusion and discord, the sins of everyone involved are magnified. It would be an impossibility for any person to analyze correctly just exactly what happened and who was basically responsible.

In such situations and at such times, it is doubly imperative that we anchor ourselves to doctrine—the *principles of conduct* which we accepted as the premise of life. To do anything less is foolish.

### **Should Men Expose the Sins (Real or Imagined) of Others?**

Christ is the role model for all men. He is our perfect example. As our example, did Christ leave us an illustration of how to handle such situations—situations dealing with the sins of others? He certainly did!

The case is that of the woman caught in the very act of adultery. The accusers brought her before Christ, tempting Him.

Whom did Christ indict? How did He treat the woman?

Jesus Christ told the accusers to consider carefully, and the one without guilt should cast the first stone. If they were perfect and without guilt themselves, it was all right for them to take the life of this sinner. Why? Christ knew that they all were guilty of sins just as great. Thus, when confronted with this dilemma, the woman's accusers left on the sly. They could not face up to their own guilt.

When Jesus saw they had left, He turned to the woman and asked where her accusers were. Also, He asked whether any had accused her. She replied that no one had. Jesus Christ said: "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more" (John 8:11).

Two principles must be remembered from this illustration: 1) The accuser is equally guilty, with no real right to condemn another. 2) Mercy is the more significant spiritual principle. Jesus Christ found tolerance and understanding imperative. But, He did instruct HER to go and sin no more.

Why cannot men live up to these high and exalted principles? Is it because they are bent on revenge? And does not revenge cloud the thinking of man?

Remember, Jesus Christ did not identify the adulterous woman. He dealt with a principle, not with the personality and sin of another person.

Sometimes men apparently feel that if they do *not* expose, they are condoning sin. Nothing could be farther from the truth! How is it possible that one act—exposing other men's sins—can be of lesser significance than the acts committed by the one being exposed? If we would truly live the Christian life, we should not involve ourselves with the sins of others. For, we are not called upon to judge them. That responsibility belongs to Jesus Christ, who will judiciously exercise it when He returns to the earth.

Next, how can any "exposé" be termed compatible with the application of the Golden Rule? Does not the Golden Rule state: "Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you"? Considering carefully, does not any "exposé" imply that the author is asking for *his* sins to be exposed? If he really believes the truth of the Golden Rule, he is stating that he wants someone else to openly ridicule him. Or is he saying, "I have committed no sins, therefore there is nothing to reveal or expose"? And if that be the situation, is he not manifesting an exaggerated degree of self-righteousness?

Any judgment requires ability to read *hearts* and *minds*. Since men cannot read the hearts and minds of others, they cannot judge properly. Therefore, any human's censuring

and judgment will be biased—based on imputation of motive. God will not look kindly upon anyone who imputes motives and judges harshly on the basis of prejudice. Let it be remembered, only God can read hearts and minds. Therefore, only God can truly judge men. This responsibility should not be assumed by any man. Any human being assuming such a responsibility will find himself guilty before God.

Finally, mercy rejoices against judgment. It is the responsibility of every mortal not to expose the sins of others. Each individual is accountable to God for openly confessing his own sins. But on the other hand, he is equally responsible for not exposing the sins and problems of others.

How contrary are human beings! They like to expose others, but at the same time will do their level best to conceal their own guilt.

At no time should men write or speak about the personal, private sins of others. God has not given any man this responsibility. To assume so is to manifest vanity and carnality. But, why do men try to hide themselves from their own guilt?

### **Why Do Men Hide Themselves?**

The Truth is a brilliant light. It shines into the depths of our very beings. It reveals us for what we really are.

Any who are not converted, and those who have lost the correct spiritual orientation, cannot tolerate the brilliance of that light. They prefer to conceal themselves in the recesses of their own conjured-up self-righteousness. The effort to expose others is but one of the avenues of reinforcing the image of *self*. Those living in such deception will feel comfortable until the ultimate day of revealing. Then, woe be to those who have not faced up to what they really are! The efforts of exposing others will be of little significance at that time. We each stand on a one-to-one basis with Christ. Where no mercy and kindness have been tendered to others, there will be none for the accuser.

How much better to have been more tolerant and forgiving! For those so spiritually oriented, much mercy and kindness will be given. How great is the need of each!

### **Sins of a Chosen Servant Do Not Change the Truth**

At best, any exposé is retaliatory. It is generally the manifestation of disappointment and disgust. In Biblical terms, it is the manifestation of hate.

If Jesus Christ is our perfect example, then all such attempts are contrary to the basic spiritual requirements. At His trial He opened not His mouth. He accused no one. He left such necessity up to the Word of God. For, it is by the Word of God that we shall be judged.

What is the real orientation of a Christian? His thoughts reflect this acclimation. They arise out of the direction and purpose of the man.

If the manifestation of the defensive and carnal man is ridicule, hate, and contempt, what is the indication of the truly spiritual man? Paul explains this:

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of *good report*; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things (Ph'p. 4:8).

Again, what things? Paul makes it very clear. "Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Ph'p. 4:9).

We are not to think on the faults of others. On the contrary, we are obliged to look upon those Biblically proven things which God revealed to us through His servant—even though that servant might have gone astray. What happens to the man does not change the eternal nature of the Truth. Why should God be held accountable for what a man does? But this is precisely what Satan wants men to think. Unfortunately, too many of those called of God in these last days have turned against God and have given an attentive ear to the still, subtle voice of Satan.

Brethren, let us think upon constructive things. The things which God gave to us and requires that we maintain through faith. There is absolutely no value in wallowing in the evils generated by human beings—whether those evils are precipitated by lifestyle, or whether they are the writings or speaking of those who desire to expose.

The Bible instructs us to think on good things—the things of the Truth of God. Nowhere is there any instruction given which would justify exposés.

What, then, is the premise of *all* such writings and speaking?

## Exposing: a Fruit of the Spirit, or a Work of the Flesh?

To be spiritually minded is life and peace. But to be carnally minded is death. It is imperative that we be able to differentiate.

The fruits of the Holy Spirit are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance (Gal. 5:22–23).

Do writing and speaking which ridicule and censure others produce *love*? Hardly! Love "covers," it does not expose. What about *joy*? Merely observe the one who writes, as well as the one harshly judged. There has never been any joy manifested in these circumstances—and there never will be, for such is not the work of the Spirit of God. Do these writings generate *peace*? Of course not! The exact opposite is manifested.

Further, such writings and speaking do not manifest the elements (fruits) of longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, or temperance. In every way they exhibit traits and characteristics which produce effects the exact opposite of those of the Holy Spirit.

What do these efforts manifest? What is the real source of their inspiration?

They are the manifestations of the works of the flesh. For a list of those works, see Galatians 5:19–21. For our purposes, let us limit our consideration to the works of hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, and heresies.

Do such writings (or speaking, in the case of cassettes) manifest or produce hatred? Without doubt! Most of us have seen some other person ridiculed or exposed. What was the result? Can there be any doubt?

What about variance? There is no doubt here either. Emulations—desire to surpass, competition, rivalry, antagonism, controversy, or opposition? Nothing further needs to be said. Any with eyes open cannot possibly miss this manifestation.

What about wrath and strife? Such writings or efforts are the very source of the carnal fruits of wrath and strife. No one could possibly miss these indications.

Finally, in a very real way such writings and endeavors which expose the personal sins of others are the root cause of seditions and heresies. For, as a result of them, many differing and spurious splits have been generated.

Since these "exposés" are the works of the flesh, men must use great caution when reading or listening. Remember, the natural, carnal mind is ever ready to accept the way which seems so right and appealing to it.

Works of the flesh are everywhere. Day by day you are called upon, out of spiritual integrity, to evaluate writings, tapes, speeches, etc. Without a proper guide, you will be left bewildered and confused. Therefore, there are several questions which we must yet ask and answer.

### **What Is the Motive or Purpose for an Exposé?**

God's Word is for the purpose of instructing us in the way of righteousness—the way of eternal life. Even the generalized lessons written by Israel as a nation and the specific examples of individuals whom God included in the canon of Scripture are recorded for our admonition and learning. They are written objectively to help us.

Can the same be said of the writings of men today? One thing is certain: The writings of men cannot be considered a part of the sacred canon. The Bible is complete, and we must not add to or detract from it.

So, always ask this question: What is the real motive for the writing or speaking? Could it be anything other than a defensive gesture? Is it an act of the flesh? Does the work produce love and understanding? Was the work written to present the best side of the individual involved? Does it manifest the fullness of the Holy Spirit of God? Is it written to censure self (for there is no God-given right to evaluate anyone else)?

Remember, any work that is not objective will not be acceptable to God. If the motive is wrong, we must exercise unusual care that we are not influenced adversely by those things said or written.

All the spurious material presently being written and spoken might just be a part of the great test which God is administering in these last days. Remember 1 Corinthians 11:19.

### **What Is the Basis of Human Judgment?**

Men do judge. They have assumed that responsibility, despite what the Bible says about it. What is the basis of their judgment? How do they judge?

First: Men cannot use more than their own past—what they have learned. What they have been taught by parents, by the community in which they live, by the sphere of their formalized education, and by their years of work.

Second: Men are influenced greatly by their own experiences. What has happened to them, personally, forms the reservoir out of which comes the substance of all judgment. But, the question is this: Is their experience representative of norms—especially, the spiritual norms? And can one use his own experience to judge another person? Personal experiences are the great teachers of the people involved. The same experiences may have no relevancy to others, except in a generalized way. We all learn that sin does not pay dividends. Conversely, those called of God learn that obedience pays off in handsome blessings.

The object lessons God teaches through our forefathers' experiences are of a generalized nature. With a few exceptions, there is no specific mention of personal sins and difficulties of the individuals whom God used to write those meaningful lessons.

Third: Personal convictions form the fabric out of which come many decisions. But the convictions of another man may not be the absolute Truth of God. In fact, every man is right in his own eyes. In the act of judging, we essentially are comparing ourselves among ourselves. That is, the man judging—via writing or however—is comparing the accused to himself. In those areas where the accused does not measure up to the standard of the one judging, the accused encounters the wrath of the self-appointed judge—the one who presumes to write or speak about another.

Fourth: *Emotions* form the depth and degree of a man's judgment. As bad as the above premises are, the premise of emotion is many times worse. Generally, emotions can only warp logic and rationale. An angry man cannot be expected to render wise, comprehensive and logical decisions. Neither can an injured man be expected to render objective and unbiased opinions. The element of anger or depth of injury invariably will taint any decisions which must be rendered.

Conversely, exceptional affection, love, and regard for another person will render one incapable of objectivity if judgment is ever required. Any person emotionally bound up in the life of a friend would want to evidence considerable beneficence. He simply could not be completely impartial, regardless of desire or intent. For these reasons, even judges of this world will not allow themselves to be involved in some cases of judicial responsibility.

By nature, men are not equipped to judge. They are defective in experience, training, basic spiritual knowledge, and emotional control. From both sides of the coin, the world

has become a living example of this total failure. And all subsequent efforts serve only to substantiate the record of the past.

Why, brethren, should we add to the record of failure? Our objective purpose at the present time is to gain the essential knowledge, experience, and emotional control. Those called of God know that such capability does not lie within them. The act of conversion is an act of humiliation. In that state, one becomes teachable—willing to be educated and trained, fitted for the awesome responsibilities with which one is to be shouldered tomorrow.

### **Why Cannot Men Judge Objectively?**

We have already seen that men cannot judge objectively: they are biased and prejudiced because of emotions and past, as well as their own personal convictions. But, we yet need to understand why man cannot judge in a way that is acceptable to God. In understanding why man cannot render such service, we will also see why God has not given such responsibility to him.

God, as the Creator of man, made him subject to human nature. Thus, the first inadequacy of man's judgmental efforts: Being subject to his own nature, he is automatically self-defensive—a trait which renders him completely subjective, not objective.

Second: Being born of flesh, with a carnal mind, he does not see things as God does. God reads hearts and minds—He views things from a totally spiritual perspective. But man sees things from his purely carnal perspective.

Third: God tells us, through His servant Isaiah, that His ways and thoughts are not the ways and thoughts of men. Only through the gift of the Holy Spirit can we have the mind of Christ. We have already seen that the manifestation of that Spirit precludes all exposés, ridicule, and the censure of others.

The only people who are capable of even limited judgment are those who are called of God and have dwelling within them the influence of the Holy Spirit. And by decree of God, they are to examine self—no one else.

Fourth: At best, men have only selective memories. No man has perfect recall. Some men believe themselves to be virtually infallible in their recall. Yet their accuracy, when compared to the real truth, is highly questionable. It becomes obvious that their recall is greatly influenced by emotions, experiences, and other self-defensive criteria.

Fifth: There is no man who has not sinned and does not continue to sin, regardless of his efforts to cease the practice of evil and wrong. As long as he is a sinner, no individual has been given the responsibility of judging another. Jesus said: "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (John 8:7). In other words, how can we possibly judge impartially and accurately, when our minds and natures are tainted by the flesh? The only acceptable occasions wherein a man can and should indict others are those in which God personally calls, commissions, and sends to a specific people or individual. At such times, God gives the very words which must be delivered. They are not from the reasoning and rationale of any man. They are from God. In such cases God is using a human agent, as He has oftentimes done.

### **Who Is the Accuser of the Brethren?**

To charge and personally indict any man is to accuse. And who is the accuser of the brethren? Satan the Devil. Even though the thoughts proceed from the minds of men, they are often generated by Satan. He personally stirs up the minds of men to ridicule, judge, malign, and manifest contempt for others.

How tragic that men, because of their own personal experiences, feel they must write books, articles, and magazines filled with criticism! But true to human form, they always do it under the guise of spiritual responsibility—which is a full-fledged perversion of Scripture.

How thrilling to Satan, who is endeavoring with all dedication and purpose to destroy every called and chosen servant of God! He has effected a cleavage among the people of God. He has effectively turned them against one another. Unless men begin to recognize the efforts of their unseen enemy, they will be destroyed by one another.

No matter what happens, we are never justified in resorting to ridicule. We are never justified in proliferating propaganda for the purpose of self-defense. We are never justified in rejecting the Truth of God because of other men's failures. We are justified only for holding fast to the faith which God initially gave us. This seems to be the most difficult responsibility ever placed upon man. Few, it seems, have ever manifested faithfulness.

### **Do Not Biblical Texts Support Exposés?**

Many exposés have been written. In every case, a Biblical justification is given. But we need to candidly ask ourselves, does the Bible anywhere authorize writing and publication of critical analyses of men?

Up to the present, a couple of texts generally have formed the Biblical support for the critics' endeavors. Let us analyze them.

First: Did not Jesus say, as recorded in the book of John, "The truth shall make you free"? To them the text implies that a revealing of men's sins is imperative. But is this a true interpretation?

Nowhere in all the Bible does the expression "the truth" mean simple and accurate information. Jesus was referring to that spiritual knowledge which cannot be ascertained by men. It must be given by divine revelation. It is the spiritual knowledge of the way of life. That truth will indeed make us free—free of the very problems inherent in the false interpretation of the verse (that is, the indication that men's sins should, indeed must, be made public). Other texts make it very clear that such actions ensnare us again in bondage—bondage to the self, which drives and compels men to feel obligated to expose others.

How, may we ask, can the knowledge of some other person's sins make us free from our own personal bondage to this nature? When analyzed properly, the very conception lacks merit from every conceivable view.

Second: Does not the Bible say that men shall be known by their fruits? Indeed! But where is the obligation to *expose* those fruits, which we can ascertain only by spiritual knowledge? To know is one thing—to expose is quite another. By knowledge of the behavior of others, we can safely chart ourselves through the mutual waters of life. But nowhere are we under moral and spiritual obligation to publish the sins of any other human being. If we feel the obligation to expose, why should God find it necessary to reveal all the hidden things which have not been covered by the shed blood of Jesus Christ? For, in Matthew 10:26 we read: "there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known."

The knowledge of truth which will set us free is the knowledge of *the Truth*—the way of life. It is not knowledge of other men's sins. Further, the knowledge of other men's sins is for the purpose of identifying fruits. In no way does it imply the necessity of public revelation.

### **What Are the Consequences of Judgment (Prejudice) Exercised by Men?**

Jesus instructed men to judge nothing before the time. For, with whatever judgment they judge others, they in like manner will be judged. This is a varied application of the

Golden Rule. How few truly realize the scope of their judgment at the appointed time! However, the way they behave in relation to others is the pattern by which they have asked to be judged.

Mercy rejoices against judgment. Where mercy, kindness, tolerance, and understanding have been manifested by men, the like will be employed in their final judgment. But where ridicule, contempt, disrespect, and arrogance are indicated, little consideration will be given them.

Can *anyone* achieve the ultimate spiritual objective without the mercy of God? The only way to insure oneself of that mercy is to manifest it in relationships with others. Our spiritual relationship with God is judged by our relationships with one another here on earth. If we cannot honor and respect men whom we can see, how can we love, honor, and respect God whom we have not seen?

Finally, the *words* we write or speak about others are the basis of our final judgment. For Jesus Christ said: "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (Matt. 12:37). How we verbally respond to all circumstances and situations here in this arena of testing is extremely crucial. If we seal our lips—avoiding the castigation of others—we will not have to answer for unwise utterances. If we arrogantly speak our minds, we will pay the ultimate price. For, by those same words we will be judged.

In conclusion, let us candidly state: We have not written about the sins and problems of others, for the very reasons mentioned above. Personally, we could have written much from a firsthand viewpoint. We were at the hub of the activity. Much that transpired happened within our sphere of observation. We are not ignorant of the facts. But the crucial question is, of what value is the publication of other men's sins or problems? They serve no useful benefit. However, they have served to destroy the godly call of many. If men can be known by their fruits, surely a concept or work can be evaluated by the fruits which it bears. We have seen absolutely no good come from these publications. That fact, alone, clearly indicates their true nature.

It is hoped that all, as dear brethren, will evaluate carefully and wisely the matters of current concern. Will we be shattered in faith? Will the knowledge of others' sins cause us to lose faith and confidence? Remember, God clearly revealed that these very conditions would surface in the last days. Our faith should be strengthened rather than destroyed by them. Judge the matters of vital importance to *your* future life. Do not judge other men—God has reserved that responsibility for Jesus Christ. What you do in the future will clearly reveal which avenue you chose.

Once again, all our love, prayers, and thoughts. We surely look forward to seeing all at the Feast of Tabernacles. Pray diligently, and God will surely see you through. How desperate is the need for mutual fellowship in these dark, foreboding and cloudy days! We need the inspiration and encouragement each can provide for the other.

Again, our love and deepest feelings. We highly honor and respect you all.

In much love and respect,

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