

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Two Facets of Divine Revelation—Part XVI A Change in Man Required

September 1982

Dear Brethren:

Warmest greetings to you all once again. Just one month to the Feast of Tabernacles time again.

Truly time has taken wings. It seems we can hardly finish one responsibility until the next is knocking at the door. Yet, I am sure the passage of time is more fleeting to those of us who have frequent contact with others of like faith than for those who are semi-isolated or completely cut off from other believers except at Feast time.

We so look forward to seeing you all again. One who will *continually* remain faithful to God and the revealed way of life is so priceless. The more rare an item is, the greater value it bears. Thus, God classifies His chosen and faithful sons and daughters as gems—jewels (Mal. 3:17).

Now is the time to fervently and faithfully pray about the Fall Feasts. We cannot expect to enjoy the maximum blessing of God unless we pray. We often fail to receive because we ask not. Therefore, if we sincerely and honestly desire a rich, inspirational, and rewarding Feast, we must diligently pray to God. Let us ask God daily for the finest Feast possible this year. Let us ask God to make each of us ready to enjoy the foretaste of the soon-coming Kingdom of God.

For this month, September, 1982, we are continuing the series on the subject of "Two Facets of Knowledge." Once completed, this series will contain a thread of Truth from the beginning to the end. The subject should be very clear and comprehensible.

This month, the sub-topic, "A Change In Man Is Required" is covered.

Man's Ultimate Purpose

Truth is spiritual. The Words of God, they are spirit and they are life. And God's Word is Truth.

Man is physical. His knowledge is limited to the sphere of the natural. He cannot conceive nor understand things outside of his natural domain. He, by nature, is subject to his natural nature of weakness. He is not, indeed cannot be, subject to the Law of God—that which is spiritual, Truth.

Yet, God did not create man in vain. He put him here on this earth for a purpose. What is that purpose? Why did God create man?

The ultimate objective for the existence of man is that he might be made conformable to his Creator. This conformity goes far beyond the external, physical features of form and shape—which he even now possesses by virtue of his physical creation. The ultimate objective is to be made *spiritually* conformable to God, the Father.

A residual change—from flesh to spirit—requires a *very great change*. It involves the entire orientation and nature of man—a change from one set of inherent characteristics to a different and noble set of inherent values.

But, if man is subject to his own weak nature, how can he change himself? He cannot lift himself by his own endeavor. The change must come from God—an authority and power outside of man. The promise of this dramatic and purposeful change issues from God. He is the One who is working all things after His own will.

God Promises to Change the Defective Nature of Man

As planned from the beginning (Deut. 32:7–8) God chose Israel as His people—a people to whom He gave His way of life. Once that way of life had been announced, the people entered into a covenant agreement with God. That covenant was a marriage agreement. A marriage agreement Israel broke (Jer. 31:32).

Through the prophet Jeremiah God revealed His intent to make a New Covenant agreement with the people of Israel (Jer. 31:31–34). He said, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a *new* covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah" (verse 31).

In what way was this New Covenant to be different from the Old original Covenant He made with them? The answer is found in Jeremiah 31:33. He said, "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the Lord, I will *put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts*; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

Under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the Apostle Paul expands upon the prophecy of Jeremiah (Heb. 8:7–10). He shows that the Old Covenant had a fault. Because of this fault, a new covenant was necessary.

What was the fault? It was with the people. That is, they did not inherently possess the character or will to obey the terms of the Covenant. Therefore, a second covenant was mandatory. God promises to make this New Covenant relationship. Under the terms of this New (second) Covenant, God promises to change the nature of man. He promises to change the heart from stony indifference to love and affinity for the Law of God. The change is to be residual. By God's power, the love for and orientation to the Laws (ways) of God were to be inscribed upon the heart (including the mind).

God knows the weaknesses of men. He knew that man of himself could not obey the Truth—the way of life. He was inherently subject to the way of death, for he had been created with that nature.

In process of time, God revealed His intent to change that deficient nature of man. He promised to write His spiritual way into the hearts and minds of those chosen to understand the Truth.

When Did This Change Begin?

When did this change begin? On whom did this change occur?

Prophetically, in the last days, Jesus was to appear on the earth to fulfill a very significant responsibility given to Him by God, the Father (Heb. 8:1–6). He became a High Priest of a different order—not of the physical but of the spiritual. The physical was a type of the spiritual. Through Christ a transition was effected from the physical to the spiritual. He, Christ, received a spiritual ministry. As such, He became the mediator of a better covenant. Since there are only two Covenants, He became the mediator of the New, second Covenant—the Covenant under which the Laws and ways of God are to be written in human hearts and minds.

Christ was the beginning of that change. He became flesh to pay the penalty of man's transgressions. At the same time He was empowered by the Holy Spirit to live abundantly the way of Truth. As a physical being—a sin offering for us—He paid the penalty of death. As a faithfully obedient Son, He lives—beyond the resurrection—to take up His abode (by the spirit) in us. By living in us, He writes the way of life into our minds and hearts.

Many clarifications regarding this transition may be found in Hebrews 10:9–29. Let us take careful note.

In verse nine, Paul clearly states, "He (Christ) taketh away the first that he may establish the second (covenant)." Remember, the second Covenant was the writing of the laws into hearts and minds. It is obvious, the writing of those laws into hearts and minds is through Jesus Christ. That is, He is working in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In verse ten, we are told, the hope of those called is in the offering of the body of Jesus Christ. In the case of Christ, the offering was a perfect and complete one. It was made but once—never needing to be made again (verses 11–14).

Predicated on the plan and purpose of God, designed from the beginning, God could prophetically indicate the transition from the Old to the New. This He did in Jeremiah 31:31–34. That transition was accomplished through Jesus Christ. By Christ in us, the Laws of God are being written into our minds and hearts (verses 14–17).

When the character of obedience is perfectly written in us, all sins and iniquities—transgressions of the Law—will be remembered no more. And where complete remission exists there is no further need of offering for sin (verses 17–18). At the appointed time this perfection will be realized. Those aware of God's Word in them—those who truly are overcoming—boldly come into the presence of God. Why? Because Jesus Christ paid the total price of our human weakness. He made it possible for us to lay the physical down—crucifixion of the flesh is our part—and become the recipients of a more perfect way, the spiritual way which is written in minds and hearts (verses 19–20).

This operation of God has been completed. Jesus, Himself, said, "It is finished." The work of reconciliation which God had given Him, He completed. It is now necessary for those called of God to recognize the merit of Christ's sacrifice and the need for *their* change. We, all, must come into God's presence with a true—honest, candid, and meaningful—heart. We must exercise total faith. And we must never depart from that

call, cleansing operation, and faith in the initial operation of God (verses 22–24). We must consistently and rightly encourage one another (verses 24–25).

The promise of this change is so humanly incomprehensible! The opportunity afforded so awesome! The privileges so unmerited! We must never lose sight of the operation of God. It is offered but once. To turn from it—to sin of our own volition—is to relegate this high calling to a station of mere human endeavor or purpose. The results are a permanent loss of privilege (verses 22–29).

The change required was effected by Christ Himself. He came as a mere man. He never sinned once. As a human being—born of woman—He could pay the price of our sins. This He did. Now we can crucify the old self and allow Christ to live His perfect life in us. By this operation the real, spiritual purpose—the Laws, and the whole Word of God—can be lived in us.

The required change began with Christ. From that day forward, those called of God could allow the same life of character and obedience to be lived in them.

The way has been proven for us to enter the Holy of Holies.

How? How can Christ live in us? How can we be changed from this wretched carnal self to a being of character and true spirituality?

How This Change Is Effected

True character could never be realized in human beings by any endeavor of their own. Why? Because of the weakness of the flesh. And because of the weakness of the flesh, the spiritual Law of God can never be lived by man—of himself (Rom. 8:3).

This problem of weakness was rectified by the sending of Jesus Christ. He was born of woman and thereby made subject to the weaknesses and carnal pulls of the flesh. By living His entire lifetime above the natural tendency to sin, He condemned sin in the flesh (verse 3).

What was the purpose for condemning the natural inclinations of the flesh? Paul said, "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us . . ." (verse 4).

In whom will this great change be realized? Those who *will* to walk after the Spirit and *not* after the pulls of the flesh.

If we allow the will of the flesh to dominate we will perform those things which seem right to us. They are concerned about the flesh—its comforts and satisfactions. On the other hand, those who are recipients of the Spirit have crucified the fleshly expectations and have oriented their lives to things spiritual—the ways, thoughts, and purposes of the Spirit (verse 5).

Why is it essential to effect a change in our mode of thinking and living?

Paul makes the answer revealing and impressive. He said, "For to be carnally minded [the natural mind with which man is born] is death; but to be spiritually minded [the mind of Jesus Christ, of the Spirit] is life and peace" (Rom. 8:6).

Why is there such a fate for the carnally minded? Paul continues, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Rom. 8:7).

Man of himself is ill-fated. He cannot of his own mind and volition will to obey God. His natural will is enmity against God. It is not possible for man of himself to will to obey God. As Paul wrote, ". . . they that are in the flesh *cannot* please God" (Rom. 8:8).

What makes the difference? How can some men obey God and do those things which are pleasing to Him? What makes you, the called of God, willing and obedient? ". . . ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you" (Rom. 8:9).

Externally, there is absolutely no difference between the called and the uncalled. They look alike. They mingle freely on the streets and avenues of life. Except in behavior (we hope) the "uncalled" cannot see any difference between you and them. The difference can be comprehended spiritually only.

For the behavior of the called should; indeed, must, be a manifestation of the character of God. It *must* be the true light—the light which reveals.

If we do not possess that Spirit of change in our lives, we are not of Christ. We belong to Him only if we have crucified the old self and then allowed Christ, by the Spirit, to live the new life of obedience in us. And ". . . if Christ be in you, the body is dead . . ."—dead bodies know nothing and do not will disobedience—" . . . because of sin . . ." (Rom. 8:10).

If by the call of God, we have willed the crucifixion of the old self, and have allowed Christ, by the Spirit, to live His holy, righteous life in us we are daily experiencing this promised change. A change of carnal animosity toward all things spiritual to a willing and obedient attitude of submission to the true way of life. And ". . . if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal [flesh] bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you" (Rom. 8:11).

The change is a three step operation. First, God must call. It is not of our own personal volition. It is by the will of God only. Second, we must will the crucifixion of the old self. The accomplishment of this objective is by the power and operation of God. But, initially, we must step out in faith—knowing God will back us up. Third, the Truth—the way of life—must be lived in us by Jesus Christ. And Christ lives in us by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Once the operation of God has commenced in us, we must continue in faith until the day of permanency—the day that way and character are eternally written into minds and hearts (Ph'p. 1:6; 3:21).

As indicated earlier, this whole operation is not commenced, carried out or finalized by the will of men. Our carnal natures are such that we cannot of ourselves seek to please God and do the Truth—the way of life. We are subject to our own natures. The will to perform anything outside of ourselves must come from an outside source. James succinctly states this fact in James 1:18. "Of his own will begat he us with the word of Truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures."

What we see happening on this earth is a manifestation of the will of the Father. The "uncalled" are merely doing what they were created to do.

Until they are called they can do nothing else. The nations are doing only what God allows. The only culpable people are those who know the Truth and have reverted to the carnal way of flesh. These people stand guilty before God. They will be severely judged and condemned, unless through the exercise of trial they return to the faith once delivered.

Knowing the fickleness of human nature, two basic questions surface. One: Who are those who will effect this required change in their personal lives? Two: Who will not make the required change?

Who Will Effect the Required Change in Life?

Man by nature fears and respects tangible (physical) things. He is motivated and dominated by what he can see. Since physical beings are not subject to God's way (spiritual things), it is obvious some change of orientation must occur.

What is the point of beginning for those called and afforded the possibility of change? What gives them a new sense of direction? Why is such a change necessary for man?

The psalmist David wrote, "The works of his hands are verity and judgment; all his commandments are sure" (Ps. 111:7). The spiritual works of God are firm, unmoveable. They are sure—unalterable. He continues, "They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in Truth and righteousness" (verse 8). The ways of God are absolute. They are not subject to change.

If man, who by nature is contrary to God and His purpose, is to be made spiritually conformable to God, He must experience a change. This change was purposed by God. In verse nine David said, "He sent redemption unto his people . . ." Yet that change is conditional. It is not compulsory or arbitrary. Character is not developed by compulsion. Obedience by legislation and compulsion is meaningless.

Who, then, can and will effect the necessary change? David continues, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom . . ." (verse 10). By experience, by circumstance, man called of God acquires a fear and respect for His Creator. This is a fear of God, not of any man or organization. A fear for God will keep the called in harmony with unalterable, eternal, and unchangeable things—things of the Spirit. Whereas, a fear of man—regardless of what man—or organization will result in conformity to dictates, wishes, concepts, and edicts of those men. In such cases, the ones called have lost their initial, beginning, spiritual tool of obedience. For, it is the fear of God which gives us a spiritual orientation. Lose that fear, and everything spiritual is lost. For such an individual is back to a carnal orientation—a trust and respect for physical things.

Solomon wrote of this beginning. In Proverbs 1:7, he wrote, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge . . ." And again, Solomon wrote, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man" (Eccl. 12:13).

Fear is a beginning premise. For, what we fear we respect. Those who fear interruptions of physical life will make *every* provision for the flesh. It is called the law of "self-preservation." But those who fear God, make *no* provision for the flesh. They accept God at face value. God who has promised to provide every need for those who first fear, honor, obey, and respect Him.

Fear is a beginning requirement. There are others, however. Solomon, by wisdom—given by God—had come to understand these basic responsibilities. The whole basic procedure is beautifully explained in Proverbs 2:1–9. Here we are informed God must first give us the understanding of His Words—for it is impossible to receive what has not been given.

The order: *Receive* the words; then *hide*—bury deep inside—those words given; next *incline* thine ear unto wisdom, our new spiritual bent or orientation; acquisition by *application* is next; followed by "*criest*"—aggressively pursue, request or ask—for spiritual knowledge. Then it is imperative to *lift up* the voice—ask of those who can give wisdom—in continual determination.

God must reveal the Truth. But it is not a gift to the derelict. Those favored to receive the priceless spiritual knowledge of life must personally labor with aggressive purpose, tempered and directed by the absolute requisite fear for God.

With aggressiveness engendered by the Spirit and availability granted by God, knowledge of the Truth and understanding of intents and purposes are assured (verses 5–9).

Jesus Christ spoke of this same principle. Those called to know the Truth must *ask, seek, and knock* (Matt. 7:7). Only those who exercise the individual responsibility of searching out the gift God has already given will ever find it.

The tragedy of it all, is the fact, so few will *find* or avail themselves of that Truth (Matt. 7:14). For the greatest impediments to spiritual knowledge and growth are carnal minds, hearts, and the weaknesses of the flesh.

Those who will effect the necessary changes in their lives are those who first acquire, by experience and trial, a healthy fear and respect for God. On the premise of those experiences, the hearts and minds are inclined toward a domain of knowledge previously unavailable to man. With diligent effort on the part of those called, they can become recipients of spiritual knowledge, not just comprehension of the physical sphere.

Continuity in Truth is then a matter of *love* for the Truth made available. Those who by use and conviction keep the spiritual prominent in their lives do not allow compromise. But the vast majority fall somewhere in between those who trust in the mind of man and those who perfectly crucify the old mind and allow only the mind of Christ to dominate them and give direction to their lives. Those in between do not reject the idea of God and Truth but both are individualistically tainted by the subtleties of human mind. They do that which they think is right too much of the time.

Who Will Not Make the Required Change?

In accord with the plan and purpose of God, all men must eventually come to the knowledge of the Truth. We have already seen which ones will manifest faith and continuity. Who will not face up to the individual responsibility God imposes upon each of us? Those appointed for the second death!

In Proverbs 3:5–6, Solomon was inspired to instruct, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

If the righteous trust God, have no confidence in their own fleshly concepts (understanding), acknowledge God in all their activities of life and receive direction for pursuits of life; it is quite obvious the unrighteous are doing the exact opposite. They trust their own minds, have confidence in their own decisions and see no reason to seek the approbation of God in their endeavors.

Those not called have made no decision, either pro or con. They are living the natural ways of flesh. Only those once called of God are accountable. For them, a rejection of God and the spiritual purpose of life may mean a life of misery, woe, and difficulty now. In the future it means extinction. God expects us to hold the prized hope of life dear and with unalterable confidence.

Solomon in Proverbs 14:12 and Proverbs 16:25 speaks of the natural way which seems so right to human minds. Regardless of how right it seems, the end result is death. This very fact alone should make us aware of one absolute principle. If one cannot trust the concepts of his own mind, it is imperative that God make the unalterable absolutes of Truth known. Would God be so unfair as to judge (death consignment) us on the basis of absolutes which we could not ascertain by our own minds and yet were never revealed to us? Of course not!

Those who once knew the Truth and then turned back to their own minds and understanding will not be making the required changes in their lives! Why? Their purpose of turning to human rationale is to avoid some specific spiritual requirement which may appear too difficult or unpopular.

How broad is the potential for human rationalization? The answer: The whole gamut of human concept and philosophy. In Proverbs 16:2 we are told, "All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes . . ." How, then, can a man judge and evaluate his thoughts, ideas, and ways? Only by the implicit acceptance and trust in a divinely revealed way of life. And this possibility exists with those called of God only. Note how clearly this concept is mentioned in Job. We are instructed by a question, "Canst thou by searching find out God? canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection" (Job 11:7)? The answer is "NO." Did not Jesus say the Father had to be revealed (Matt. 11:27)? Again in Job we read, "Touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out . . ." (Job 37:23).

Now let us comprehend the fate of those called but due to the fleshly pulls yield to the vanity of carnal mind. The whole tragedy of their choice is made plain by Solomon (Pr. 1:24–33). Too many rationalize until it is too late. There *is* a point of no return. All of us must remain aware of this possibility.

Historically, the lessons of rejection of spiritual knowledge and purpose have been written. To those in the days of the Apostle Paul, the events of Ephesians four transpired. However, these events are recorded as a part of the Bible for us of the last days, also.

A Life of Jeopardy, Unless

In Ephesus a number of Gentiles had accepted the Truth and had made Christianity a profession of life. In the process of time a significant number of those who had been called were manifesting vacillation and much uncertainty (Eph. 4:14). Others had turned away from the Truth entirely and were actually hardened in mind and attitude (verses 17–19). Their spiritual understanding was lost due to the fact they *allowed* themselves to become separated from the way of God. Tragically, they grew blind to the real Truth—Truth which they once knew and understood. Then insidiously as time passed, these same people, once called and obedient, became calloused, hard, and indifferent. The next step is to resort to the full bloom of human passion—doing whatever comes conveniently and lustfully to their minds and hearts.

Such behavior is not how we learned about Christ and His character. The spiritual obligation is to see ourselves humanly for what we are. Then, we are obliged to wage war with the flesh—crucifying the old carnal self (verses 20–22).

The Apostle John wrote to the called of God in comparable fashion to what we must see today (1 John 2:21). He knew the people knew and understood. They had been called of God. The Truth had been revealed. But conditions and circumstances of the day were most distressing and disruptive.

People were questioning the Truth because of what other called children were allowing to happen in their lives. They reasoned, "How could it be the Truth when ministers and lay-brethren were not honorably living up to the standard of their high calling. But as John said, "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it . . ." (1 John 2:21).

God's Truth does not change. The defect is with man—never with the Truth. When men change it is the manifestation of the same carnal weakness evidenced in the lives of ancient Israel. The Law of God and His ways were not the problem. The difficulty was with the people.

Once that Truth is revealed, we stand in great jeopardy unless we keep the flame of Truth alive through faith and steadfast obedience. And faith is the evidence of that invisible way which God revealed to us.

Satan is a past master of deception. But the carnality of man is relatively capable in its own right. Deceivers have energetically attempted to impart an image that is not true to fact. They want others to believe they are Christians, doing the will of God, while in reality they are pursuing the course of their own natural minds. How, then, can one tell the genuine from all fakes?

How to Tell the True Believers From the Presumptuous

In Egypt, God said to Israel, I will make a difference between you and the Egyptians. Is there a difference between a Spiritual Israelite and a Spiritual Egyptian today so that those empowered by the Spirit can know the true from the false?

Indeed!

Basically, as Christ said in Matthew seven, the fruits borne indicate the difference. A good tree brings forth good fruit. A bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth bad fruit; neither can a bad tree produce good fruit. Fruits are a definite indication. By their fruits—the actions and concepts of those called—you shall know them (Matt. 7:15–23). All claims of presumptive individuals notwithstanding. For every man will attempt to justify himself.

Paul makes the above principle very clear. He wrote to Titus, "They [those who knew the Truth but turned to their own conceptions] profess that they know God; but in *works* they deny him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate" (Titus 1:16).

Works and actions *are* observable. They are the fruits which manifest our true orientation—of the Spirit or of the flesh.

There are four very specific manifestations of those who are called and who honor that call with specific responses. By these responses you will know the "good trees"—those in whom the Spirit is active.

1. *They are crucifying the old self.* To the observant eye the changes are perceptible and sometimes dramatic depending upon the aggressiveness and conviction of the individual involved. See Ephesians 4:22–32 and Colossians 3:8–9.

2. *They are constructively putting on the new man*—the image and character of Christ. Equal to the destruction of the old is the building of the new. Aggressively and purposefully, the really convicted child of God is creating—by the power of the Holy Spirit—a new man and image. See Ephesians 4:23–32; Colossians 3:10, 12–17.

It is not sufficient to destroy self. The new must also be created.

3. *They fear and honor God in respectful obedience.* By crucifixion of natural mind (Rom. 8:7) they willingly and purposefully accept God's Law and ways of life (1 John 2:3–6). No longer do they argue with God. They love God's Law. They love and obey His statutes and judgments. They seek the will of God—not the ways of their own carnal minds.

4. *They manifest a willing, pliable, humble, and self-sacrificing attitude.* The hard, unbending, self-centered mind of the flesh is diminishing. The mind of Christ is growing and becoming more dominant daily (Ph'p. 2:1–7; Matt. 20:20–28).

It would seem that any human being manifesting the above traits would be honored and respected. Not so, however. The natural mind is wrathful, seditious, and hateful. It, along with the vicious influence of Satan and his demons, is wrathful and very aggressively against all things spiritual—those things which are of God. Yet, the subtlety of human mind will not allow for the admission of fact. It deludes itself into believing it is spiritual—obedient—while manifesting every trait of the flesh and carnal mind against the real Truth. This human trait manifests itself in a real problem in the last days.

The Problem Compounded

The Apostle Paul was inspired to write of these traumatic times of the last days (2 Tim. 3:1–8). A careful observation and evaluation of the above text reveals plainly the fact these wrathful people were once knowledgeable of the Truth.

The time of these events is the last days. The conditions are perilous. The cause is the wrathful and seditious behavior of the people involved. They are not to be trusted. Their word means nothing. Even a modicum of human kindness does not exist. They are deeply involved in a "social order." Their wrath is vented against anyone who does not or will not sink to their level of behavior.

Yet, these people manifest a "form" of godliness. That is, they talk about principle and Truth. But, they deny its effective power in their lives. In other words, they speak of Biblical principles but they do not live by them.

Those faithful to "the faith once delivered" must have no part with them. Any such association will not benefit those who rejected the faith, and will surely taint the spirituality of those attempting to remain loyal and faithful.

These hateful beings make a pretext of astuteness. They feign to be scholarly and studious. But, in fact, situation ethics is the rule of the day. Conviction and principle are meaningless. They are unable to establish themselves with firm orientation and purpose—unable "to come to the knowledge of the truth."

It is not a matter of not knowing the Truth. On the contrary, they know the right way but they "resist the Truth." For whatever reasons, the way of God is not carnally satisfying. They refuse to yield to what they know because it would cramp their lustful, volatile, and hateful nature—the nature indicated in verses two through four.

Though superficially appearing to be scholarly and erudite, God says they are corrupt of mind. Mental soundness and stability are gone. They are now subject to pernicious vacillation of mind—a sick, questioning spirit.

Why is this attitude of questioning so injurious and spiritually damaging? Because it denies the faith God initially gave—"reprobate concerning the faith," said the Apostle Paul. Acceptance of the true doctrines is a matter of call and faith. Once called and subjected to the faith of God it is of vital necessity to *keep that faith alive*.

What was our call of faith and conviction? We have no need that anyone explain the matter to us. We all know. But will any of us resist the Truth (that which we knew), because we revert to a trust in our own minds and scholarly abilities? If we do, rest assured we will exist in uncertainty—never able to come to the knowledge of the Truth. But those of absolute faith will continue in the way to which they were called and for which they were baptized.

In the case of the faithful, God continues to carry out His promise of writing His ways into their minds and hearts.

God Is Carrying Out His Spiritual Promise

God's Word is sure. What He promised to do, He is doing or will do at the appointed time. God is not as man—prone to exaggeration, lying or just plain forgetfulness—what He has spoken He will bring to pass (Num. 23:19).

God, through the prophet Jeremiah, promised a great transformation in the spirit and character of called men. He bound Himself to write the Laws, statutes, and judgments of the Old Covenant into hearts and minds.

At the appointed time He commenced to do just that! It is an operation He has been carrying out from that beginning up to the present.

In 2 Corinthians 3:2 we read, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men . . ."

How was this writing taking place? And what contrast existed relative to the Old Law and Covenant?

Verse three, "Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart."

What initially was inscribed upon tables of stone is now being written in the fleshly tables of the heart. What was engraved upon tables of stone? The Law of God.

Presently, God is writing His Law upon the hearts of all whom He calls. And this transformation occurs by the power of the Holy Spirit. Further, the means by which the called hear and are instructed is a New Testament (Covenant) ministry. Called by God and commissioned to preach, they speak the ways of God which are to be written in the minds and hearts of the people whom He calls. Paul wrote, "Who [God] also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter [the Old, first] but of the spirit [the New, second]: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Cor. 3:6).

As God promised, that Law is being written in hearts and minds. It is the principle condition of the New—second—Covenant. And by this writing the abundant life is implanted in those called of God to see and understand.

Our Responsibility

God is carrying out His promise. He is writing His Laws, statutes, and judgments into our minds and hearts. What is the responsibility of those called and in whom this operation is being carried out?

First, let us manifest all confidence in the work and purpose of God. Why? "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).

That good work occurring in us is the writing of God's Law and way of life by the pen of the Spirit. It is a work God will continue until the day of Christ's return. We, then, must be confident that God began writing His ways into our hearts and minds from the day we were called and will continue it until the appointed time of completion.

Have no doubts about that Truth God began inscribing upon your minds and hearts when He first called you!

Second, the full dimension of Christ is being wrought in us (Eph. 2:10). His character! His immutability! His faith! His power! Everything which Christ represents. We are the workmanship of God the Father. And what God is developing in us is that which was foreordained to be accomplished.

God's will—His way—has never changed. He is immutable. He is not a man that He should or needs to change. One cannot improve upon perfection. God has been perfect from the beginning. Therefore, what was first ordained to be accomplished in the lives of those called and chosen *is being done*. Those called manifest those very fruits—fruits which are visible, that which can be seen and read of all men though they may not be understood by those who are unaware of the absolute standard of perfection.

What God commenced to write cannot be called error. To label the spiritual writing of the Spirit as false is to deny God, the Father; Jesus Christ, the Son; and the working of the Holy Spirit.

For those called of God, the Holy Spirit has been writing the ways of God into their hearts and minds from the beginning of that call. Since God is not the author of error, change of that way is not and never can be acceptable.

Third, we must manifest confidence that Christ is constructing His own house. This confidence is evident in the design and forming of the foundation as well as the super-structure.

The foundation is laid first. If incorrectly laid, it is obvious that the house (blueprinted and designed from the foundation) cannot be constructed upon it. All logic, sense, and reason tells us the foundation was correctly laid. It is, therefore, our responsibility and spiritual duty to manifest confidence and hope evidenced in rejoicing that this workmanship commenced with our call and by faith will be continued to the end (Heb. 3:6, 14).

Change is the product of doubt. Doubt is the very antithesis of faith. For faith is the product of confidence and assurance—knowing the call of God and the consistent work of the Spirit writing the way of life, the Truth, into fleshly tables of hearts. For those called of God have been experiencing this spiritual writing of Truth into their minds and hearts from the beginning. The faithful know it and retain confidence. The doubtful laterally change, ever learning, and are never able to come to absolute Truth.

Whose house are you? A house of change and doubt? Or, a house of confidence—evidencing the marks of Jesus Christ written into yourselves?

The choice of where you remain is yours daily. Some begin in confidence but lose direction because of trust in their own mental ability (2 Cor. 10:3–5). Others accept the verbal abuse of those who laterally move, choosing rather to remain unmoved in faith and conviction.

All who will live Godly shall suffer persecution. What has become obvious is this: The most intense and hateful persecution will come from those who once knew the Truth, found great joy in obedience and practiced the same things the faithful continue to observe. This is exactly a replay of the historical example of the New Testament Church.

Our responsibility? Count it a joy to bear in our own lives the marks of the sufferings of Jesus Christ. He came unto His own and they rejected Him. Are we any better than He?

He that *endures unto the end*, the same shall be saved. Make your determination to endure—NOW!

Feast time is fast approaching. We are anticipating a glorious Feast once again. God willing we hope to see, or if unable to see, to serve all during these Fall Feasts.

Please take care. You are precious in the eyes of God and those of us called to serve you.

Once again, all our love and respect.

With profound love and regards,

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