

# Church of God, The Eternal

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## God and His Law Are Unchanging

September 1977

Dear Brethren:

The Feast of Tabernacles is just four weeks away. As has been true in the past, I am sure God will give us a memorable time. After all, the Feast of Tabernacles is one of His great feasts. He is ever watchful over His holy, sacred and meaningful laws, as He is over His chosen people.

Remember, the Law reflects the character of God. He is unchanging, consistent, trustworthy. It is the ever-pervading influence of Satan and his cohorts which slanders that character by denying the validity of God's Law. Truly, if one could logically and acceptably prove the abrogation of law, God is thereby rendered powerless, inconsistent, changing and—in general—lacking in character.

Make no mistake about it, God is unchanging. He is loyal to His own character, His Word and the people to whom He has given promises and assurances. Any change whatsoever would render Him subject to the ridicule and warranted criticism of countless millions of people throughout the ages. The god of this world would love to bring about such a condition. He has a host of disbelievers (those who once knew and understood) who are willing to be his servants in one of the most subversive and clandestine endeavors of all time.

Brethren, by our failure to live up to the truth which we were taught and practiced, we support and lend credence to that ignoble effort. Sanity and integrity cry out daily, in our troubled times, "Where are those who will simply and humbly say, 'yes, Lord, I will do what you say'?" Where are those who truly tremble at His Word—those who love His Word with all their soul, heart and being (Isa. 66:2, 5; Psa. 119:97)?

Today, too many people read the simple instructions of God, then proceed to rationalize away the necessity of personal obedience. "Those laws were instituted for a period of time only!" "That is a part of the Old Covenant!" "Those instructions were for Ancient Israel!" Or, "Those were requirements for peoples who lived prior to the death of Jesus Christ!"

Such irrational conceptions make the veracity of God's Word a travesty. Where is the concept of a spiritual Word? A Word which exists forever? A Word which is for all peoples, for all time?

It is God who ordained a way of life! Jesus Christ was that way of life, animate—living in the flesh. He is our perfect example. And He is, in you, the hope of your eternal glory. Will we—by the subtlety of human reason—allow Satan to accomplish things in our lives which he could not perform in the personal life of Jesus Christ? What concept will we allow to dominate in our lives? Will it be the submissive, obedient life of Christ? Or, will it be the rebellious, self-justifying life of Satan? Each of us individually, only, can make that determination.

### **The Right to Be Right**

As Paul and John so eloquently stated, we do not need to be informed of that way again! No, No, a thousand times NO! We need only to act on the faith once delivered. We know God's Truth. We lived and practiced it. We saw and personally experienced the spiritual and physical benefits. What we need is the courage to defy the still, subtle voice of Satan, who is working overtime to destroy faith in that way of life. And we need the perseverance to be faithful unto the end. For, if we faint—fail to live up to the simple instructions of God—our spiritual strength is small. Are we strong in the Lord? Do we have the courage of our initial convictions—confidence that God gave us a right way of life when we were called?

The big question which arises is: what gives us the right to be right? Let me be candid! If we were merely effecting an organization to espouse our own ideas, I would have no confidence at all. The name of the organization, the name of the man most responsible, or any other physical characteristic, is of no significance to God. What really counts is the truth—God's Truth. The truth thought-out long before the creation of man. The truth which put Jesus Christ on the stake—not for Himself, but for you and me. The truth which necessitated the call and commission of prophet after prophet, throughout the history of humankind. The unalterable, unchanging truth given to Israel. That same truth given to the apostles and all other called and chosen Christians (Heb. 4:2). The same truth initially given to you and me. The truth has never and will never change.

We have no right to tamper with it, regardless of human arrogance and conceit. We have the right only to obey it. The most priceless possession ever to be given to man. Yet, the very called of God sometimes treat it lightly. Will we be the faithful? Or, must God yet look for a willing and responsive people?

In this context, let us consider the Feast of Tabernacles. Can we, individually, decide where and how to observe it? All of us understand and make allowance for events and circumstances beyond our control. Sickness!

Lack of sufficient funds! Other. We refer not to those situations. But, what about those who have decided they will keep it at home? Those who have changed and altered belief to justify establishment of their own feast?

God created us free-moral agents. We have a God-given right to make our own choices—our own decisions. But that does not mean they are right in the sight of the Eternal Creator God. Then how can we know?

### **Apostasy Foreordained**

As stated earlier, if it were predicated on some technical justification, none of us would KNOW. But, a careful study of the Bible shows that the Church of God in the last days was given the truth. It plainly reveals a major departure from that truth. And, at the same time, the strongest possible appeal is advanced for those called to remain faithful and loyal to the initially revealed truth. Our only confidence stems from a determined effort to practice what we were taught. What counts is the TRUTH! Where has God kept that truth alive? Let me assure you, if I knew any other group really attempting to remain faithful, I would be most happy to be with them. When I was forced to make a decision in 1974, there was not one individual who stood up and made it known he would honor God—not men. I would have been so grateful and thankful to have known of one. Yes, subsequently some came out of the Church of God, but were either too badly tainted and damaged with the concept of "new truth" or were willing to tamper with the doctrine. In every case, many and unique problems have ensued. And that is not to say there will not be many problems encountered by those who purpose to remain faithful. What, then, is the difference? The called will experience trials related to their faith—the trial of faith, to which Peter made reference. That trial will always revolve around obedience to the truth. Whereas, the trial of rejection will revolve around the individual—personal calamity, sickness, etc. The greatest trial any of us will experience now is the test of whether there is any circumstance or condition which would induce us to give up the truth—turn from implicit obedience. No matter what, let us not be weary in well doing, for we shall reap everlasting life if we faint not. Let us shore up the faith through much prayer, study and fasting. Let us give no advantage to Satan because of sagging faith. Endure to the end. Be consistent.

Remember, it is not a matter of man, organization or group. It is a matter of the truth. Where is the original truth—into which you and I were baptized—still practiced? Find it and be faithful to it.

This year, God's Truth—the same truth you and I accepted at baptism—will be preached at Newport, Oregon. Those who really love that way will be there.

The troubled circumstances of today have absolutely nothing to do with the ministry specifically. All of us were called and taught that way of life, too. Despite all temptations and trials which we have experienced, we have elected to be faithful. Would our failure to live up to God's Truth make some feel more comfortable—justified in their weaknesses? We would be derelict if we did not appeal for obedience. We do in our prayers to God. Now, we have written it to fulfill our responsibility.

See you at the Feast. May God protect and inspire you.

In conclusion, let us be praying for one another. These last days are going to be most trying and difficult. But how much easier, if we will inspire and encourage one another!

Take care—you are God's chosen and faithful. You are priceless in His sight. Let us have no accidents or difficulties. Let us mentally prepare for the Feast. As God said, peace must be *made*—so we must *will* to have the greatest Feast ever experienced. The realization of that hope rests with you alone—with no one else. What others do can affect you physically only. It cannot get to the mind of Christ in you, if you will it that way.

Have a most happy journey and Feast.

In sincere 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