

Church of God, The Eternal

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The Two Facets of Divine Revelation—Part XVII Faith: the Essential Added Ingredient

November 1982

Dear Brethren:

Feast of Tabernacles 1982 is finished. And what a Feast it was. How we could have been more greatly blessed, spiritually, is difficult to comprehend. Truly the whole occasion was a special gift from God.

In a sense, the Feast is a congregation of human beings. It is the behavior and response of those human beings who attend which either makes or breaks the occasion. God and Christ in you wrought a wonderful example this year. The control and purpose you manifested this year were note- and praiseworthy. We firmly believe God let His glorious countenance shine down on you in warm approval.

In retrospect, the Feast should be a source of inspiration and determination all through the long winter months—months devoid of any further festival activity. As in the case of the weekly Sabbath, remembrance is the key. In moments of trial and difficulty, let us recall the days of the Feast, 1982. Remember the days of God's great love, mercy, abundance. Our experiences at the Feast tell us unequivocally that God cares. He will see us through all situations.

Pursuit of aggressive spiritual purpose will insure us of a very successful Feast next year, as well as every intermediate step between that ultimate objective—God's Kingdom—and the present. The hands of the diligent, spiritually and physically, will be filled. Those who anticipate and make the necessary moves will be rewarded. Lack of vision and purpose result in dissatisfaction and heartache.

NOW IS THE TIME TO BEGIN REQUIRED PREPARATION, The results will be a glorious Feast, 1983.

A Meek Response Required Toward the Babylonian Spirit

The world is in chaos. Satan is the god of it. As Christians, you cannot count on this world for help, inspiration, and encouragement. If you belonged to this society, Satan would "love" you. As an enemy of his philosophy and way, he hates you—even as he hated Christ.

But, do not despair! God is still in control. What He purposes for you will come to pass. Faithful obedience to the Way of Life—to all fundamental laws of good and equity—will insure you of God's intervention, inspiration, and help on a daily basis. With His powerful intervention you will be favored with jobs—the means of caring for families—and protection against the rage of "antagonists," those who hate the Truth and all God stands for.

As the called and chosen of God, we are aware of many a design of the "criminal element" which has found its way into very high places of government and business (Eph. 6). Being aware and highly sensitized by knowledge, we can easily become wrathful and vocal about the myriad abuses experienced. This is not the will of God. We must keep our minds and hearts under proper control. That is, truly "possessing our souls." Human agitation never produces desired results. If we wait patiently for the coming of Jesus Christ, we can be used to help in the total restoration process—a process requiring approximately eleven hundred years.

What a thrilling experience to be used at a time when requisite power, knowledge, and direction are available—when nothing can deter or hinder the restoration process. Any effort at the present time would be fraught with disappointment, lack of jurisdictional power, unanimity, and accord of people affected as well as inherent weaknesses and pulls of our own. In the time appointed, being under a captain who is not influenced by the pulls of flesh, we will experience an effort not destined for failure. What a day that will be!

The joy of tomorrow is directly proportionate to our grasp and knowledge of this day—the present. How can we truly, effectively pray for God's Kingdom of tomorrow—if we do not really see the length and breadth of Satan's kingdom today?

These dark winter months are a clear representation of the darkness of this world. A period of time during which we fervently look forward to God's active intervention in the affairs of men. That intervention is beautifully and meaningfully laid out in the Holy Days. All Holy Days are very important. Elimination of a single Holy Day would render

the plan of God defective. This winter is the time for us to keep our eyes fixed upon the purpose of God—the time to anticipate the coming Holy Days and make all necessary spiritual adjustment and change. Mastery during this proving time assures us of purpose tomorrow. This world is awaiting the manifestations of the sons of God. Then, at the appointed time, the real changes will be made. You, the chosen of God, will be empowered to accomplish it. And, you, the spiritually born of God, will not be subject to human weaknesses which are causative factors in the failure of all human endeavors these past six thousand years. At that time, being born into the nature of God, you cannot be tempted and led astray by these weaknesses.

The weight of man's sins is causing the earth to rock and reel. Though they do not know it, they are anxiously awaiting your new birth and the assumption of governmental responsibility.

For the month of November, 1982, we again will continue the series of letters covering the broad subject of, "Two Facets of Knowledge." Specifically: Since spiritual things cannot be seen—are not tangible—they *must* be revealed. Once revealed, what is required for continuous belief?

Initially holding the Truth of God does not, in itself, insure Faithfulness. The history of man is replete with failure—failure to realize the priceless value of a way of life given to them. Adam and Eve knew the Truth. Cain and Abel knew the same Truth of God. Ancient Israel was given God's perfect Way of Life. The New Testament Church, established by Jesus Christ, was the recipient of spiritual things—the Laws, statutes, and judgments of God, the very Words of Life.

Yet, in every case mentioned above, failure to adhere to that priceless way was experienced by many to whom the opportunity to obey had been given. Why? The Apostle Paul wrote to the Roman Church, speaking of Israel, "What advantage then hath the Jew [those held responsible for conveying God's Words to all Israel]? or what profit is there of circumcision? Much every way: Chiefly, because that unto them were committed the oracles of God. For what if *some did not believe*? shall their unbelief make the faith [faithfulness, consistency of purpose] of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar . . ." (Rom. 3:1–4).

God's Words had been given to the people of Israel. His Words are spirit and life. Yet, they were deemed of little value to many who had been influenced physically—by their own minds and hearts or by others in the camp. Does this type of behavioral change alter the Word or purpose of God? Indeed, not! Regardless of how human beings react,

the Word and will of God do not change. God's purpose remains absolutely the same. Therefore, concepts and actions of men contrary to the revealed Word of God are classified as lies.

At this point it is essential for us to remember one basic principle. The people of Israel had received the Words of God—the Way of Life—yet they did not recognize the value of the possession which they held. Rather, they were satisfied to set the Way of Life aside in order to adhere to their own concepts. The initial receipt of God's Word did not insure them of faithful adherence to the Truth.

Frighteningly, these words of history were recorded for subsequent generations. The Apostle Paul infers they were recorded for the benefit of those called to the Truth in his day. Also, we are clearly informed that those Words were written for our admonition upon whom the ends of the world (age) are come (1 Cor. 10:11).

Regardless of the generation, being given the very Truth of God does not guarantee faithfulness to it. History proves it irrefutably.

What then is required for faithful obedience to the Truth once it is revealed and given to any human subject?

What Is Required for Faithfulness?

The principles of God—Truth—are applicable at all times. They are spiritual, eternal; therefore, indestructible.

God called a people of old—Israel—to write, humanly, requisite lessons for us (Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11). The Biblical lessons of their failures and sufferings were in vain only if we fail to apply them.

With regard to God's eternal Truth, what invaluable lessons did they learn and in turn write through the pages of the Bible for us? Lessons we must not fail to heed.

First, Paul, under inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said the Israelites received the Gospel—the same Gospel which was taught subsequent to the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. It is exactly the same Gospel—Word of God—which is taught today.

Second, receipt of that priceless gift did not bring reward and purpose to their lives because it was not "mixed with faith."

Comparing Romans 3:1–4 with Hebrews 4:2, it becomes very evident that deficiency of faith resulted in an unrewarding departure—"did not profit"—from the Truth they heard and received. The problem was not the Law or Truth of God. The difficulty abode within the natural nature of man (Rom. 8:7).

Faith is not an ingredient of the natural mind and heart. It is a characteristic of the Spirit (Gal. 5:19–23). Yet this vital power and force is requisite to faithful obedience. Israel of old failed because their endeavor was not mixed with faith. The result was the writing of human lessons of vacillation, change, and rebellion. They did that which seemed right to them. Every man became a law unto himself. Each one began to trust in his own mind and ability.

History dramatically reveals the consequence of this spiritual failure—this human orientation. The greatest need of all human needs is a rock-solid faith to believe unwaveringly that which can come only as a gift from God—the revelation of Truth.

Faith is absolutely imperative in order to believe consistently that which cannot be seen, demonstrably proven, or physically certified (Heb. 11:1, 6). Conversely, what is the manifested evidence of a physical orientation? Change! Doubt! Wavering attitudes! Individualism! Erudite orientation! These manifest the nature and will of man. What God is looking for is a people who will believe and hold steadfast the gift which He has promised.

Such faith is not foundationless. What is the premise? How can called man know and therefore manifest total and unequivocal confidence?

What Is the Premise of Faith?

Obviously faith is not predicated on what we have personally sought out and "proven" for ourselves. For, if it were so based, faith would not be an evidence of things which are not seen. But it would be the result of our own human endeavor.

What is the legitimate premise of *genuine* faith—the spiritual ingredient which proceeds from God?

When writing to the Church of God at Colosse, Paul commended the brethren for their manifested faith in Christ—" . . . the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (Col. 2:5). In the very next verse, he tells them what the basis of that faith is. He said, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6). "As ye received," continue steadfastly. How is such instruction possible except one initially receives Jesus Christ—the Word, the Truth and the Way of Life—and then bears the cardinal responsibility of consistency in the walk of faith, a faith which says, "I know I received the Truth of God and am unwilling to change"?

Those who have received the Truth know they are chosen of God and have been blessed with *the* Way of Life. Others will manifest a false, counterfeit faith. But in the day of the revelation of the true Sons of God, the world will come to know those chosen of God, too. All things will be made apparent at that time.

In the final analysis the order of responsibility is as follows: First, one must be called of God—called to KNOW the Truth. Second, the power of the Holy Spirit must be given whereby the called are enabled to obey the Truth. Third, those called must be the recipients of faith insuring a possibility of unwavering obedience to the revealed Way of Life. Fourth, that faith must be exercised—"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, *as ye have been taught . . .*" (Col. 2:7).

The real basis of faith is the initial revelation—as one has been taught and therefore received Christ. Faith is not foundationless—an exercise in futility. Its foundation is rock solid—the ROCK which is Christ. But why is faith necessary?

Paul explains: "While we look not at the things which are seen [tangible, physical things], but at the things which are not seen [spiritual things]: for the things which are seen are temporal [short-lived]; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Cor. 4:18).

It takes faith to hold and esteem highly things which are not tangible or physically demonstrable. Such things are unnatural—illogical and foundationless—to the carnal mind. But they are spiritual, of God. With the promised faith we can walk consistently in the revealed way regardless of all carnal objections and resistance—the reluctance of natural minds, minds which are against God and all that He stands for.

The Apostle John makes the above Truth plain. He writes, "Whosoever shall confess [to assent, covenant, acknowledge] that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God" (1 John 4:15).

What does it mean to acknowledge (confess) Jesus as the Son of God? It is incredibly easy to appropriate a name or even an image! In fact, the very statement by John indicates the existence of confusion as well as deliberate deception. How is it possible to *know* and thereby be able to manifest complete confidence?

An example should serve us well. First, a point essential to remember. Any deception (counterfeit) is intended to influence others to accept a worthless item (usually bearing all observable, physical features and characteristics of the original) for a represented value equal to the genuine item.

Now to our example. The counterfeiting of legal tender.

To properly evaluate, some well-defined standard must be established. This standard must remain constant, unchanging—both because of its past acceptance by the populace as an exchange value—so worth and labor are not distorted—and as an acceptable commodity which creates trust, confidence, and willingness for present and future action. In the case of coins, the substance, weight, appearance, and inherent value must be rigorously guarded. When subjected to the test, all these characteristics must be present—or someone has been tampering with the items involved.

How does this example apply to Christ—the One we must acknowledge to be the Son of God? What is Christ?

Christ was much more than a name! More than just another personality of His day! It is His inherent value and substance which we must acknowledge. If Christ were to walk the earth today, would He be any more recognizable now than He was three thousand years ago? Not to the average individual.

Why?

Considering our example again, the item must be recognizable and the substance known. Relating this to Christ, it is obvious there must exist knowledge of what He is and thereby make Him recognizable.

What is Christ? How would one know Him if He were to be seen? The world of Christ's own day did not recognize Him (John 1:10).

He was the Word of God made flesh (John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1–3). That is, Jesus was the total Word of God personified in a physical body. He was the Word of God

animated—a living, moving manifestation of that Word. And that Word was the will of the Father—a manifestation of the work of the Father (John 14:10). He was the Way of Life, the Truth and the Life (John 14:6; Heb. 10:20). He is the resurrection and life (John 11:25). He is the true manna of God (John 6:31–58).

Another characteristic of Christ. He is the same always. There is no change in Him—from generation to generation (Heb. 13:8). He changes not. There is not even a shadow (hint) of turning (changing) in Him. He is, has been, and will always be the same. He is perfect (Matt. 5:48).

Now back to the text in 1 John. When we acknowledge (confess) that Jesus is the Son of God, what precisely are we admitting? That Jesus is the living, unalterable Word of God—the Way of Life and the Truth. And that such admission is possible only because God dwells *in* those individuals.

Being unchangeable, if God dwells in them, He is living exactly the same way He did in His own Son's life—Jesus Christ.

Now notice how *we* are privileged to manifest optimum confidence. See 1 John 4:17, ". . . we may have boldness in the day of judgment: *BECAUSE as he is, so are we in this world.*" Did you catch that? As Jesus was in His own physical body in His day, so are we in our time. That is, whatever Christ did, thought, and spoke so will we in our time if He dwells in us.

What is the premise of faith? Knowing that one has received Christ—manifested in action and word exactly as He was when dwelling in His own day. You can have boldness—implicit faith—only if what you do, believe, and think are precisely the same as Jesus did . . . that the unalterable Word, Christ, lives in you. If such faith is kept alive, the called of God cannot, or more specifically, will not, turn away to strange, heretical concepts.

How can we keep such faith alive?

The Proof Is in Action—Not Scholarly Evaluation

So many are resorting to "scholarship" and personal, intellectual prowess in an attempt to ascertain right from wrong. Such orientation simply will not work. As Paul said, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7).

Being carnal and opposed to spiritual things, it is *not possible* for us to physically determine Truth. As a special gift from God, the Truth *must be given* to those called of God. Then faithfulness requires a heavy infusion of faith.

But how do we *PROVE* and *KNOW* the Truth? Jesus explains!

The people of Christ's day took exception with His doctrine. Why? Because it was contrary to that fabricated by men for their personal advantage and purpose. They were mystified! From where did He obtain His doctrine? He said, ". . . My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent " (John 7:16).

In a single statement Jesus said: 1. He did not acquire His doctrine from any human source. 2. He was given the Truth by the Father. And, 3. He was sent by the Father to live and proclaim that way which belonged to the Father.

Now, how are human beings subsequent to Jesus Christ to know the Truth? Note John 7:17.

"If any man will do his will, he shall *know* of the doctrine, whether I speak of myself" (John 7:17). Notice, He did not say, "If we study carefully, we shall know the truth." On the contrary, the whole inference is that the Truth is first given—just as the Father gave the Truth to Christ—and then the assurance and confidence come by action—by living the Truth. The called of God *know* the Truth because they live it. Not because they were capable students who ferreted it out for themselves.

This world belongs to Satan the Devil. He is the author of its present fabric—customs, beliefs, actions: ALL. Christ came to make it possible to be translated from that kingdom of Satan to His own Kingdom (Acts 26:18; Col. 1:13).

If we continue to walk in the ways of sin, we are not of God. What is sin? It is the transgression of the Law—all the Law. What Law? Unless a text specifically denotes what Law, it can only be taken to refer to the whole of what is called the Torah—the first five books of the Law. The Bible does not basically differentiate between the segments of the Law. The Greek word "Nomos" is used to refer to all the Law—the Torah.

Sin, therefore, is the violation of any of the Law. Christ came to take away sin—that is, He lived the Law perfectly. And since our only hope is Christ in us, it becomes quite obvious that Christ, the unchanging Being, will live the same life in us He lived in His own body. See 1 John 3:4–10. If we are living and doing exactly the same

things Christ did, He is living within us. But if we are not doing exactly the same thing He did in His own life, He is *not* living in us. By this factor alone we can know whether we are the children of God or the children of the Devil.

In summary: We know Him if we are living exactly as He did. To receive Him is to receive the Truth—the Word of God. And we will *KNOW*—have confidence in—it when we *ACT* on it. Indeed, the proof is in *action*—not a scholarly evaluation.

But, how can one know? Is it possible to be confident, to know that one is a child of God? What is the real manifestation of faith?

The Manifestation of Faith: Attitude

Man's actions and attitudes of life reveal his orientation. No man can hide his "true" intents and purposes for long. We, as human beings, are open books—known and read by all who are sophisticated in the knowledge of flesh and its ways. Christ succinctly stated: "By their fruits ye shall know them." Those fruits are our actions, thoughts, and purposes—the manifestations of hearts and minds.

As natural entities, ruled by the fleshly mind, we exhibit the carnal traits. In other words, the *self* is exalted.

To be spiritually oriented, we must abase the self and exalt Christ—the true Word of Life. An equilibrium is not acceptable. Either serve God—exalt the Word of Life—or serve self—exalt the carnal. In Revelation, Christ says through the Apostle John, ". . . I would thou wert cold or hot" (Rev. 3:15).

To exalt Christ, we must abase the self. Contrariwise, when we exalt the self we simultaneously abase Christ.

From the lips of Jesus Christ, let us observe the manifestation of faith and conviction. When addressing a number of Jews who had just begun to believe Him, He indicated the basis of genuine faith and the requirement for ultimate receipt of the promised reward. Let us note the story in John 8:28–32.

He said, ". . . When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he . . ." (verse 28). The Greek word for "have lifted up" is "Hupsoo." It means to exalt. Note its usage in Matthew 23:12; Luke 1:52; Luke 10:15; Luke 14:11; Luke 18:14; John 3:14; John 12:32, 34; James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:6.

How can exalting Christ make us to KNOW who He is? The answer is found in His clear statement, "I do nothing of myself." In other words, confidence comes from knowing that what was received—Christ in His own body or for us the present manifestation of Truth—was and is the unalterable Word of God. And no one can possibly exalt Christ, in such a manner, unless and until he abases himself—mind, heart, and attitude. A historical example should serve us well. In 1 Thessalonians 2:13, we read an illustration of what Christ was saying in John 8:28. We read, ". . . When ye received the word of God [Christ, John 1:1, 14] which ye heard of us [God's chosen messengers], ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God . . ."

Many New Testament texts and prophecies relating to the last days make it clear that a comparable situation existed in the last days. But far too many turned away because of evil practices of others and rampant confusion.

Faith is required! But, faith in what? Faith that Christ—the Word of God—was sent and is present today, with those called to receive Him. Let us be careful not to deny Christ.

What is the manifestation of genuine and stable faith? The manifestation of conviction and knowledge?

John continues, quoting the statements of Christ, ". . . If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall KNOW the truth [Christ received] and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31–32).

Faith requires continuity of belief. Equally, continuity of belief manifests genuine faith. It is the spiritual ingredient required for steadfastness and determination. Faith cannot be augmented by scholarly evaluation. It comes by action, said Jesus Christ. If ye do these things, then shall you *know*. Consistent knowledge comes only by consistent action. Then from that premise, the truly called and converted can grow in grace and knowledge—adding to their previous revelation.

Let us not be forced to learn in the manner of ancient Israel. We have seen the works of God in our day (Heb. 3:9). If we falter and fail to evidence real faith—continuity of belief—and depart from the living God we will receive a very hurtful and final judgment (Heb. 3:10–12; Heb. 6:4–6). On the contrary, let us remain a part of the household of God (Heb. 3:6).

As God's chosen, we have known the Truth (2 John 1). Why? Because that Truth (Christ) dwells in us (2 John 2). How can He dwell in us and we do not even know Him? It is not possible. Our problem? We just need an extra "shot" of faith—faith to *KNOW* we have *RECEIVED* Christ and that He dwells in us.

Continuity of *belief and action* (Jas. 1:22) is the manifestation of faith—the faith requisite for salvation. And the faith is the underpinning of our confidence—the expectation of what we do not see at the present.

We yet live in these physical bodies—subject to the daily carnal pulls, yet required to resist all such temptations. Being in flesh bodies, yet the called of God, what fundamental cautions are necessary?

What Exercise of Caution Is Necessary?

As noted, a call of God is imperative. An opportunity for "life" is impossible without it. The receipt of Christ—the Truth and Way of Life—is equally important. Yet, such a magnanimous blessing does not guarantee success as a Christian.

There are very great pitfalls which we must recognize and fervently guard against. What are they? How can we avoid them?

First, as a called individual, you immediately become the prey of two giant forces—influences. Satan becomes an archenemy as well as your own carnal mind. You, and you alone, can and must safeguard against this hateful intrusion. Paul said, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy [machinations of carnal minds devoid of the Holy Spirit] and vain deceit [deceptive desire to influence others to support heretical 'positions'], after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Col. 2:8). This is the desire to delude oneself into accepting the ways of the flesh and carnal mind while "kidding" others into believing one is a Christian.

What is the basis for the required evaluation? In verse 6, preceding the text above, Paul gives the premise. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him" (Col. 2:6). What God gives to us, by revelation, becomes the standard by which we evaluate all concepts from the time of call and receipt of Christ until His work in our lives is completed. We are not left without a standard of judgment. Man's problem is not the lack of a standard but the tendency to return to a confidence and trust in the carnal mind.

Paul elaborated upon the concept in 2 Timothy 3:1–14. He refers to perilous and troubling times in the last days. During the period of uncertainty, too many pursue a course of religious ideology—but such a work is completely devoid of purpose, sincerity or honesty. It only appears to be religious. From such we are exhorted to turn away. The instruction is specifically for someone in the *last* days.

Why the confusion? It is due to an apostasy—a large segment of people who knew the Truth but departed, leaning to their own understanding rather than continuing in the faith which was initially delivered. Compare verses 8, 5 and 7, and 14. This condition is destined only to grow worse. Our hope is in remaining unmoved (steadfast—Col. 2:5) in those things which we learned (2 Tim, 3:14).

Note how problematic this condition is in the last days (Rom. 1:20–21). People begin to resort to their own reasoning (imagination). The very revealed Truth—once accepted in faith—is *changed* on the basis of trust in the carnal mind. Why? Because people do not want to retain God in their knowledge. The premise of rationale is "What is best for me?"

Second, we must have all confidence in the original Truth because all orientation of the future must be based upon that confidence (2 John 5–10). John emphasized the validity of the beginning. What was heard and received from the beginning.

What was heard and received? Christ, the unchanging One. He came in the flesh and lived in His own physical body. In like manner, He comes and lives in the lives of those chosen to know and live the Truth. Any change is a denial that Christ was living in that individual. Such denial is a rejection of Jesus Christ.

Note verse nine, "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9). Think about it. There is literally no way to make sense out of verse nine except to accept the need for an initial revelation and receipt of Jesus Christ.

Now note the most interesting statement of verse ten, ". . . bring not this doctrine . . ." What doctrine? The doctrine of Christ received from the beginning.

Just remember one point. All men must live by every word of God. These verses of 2 John are written for you and me, too. The unchanging God is consistent. That is why we can so confidently trust His promises and way.

The Apostle John Puts All Into Perspective

Men by nature are blind to Truth—the Word of God. A miracle of conversion is essential before any man can comprehend spiritual things. This comprehension is an act of God—divine revelation. Then, next, men—born of weakness—must receive a gift of the Holy Spirit before obedience is possible. And finally, unless faith—the evidence of things not seen, spiritual things—is kept alive and strong, called men will begin to use human rationalization and thereby depart from the faith.

See John 3:18–21. The conflict between natural man and God is made quite plain.

Those who do not comprehend are already condemned though not for the ultimate consignment. Regardless of whether we see or not Truth stands absolute. If it is broken or rejected, it demands a penalty regardless.

Christ as the Truth personified must be accepted or rejected. If rejected, those responsible are condemned. If accepted, those so acting are not condemned.

Why this condemnation? Because Jesus Christ has already come into the world and lived the Truth. The way has been arranged for human beings.

Why do men recoil at the very idea of obedience to the Word of God? Because they love living in darkness. To live the way which seems compatible to the natural inclinations with which they were born.

There is no mutual ground. If we do not consistently act upon the Word, we manifest hate and contempt for the light. And, who is Light? Jesus Christ! If we do not absolutely act upon the Word of life, we manifest hate for Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, if we *do* the Truth, we come to the light. We are manifesting a genuine love for Christ and a hate for self. For self is the very antithesis of light. Self is darkness—the way of men. Light is Truth—the Way of Jesus Christ.

What is the last-day consequence of this imperative and requisite need of faith? The time when far too many men lose their orientation and true perspective.

A Last-Day Failure

The last days are a time of turmoil and religious confusion. It is a time when a different spirit surfaces—the spirit of error. Tragically, this confusion engulfs those who once knew the Truth.

See 2 Peter 2:19–21. Some who once knew the Truth are pursuing the way of pollution and at the same time preaching a contrary doctrine and even promising the adherents to this spurious dogma life. The context plainly shows this fact: The Truth was first believed then followed by a departure.

They had been called to the knowledge of Jesus Christ. But the desire to return to the bondage of flesh had overcome them. Their end will be a frightening experience. As Peter was inspired to write, ". . . it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (2 Pet. 2:21).

Why could and did such a condition descend upon them? Because they lost faith! And why does one lose faith? Because he fails to act upon the Word. May these conditions ever be an object lesson to us all. **CONTINUE TO ACT ON THE WORD.** A failure to do so leaves us wide open to human rationalization and a quick departure from the Truth which was delivered to us.

How many will remain faithful?

Only a Small Flockette Remains Faithful

The more rare an item is the greater its value. Faith in the last days is an extremely rare commodity. Few people can or will continue to trust that way originally delivered.

The results?

Luke wrote: "Fear not, little flock [flockette]; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32), Only a tiny few will remain faithful.

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus spoke of this tiny group and why it is difficult for most to find the way. In Matthew 7:13–14 Christ said: "Enter ye in at the strait [difficult]

gate: for wide [easy and readily accessible] is the gate, and broad [varied and individualistic] is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow [confined, limited—not varied and individualistic] is the way, which leadeth unto life, and *few* there be that *find* it [many are hunting but they have lost faith]."

Only a very small group will find the way of Truth—because faith is the only key. Faith will lead us to our original call and the doctrine (Christ) which we received.

What about the confused and struggling "many"?

Many Brought Back Via Tribulation

God says He has a desire for the workmanship of His hands. He is not finished with the many who are faltering. By powerful means, He will bring many back to a knowledge of and a willingness to obey the Truth.

In Daniel we are told "Many shall be purified, and made white [righteous], and tried . . ." (Dan. 12:10). In chapter eleven, verse thirty-five, we read, "And some of them of understanding shall fall, to try them, and to purge, and to make them white, even to the time of the end . . ."

In the Book of Revelation in several places we read of those who must be tried and brought back to faithful obedience. Through trial they regain their spiritual equilibrium—their robes are washed and made white.

On the other hand there is a small group promised an escape from such trial. See Revelation 3:10. Why? Because they did not lose faith. They remained faithful to the doctrine initially delivered.

Indeed, FAITH is imperative. All Biblical history shows that the Truth is received and then followed by a departure. In the last days, however, God indicates in His Holy Word, the existence of a small elect who remain absolutely faithful. Are we not a part of those faithful? It is all up to us! We have received the *Truth*—Jesus Christ. By action—continuous action—we can keep that faith alive.

This letter is already long. Must close for this month. Please keep well, happy, and close to God. Remember, you are His children! It is our privilege to serve you.

In deepest respect and love,

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