

Church of God, The Eternal

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Who Are The Approved of God?—Part II

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In the first part of this subject—Who Are the Approved of God?—we addressed five points related to the sub-topic entitled, "Common Manifestations of all Classes of Humanity Existing Outside of 'The Faith'." There are two other major categories which seem to be imperative for a broad and acceptable understanding of the cause of human reactions in religious matters. These we address, now. Following these two points other principles will be considered by which those approved of God can be identified.

Textual Perversion

Considering the divisive, hateful, rebellious, and self-centered mind of man, it is not surprising that he will not accept any writing, book, way of life, or whatever that does not allow him the "privilege" and latitude to alter, change, or in some manner massage the specific commands and requirements contained therein. God's word is emphatic and absolute. That does not, however, impede man from interpreting it according to the dictates of his own mind. And whatever understanding man assumes in his own mind, that, to him, *is* the way of life and *is* the absolute truth contained in the pages of the Bible.

Jesus Christ had been sent to this earth with the absolute words of God. He did not speak one word that the Father had not given to Him—that which He was commissioned to proclaim during His venture here on earth. In turn, Christ had given the same words to His chosen servants and after His ascension, had commissioned them to go forth and to proclaim that same message. Just a few years later, Paul was called and in a most extraordinary manner taught the same way of life and then subsequently commissioned to go forth and preach it.

Amazingly, within just a matter of a few short years, the people who had been taught from those called and commissioned by Christ Himself, were subjected to a plethora of deceptions and many of them were actually listening and subscribing to the perverted message presumably coming from the very writings of those who had been inspired to record the truths of God. It was a perversion of the very inspired Scriptures which God had recorded for the benefit of man. To the Corinthians Paul had to write (instruction for you and me even now):

. . . seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not; But have renounced the hidden things of dishonesty, not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully . . . (2 Cor. 4:1–2).

Because of the natural arrogance of human mind, some were beginning to pervert the very message which God had given to Paul and commissioned him to proclaim to the people. Indubitably they felt they were absolutely right and therefore continued to pervert the message; they made every effort to influence and change the people who had been called to know and understand the real truth. The sad part is that both the deceivers and the deceived had known the truth and were now progressively being destroyed due to the faithlessness manifested in their change. Paul said:

But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are [being] lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not [those who refused to accept the original divine revelation as given by God Himself], lest the light of the glorious gospel [the original revelation] of Christ . . . should shine [that is, an understanding and faith in the reality of the original truth] unto them (2 Cor. 4:3–4).

The mere usage of the sacred Scriptures, the Holy Bible as we know it, is not a sufficient indication by which to determine those approved of God. Satan and his instruments also use this sacred book.

Perversion of the truths of God by deceivers who have appropriated the very Word of God has been the nemesis of the true ministry from the beginning of the commission to proclaim that way of life. In the early days of the Apostle Paul, while in the isle of Paphos, he was forced to counter those who would pervert the truth (Acts 13:10). Elymas, the sorcerer, undoubtedly felt he was right. Yet, we are told that his influence was that of Satan, the devil, not of God. An assertion of one's "rightness" does not make the assertion a fact. Who, then, is approved?

Many years earlier, Job was inspired to record a most significant statement. He said:

He [God] looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He shall deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light (Job 33:27–28).

Would we understand the way? First, an admission of our mental perversity is necessary—the most difficult thing any human being will ever undertake and an impossibility outside of the direct influence of God, via the power of His Holy Spirit. Once we have recognized the perverseness of our own minds then, by the power of God's direct intervention revealing His priceless way of truth to us, we are in a position to make choice.

We can retain faith in that which was given to us; or, we can by returning to the evil influence of our own minds turn back to perversion and change of the Holy Word of God.

Perversion of God's Holy Words is a historical fact. What is the basic means, vehicle, by which men pervert the truth? By rejecting divine revelation, they demand the right to interpret. The inherent assumption, in all such interpretations, is that a mere mind of man can know and understand the intent and purpose of the original Author. Such interpretative expectations were not new and unusual to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 14:26). Many of the members of that church thought they knew and understood the intent of what had been given; or, in some cases even believed they were the recipients of new revelation and interpretive insight. Could this concept have been at the base of the many problems which the Corinthian church experienced over the years?

It is imperative to understand, for all of us, that only God knows what He meant by the words and thoughts recorded (2 Pet. 1:20). For that very reason, no concept or interpretation of any individual is acceptable to God. The real spiritual meaning of His Word must be revealed—a miracle which God promised to perform in a given manner to those only to whom He wills to convey the message. In all other cases a day of rude awakening is inevitable.

The Greek word for "interpretation" is *epilysis*. It is used only in this text—2 Peter 1:20. However, there is one cognate, *epiluo*. This cognate is used twice, once in Mark 4:34 where it is translated as "expounded." It reads: "But without a parable spake he [Christ] not unto them: and when they [twelve disciples] were alone, he *expounded* all things to his disciples." The second usage is found in Acts 19:39. It reads: "But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it *shall be determined* in a lawful assembly." The meaning is abundantly clear. Interpretation is a matter of exposition, explanation, or a determination of meaning.

The Apostle Peter does not unequivocally condemn interpretation, explanation, or determination. What is condemned is this: No prophetic Scripture is of any private interpretation. What, then, is the meaning of the Greek word—*idios*—which is translated "private" in the English?

The Greek word, *idios*, is used quite broadly in the New Testament. Yet the confines of meaning are quite specific. It is translated as "own" in the following texts: 1) Matt. 9:1: "And he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his *own* city." 2) Luke 6:41: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but perceivest not the beam that is in thine *own* eye?" 3) Luke 6:44: "For every tree is known by his *own* fruit." 4) John 7:18: "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his *own* glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true . . ." 5) Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy [Spirit] hath made you overseers, to feed the church

of God, which he hath purchased with his *own* blood." 6) Rom. 10:3: "For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their *own* righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God." 7) Rom. 14:5: "One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his *own* mind." 8) 2 Tim. 1:9: "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his *own* purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. . ." 9) There are many other usages where the word is translated *own*.

It is also translated as "apart" (separate). In Matthew 14:13 we read: "When Jesus heard of it, he departed thence by ship into a desert place *apart*: and when the people had heard thereof, they followed him on foot out of the cities." As *alone* in Mark 4:34—see above.

It is translated in the English language as "severally" (lit. "in his own way"). 1) Matt. 25:15: "And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his *several* ability . . ." 2) 1 Cor. 12:11: "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man *severally* as he will."

It is translated as "due." 1) Gal. 6:9: "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in *due* season we shall reap, if we faint not. 2) 1 Tim. 2:6: "Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in *due* time."

Finally, it is translated as "his." In 1 Timothy 6:15 we read, "Which in *His* times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords."

The meaning, from the above, is clear and unequivocal. Can there be any doubt? Since God affords no man preferential treatment, "his own" interpretation is condemned. Many human beings have presumed to understand and explain prophecy; but all who are not called or given God's understanding and commissioned to go forth and proclaim the message are destined for failure, embarrassment, and condemnation (Deut. 13:1–5). God alone understands what He intended and/or purposed in all prophetic passages. This concept could have been understood easily if sufficient emphasis had been placed on verse 21 of 2 Peter 1. It says: "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of men: but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy [Spirit]." Though men uttered the words, they did not generate the thoughts. The messages proclaimed were directly from God. And, He alone understands the intent and purpose. The proof of explanation is found in the fact that when God makes known the meaning, even though He will use the voices of men to proclaim the messages, that which is proclaimed will come to pass precisely as revealed. There will be no guessing, and second-guessing. There will be no failures.

A significant question insinuates itself upon the minds of thinking people. Why the myriad interpretations of the Bible, prophecy, and the general parts, which we find in all areas of the world where "Christianity" is claimed as "the way of life"? How can simple and straightforward instructions have become so muddled and confused? There has to be some defect in the natural mind of man!

Why Private Interpretation?

God's words are spirit. They are not a part of the physical realm. Being spiritual the words of the Bible are not, indeed cannot be, known by natural minds (1 Cor. 2:11, 14). Yet, the natural mind is a mind of vanity (Eph. 4:17). A mind self-satisfied, confident, assertive—believing it knows and understands whatever it has set out to achieve (1 Cor. 3:20). It is a mind not to be trusted, it must be suppressed, and should be carefully watched when a person is initially called of God to understand the truth (Eph. 4:23). In the process of time, even many called of God begin to turn to the natural minds because those who possess these minds have turned inward—trusting themselves in all religious matters (Col. 2:18, Rom. 1:21). The result is that even those called, who lost confidence in the initial revelation confidently turn back to the prowess of the natural mind. With this orientation no part of God's word is immune from their tampering and interpretative perversion. They all remain religious. They have even appropriated the names of Christ and God. The people ensnared are often deeply convicted. Such religion, however, is vain. For in all cases, with the exception of the one body called to forsake the natural mind and enthusiastically accept the revealed way of life, their religions are unapproved of God. However, there is one common factor inherent in them all. Their religions are designed to counter, resist, and ridicule the real truth (Rom. 10:3). The natural mind is automatically opposed to the way of God (Rom. 8:7). The minds which once knew the truth of God and, for whatever reason, turned from the revealed way have become most hateful, diabolic, and are bent on ridicule, contempt for, and aggressive denunciation of those who remain faithful to the truth once believed. Any who rely upon, or turn back to, the natural mind believe themselves to be right. Every way of a man—one never called or one who turns back to the natural mind—is right in his own eyes (Prov. 16:2, 25). Natural man trusts his own mind. Those who set about proclaiming a religious philosophy have confidence in their own mental concepts and are ever hopeful that they will be able by cleverness, or by some proclamation of the mysterious or unknown to induce others to follow them and thereby gain their support—in all respects. The Bible uses the term, "merchandize" (2 Pet. 2:3).

Private interpretations come from the powers of natural minds—having never known the truth—or from the minds of men once called and who for some emotional, and/or personal reason have turned away from the *one* mind of Christ and have turned back to the proclivities of the natural mind (2 Cor. 10:3–5). For those who will to remain faithful, the struggle against the natural mind of man is incessant. The faithful cannot relax vigilance for a single moment.

Private interpretations—prophetic or otherwise—are a manifestation of men prompted to turn religious for any one of a great number of self-determined reasons. Or, they are more likely a manifestation of human minds once converted but who due to experience and severe trial lost confidence in the way of life and therefore have turned back to their natural minds in confidence and "full" assurance that their words will be sustained.

Can you afford to accept, for any reason—emotional or otherwise—the religious concepts espoused by just any supposed "minister" of Jesus Christ? Are we not told to try the spirits, for many false ministers have gone forth and are proclaiming "their" brand of religion ever hopeful that some will accept it?

We are instructed to try all who claim to be servants of God—yes, but how can we effectively try anyone unless we know what the absolute standard of judgment is? Spiritual things are unseen (Deut. 29:29; 2 Cor. 4:18). How can mortal man judge what he does not know and what he cannot see? A difficult task, indeed! The problems inherent in this very responsibility are the very bases for the religious claims and confusion which prevail today. When all the factors involved in such a determination are known and applied, the duty becomes relatively easy and one in which we may have great confidence and assurance.

Who, then, are the approved of God?

Fractionalization of the Word of God

The final point of this section of the present *Letter* deals with man's attempt to avoid, condemn, reject, or alter any part of the Bible he does not want to explain, obey, or face in a realistic way. By fractionalizing the word, many concepts or basic requirements can be categorically rejected. Man, who is not subject to the laws and will of God, will do almost anything to avoid required obedience and yet deceive himself into believing he is right with God and is abiding by everything which is required of him. Man most frequently deceives himself.

Before understanding just how man divides up the Bible to suit himself, let us first see just what the comprehensive duty of man really is. It certainly is far more than he will accept or admit.

Long before our day, God made a fundamental duty of man known to Moses, the human servant he chose to use in his day. When reiterating the law and duties of man just before Israel crossed the Jordan River to claim their promised inheritance, the land of Canaan, God spoke these words to Moses:

All the commandments which I command thee this day shall ye observe to do, that ye may live, and multiply, and go in and possess the land which the Lord swore unto your fathers. And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no. And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live (Deut. 8:1–3).

Experiences of the forty-year journey were intended to teach them the necessity of living by all of God's word—not a select part—if they desired to be the recipients of God's blessings. Moses typified the whole house of Israel—the church of God in the wilderness (compare Heb. 3:2–5 and Acts 7:38).

Years later another House was to be built—after the model of the one constructed by Moses (Heb. 3:5–6). What was the underlying orientation of the Master of this new House? He said, ". . . Man shall not live by bread alone [what discretionary man would choose], but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4).

Since there are only two houses mentioned—first, the physical under Moses, who typifies Christ, and second, the spiritual under Christ—the above statements strongly imply, or perhaps one should say, mandate, total obedience to every word of God as being absolutely essential for the obtaining of promised life everlasting. The above texts, looking forward to the goal, lay out the premise of that goal. By contrast, how does the view appear looking back in retrospect? In the final book, at the very end of it, man is sternly warned:

For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Rev. 22:18–19).

From these warning admonitions it does not appear that "logical" men would dare fractionalize the word of God. Yet, the history of man's usage of the word of God, based upon his own writings and spoken word, reveal quite a different picture. How has man tampered with the word of God, in his view, affording him the license to reject or alter many portions of the Scripture?

First, he has divided the Bible into what he calls the Old and New Testaments. An act which allows him the "privilege" of rejecting one or the other based upon his historical background or perverted concept of his arrogance. The Bible is the Bible. It is all God's word. Yet based upon the above identity or historical concepts both divisions are rejected. The one rejected because the person of Jesus Christ was rejected. The other was rejected because of the inability to recognize who the people of Israel are. Assuming themselves to be Gentiles, nominal Christianity has rejected, basically, the Old Testament which they assume to be Scriptures written for Jews only (whom they assume to be all of Israel). Based upon totally erroneous concepts on both sides, the validity and authenticity of God's word is determined by fallible men. How is it possible to arrive at a pure, unadulterated, comprehension and/or understanding of the Scriptures when every factor used to make the judgment is wrong? An impossibility, indeed! Yet the vast majority of Judeo-Christian concepts derive from just such a perverse orientation.

Second, beyond the larger divisions of God's word into Old and New Testaments, there are groups who predicate their beliefs and practices on a presumed separation of the New Testament into lesser divisions—the Gospels versus the remaining books of the New Testament. The contention is this: Jesus Christ came to live under the terms of the Old Covenant until His death and then with His death rendered the Old null and void. In this concept, He was the Old personified in the flesh. With His death the Old was abrogated and the New Covenant became an instrument of force. By this subtle separation and division of the Scriptures, the life activities of Christ are neutralized. It is reasoned that man, today, does not need to walk in the specific footsteps of Christ. He was living under the terms of the Old. With His death, the terms of the New came into force. By this rationalization, the remaining parts of the New Testament could be individually interpreted to allow man to do what seems right to him.

Third, to some, the generalized division of the New Testament into the Gospels and the remainder of the Scriptures was far too broad. What were they going to do with the early teaching of the twelve apostles—as recorded in their specific writings—books which form a part of the Received Canon of Scripture. To them, it was necessary to further divide the Scriptures. Christ lived under the terms of the Old, so it was easy to rationalize a rejection of the Gospels. Yet, there were strong indications in many of the General Epistles that the law of God and other hated concepts were still being taught as valid and to be observed by Christians. Human rationalization was necessary. If Christ were the Mentor of the twelve apostles, is it not logical that He would have taught them the principles of that old way? Therefore, their writings, in general, were either to be rejected or read and accepted conditionally only, and that the Scriptures of real force and validity for a "Christian" today are the writings of the Apostle Paul only. With this clever deduction, all the troubling parts of the Bible have been set aside—no longer viable and in force for human beings today.

Fourth, some books of the Bible are especially troubling. These must be eliminated by some constructive and acceptable rationale. Two such books are James and Revelation. The book of James had to be rejected because James all too clearly equates the spiritual fruit of faith with the law of God. Since James is an apostle taught under the influence of the Old Covenant, by Christ, and since the law of God was abrogated by the death of Christ, the book of James was dubbed, "the Epistle of straw." Little attention is paid to the book of James by most all professing Christianity. To avoid the overt implications regarding the law of God, it is deemed "best" to relegate the book to a division of the Scriptures considered unessential for salvation.

Long ago the book of Revelation was rejected. It is prophecy and no one really understands it anyway. Why cumber ourselves with the content of it. After all, most believe nearly all, if not all, of prophecy has already transpired; therefore, it holds no significance for those professing Christianity today.

Other books have been questioned and deemed unessential. However, the two books mentioned above are the principle ones many have sought to eliminate.

Fifth, because of the nature of the contents of the books of Psalms and Proverbs—occasionally even Ecclesiastes—these books are often included in the Scriptures as either requisite or acceptable to Christians today. The volatile, self-seeking minds of men have cleverly selected and/or rejected all Biblical books on the basis of preconceived notions which stem from natures hostile to the ways of God (Rom. 8:7; Ezek. 18:25–30).

Since we are describing the natural mind of men as it pertains to the rejection or selection of writing acceptable to him, it is essential to address the vast majority of mankind who do not even accept the way called Christian in the Occidental world. Where did their religions come from? As is all too well-known today, the religious concepts of the Eastern world are more devoutly and tenaciously observed than all those of the Western world.

Many books, by men, are written about the concepts, beliefs, and practices of Eastern people. None, however, have, or even, can, explain their origins. They can only start out with the fact they exist. Some, from there, attempt to explain possible premises for their concepts. One book alone can tell us the true story. The answer is in the book which is generally rejected by the East—the Bible itself. When God, in the process of time, selected and called a people, determined from the very foundation of the world, He set before them a way of life—the concepts recorded in the Pentateuch; first five books of the Bible—and required that these people live according to those ways in order to retain their promised possession, the land, and to remain the recipients of all His promised blessings. They were a people called to serve the Everliving Creator God. What about all the other peoples of the world—those who had come from the same family as did the Children of Israel? (Acts 17:26) One text reveals it all! To the Israelites God said:

And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven [by fleshly minds and hearts] to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath imparted unto all nations [margin: all who are not Israelites] under the whole heaven (Deut. 4:19).

Occult worship for all Gentile nations was allowed by God. They would serve and worship whatever mesmerized them and induced fear and respect on the part of natural minds. Tragically, by a review of both sacred and profane history, we are forced to admit that the called of God, Israel, were induced by those same minds to accept rank paganism. The only difference was the fact Israel retained the names of God and accepted the beliefs and concepts of the Gentiles who surrounded them. Their religion became a hybrid. That very practice prevails to this very day. Following the day of Christ, the name of Jesus and Christ were accepted but the practices and beliefs still had their roots in dim antiquity.

Because of the above facts, it is not surprising that both the religions of the East (Isa. 2:6) and those of the Occidental world are supported by extra-Biblical works. Each religion of the world has some type of "Sacred" book—books written by men but inspired by the god of this world. Even some of the so-called Christian bodies place a man-devised work alongside of the Bible. Resorting to the occultism of the East is not the tragedy of men—this is an appointment by God. The real tragedy was Israel's ultimate rejection of and separation from God. Worse yet, is the terrible reality that some spiritually called of God today, have rejected the revealed truth and are adhering to fundamental concepts of occultism.

From a Biblical premise we have seen at least seven concepts that are fundamental to all who have never known or who have rejected the real truth of God, yet feign to be genuine and true believers. Can we know the genuine Christian? If so, How? Who are the approved of God?

Those Approved of God

Under inspiration of the Holy Spirit the Apostle Paul wrote: "For there must be also heresies [margin: sects] among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you" (1 Cor. 11:19). The vast number of nominal organizations claiming the Christian label all stemmed from the one and only body created by Christ (Matt. 16:13–20). Before Christ there was no "Christian" church. Once created, it was not long before many claims were made for the name but the doctrine was that generated by men acting under the influence of Satan—the god of this world. Before the death of John, the Apostle, the Body which once existed in oneness and purity of truth had abandoned the faith and had turned

to the doctrines of demons. At that time the truly called and converted of God had to make meaningful decisions. They could have stayed with the main body—even though apostate; or they could elect to follow one of the "sects," of which there were undoubtedly many, which seized opportunity to pursue individualized concepts though each claimed to be the continuation of the original "faith once delivered"; or, they could have elected to remain implicitly faithful to the received doctrine as taught by those who had been directly taught by Christ or the apostles who followed Him. In the midst of such confusion the faithful were required to use a standard of judgment which is still applicable in these last days—days in which there was destined to be a repeat of the conditions and circumstances of that first century body. Out of such chaos the true servants of God are identified—by those whose judgment is not skewed by resorting to the perceived concepts of human minds.

From the experiences of that body which was created by Christ, served abundantly by the apostles, and ultimately became fractured by dishonest, self-styled, and rebellious men came what are clearly earmarked indications of those approved of God.

In outline fashion here are several of the basic indications. Much elaboration on each point could be given, but space in this *Letter* will not permit.

1. From spiritual and physical darkness, God calls those foreordained for this selection from the foundation of the world.
2. By an incomprehensible miracle they come to know and understand the spiritual way of life—the unalterable, unchanging truth.
3. For the first time they have come to know both the Father and the Son. A miraculous revelation (Matt. 11:25–27).
4. By a miracle they come to know who they are—that they are members of the one singular body of Christ (1 Cor. 12).
5. They are a people who recognize the divisiveness of the human mind, and are therefore crushing the rebelliousness of the flesh mind and are becoming one in the one mind of Christ (Isa. 45:19).
6. They are a people who categorically pursue the way of truth, unchanging and unalterable, from its time of revelation—in the last days (Matt. 28:19–20).
7. They are a people who recognize that there cannot be a hiatus in the continuity of the existence of that singular body in these last days (Matt. 16:18).

8. They are a small remnant who were forced—by doctrinal change—out of the body of the work in the last days and out of whom various groups emerge due to the refining process prophesied for the last days (2 Thess. 2:9–12; 1 Tim. 4:1; 2 Tim. 3:1–8, 13–14; 4:1–4).

9. They are a people who refuse to change for any reason but who do believe in growth which is not synonymous with change.

10. They are a people led by a ministry which has not appropriated position or commission. No man may assume or take to himself that office.

11. They are a people who patiently and purposefully work on themselves effecting the required self-mastery—the crucifixion of the self.

12. They are a people who highly honor God in faithful obedience—to congregate and fellowship at the appointed places and in the appointed times.

13. They are a people criticized and maligned by both those who depart from the faith and those of the world.

14. Finally, they know the body is one and that no division is of God. At the same time they know the body continues and that they must be a part of it.

Conclusion

In Christ's day there were many religions. He never became a part of any one of them. He created the "New Testament" church. It continues today as the manifested life of Christ. We are members of His body. As such, logic dictates the presence of some body which remains faithful to the way delivered in these last days and in which there was not, nor is, any hiatus—break. Can it be possible for the body to live, then die, and finally to surface once again. A ridiculous concept. That body existed in the last days and has continued to exist as a faithful entity to that which was initially delivered. Truly the gates of hell have not, indeed cannot, ever prevail against the body of faithful members, the body of Christ—the church of God in these last days.

Indeed, as Christ said, only a small number will remain faithful. Few there be who are able to make the right judgments in these chaotic last days. If you do not use the right standard of judgment, how is it possible to arrive at the right answers?

The body of Christ is *one*. That body continues to exist today. It has been subjected to wave after wave of turmoil, abuse, and contempt on the part of many who should know

better, but it has weathered all storms; and faith and purpose, as a result, have been augmented.

Will you always make the right choice—as the days grow more evil and the test of faith more severe? We know of only one group who abides by all the required concepts. Please do not emotionally recoil! Can you, from a technical premise show us where we are wrong? We are living by what we were initially taught, believed, and what we as a ministry continue to teach to all who will listen and respond.

With 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