

# Church of God, The Eternal

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My Brethren and Friends:

True Christianity is not an expression of futility or an end in itself. For the *true* believer it is a revelation of purpose, belief, reality. Christianity is a manifestation of what lies *within*. A fact worthy of due consideration: Our outward actions—works performed, thoughts expressed, attitudes displayed, etc.—are manifestations of what otherwise would remain buried deep within the recesses of self. Jesus put it this way, "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so [in like manner] every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit" (Matt. 7:16–18).

Considering the above statement, to the objective person there remains only one valid question. Do we know the good fruits from the bad ones? Can we read fruits? In simple terms, do we now the difference between an apple and a noxious mushroom? Or to be even more specific, do we know the difference between an edible apple and one that is poisonous?

If we can tell the difference between the fruits of carnality and the fruits of the Holy Spirit, we are in a position to make judgments in our own lives—never in the lives of others. What are the broad, generalized fruits borne by one who is a Christian? In essence, what is Christianity all about? In broadest terms, there are only two principles involved; these relate to one another!

## What Is Christianity All About?

The first generalized principle: the development of character. But, what is character? Is character visible—a trait or characteristic which can be observed, appreciated, and emulated?

To understand the significance of the questions posed, let us first review a number of texts.

1. Hebrew 13:21 "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ . . ."
2. James 1:13–14 "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed."

3. Hebrews 6:1 "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection . . ."
4. Matthew 5:48 "Be [become] ye therefore perfect, even as your father in heaven is perfect."
5. I Corinthians 10:13 "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

Is there anyone who does not know and understand the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19–21, and other texts)? These manifestations of the flesh are inherent traits of the flesh. They are the manifestations of evil, that which is wrong. They are bound up in the hearts of all mankind.

Since man cannot of himself change the very nature with which he was born, it becomes obvious an outside power is essential to effect required change. Character, therefore, is the manifestation of this change—a gradual change, but one becoming more visible and exemplary as the years of struggles and mastery come and go. It is the growing perfection to which the above texts make reference.

A man of character sees himself for what *he* is. He wills, by the help of God, to change the way he thinks and responds to daily stimuli—events, actions of others, comments, and experiences. He puts on the divine nature—the character of God.

That character manifests itself in two ways. (1) By seeing himself he brings his nature under control—he thinks and responds positively, not negatively. (2) With the aid of the Holy Spirit, due to a call tendered and a promised revelation of Truth, the converted one acts positively on spiritual principles—the Way of life. From God's Word he sees what actions are essential and he *willingly* responds. He wants that way of life because he knows no other way will assure him of a hope of everlasting life at the return of Jesus Christ.

Character development is only one of the broad principles essential for the inheritance of everlasting life. The second is an indigenous part of the first, yet a very distinct entity in its own right.

### **We Must Bear Individual Responsibility**

As in the first concept above, let us note a few texts. With this textual responsibility in mind, it will be much easier for us to comprehend and apply the instructions inherently involved.

1. John 13:17 "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."
2. I Timothy 5:8 "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
3. James 1:22–25 (Moffatt) "Act on the Word, instead of merely listening to it and deluding yourselves. For whoever listens and does nothing is like a man who glances at his natural face in a mirror; he glances at himself, goes off, and at once forgets what he was like. Whereas he

who gazes into the faultless law of freedom and remains in that position, proving himself to be no forgetful listener but an active agent, he will be blessed in his activity."

4. Matthew 20:12 ". . . These last have wrought but one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day."
5. Galatians 6:4-5 "But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another. For every man [person] shall bear his own burden."
6. Proverbs 12:24 "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute."
7. Lamentations 3:27 "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth."
8. Matthew 11:28-30 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. *Take my yoke* upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

From youth, man (any person) is born to bear responsibility. That responsibility expands as the child matures. Such responsibility includes all areas of life: social, labor, family, church, and life itself. The Christian is called to a way of life—a way of living this present physical existence. And to really live it requires the assistance of the Holy Spirit.

Responsibility, then, is the diligent search of the Scriptures to ascertain duty and obligation. It manifests itself in the careful and objective evaluation of self. The willing admission of carnal weaknesses and failures. And, finally, the admission of what needs to be done. Character is manifested in the determination to take necessary action—regardless of the carnal cost.

The converted and spiritually active individual drives himself with regard to responsibility. He counts on God for the spiritual strength and direction. He will not accept the lassitude, apathy, and indifference of carnality. The basis of his confidence and direction is the promise of Christ, "my yoke [responsibility] is easy, and my burden is light."

Christianity is, in the final analysis, the acceptance of revealed knowledge—the Way of life—and the character to act upon that revealed knowledge, the basis of individual responsibility. There is one other feature of genuine character. It is found in James 1:21, "Wherefore lay apart [change attitudes] all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." How, with what attitudes, we respond to the teaching of God and carry out our individual responsibilities is of great significance to God. He loves one who cheerfully responds to duty. And how greatly attitude influences us relative to value and merit of those duties. A good attitude of acceptance and willingness does make the yoke light and the burden easy.

With the above in mind, let us address the questions which confront us regarding economics and life in general.

## Man Born to Serve

Labor, success, and power are natural to the diligent. Why these accomplishments? Are labor, success, and power ends in themselves? Would that not be futility? Vanity as emphasized by Solomon? The questions of "why" still remain!

The first duty incumbent upon a man is the care of his own family—wife and children. The wife bears a comparable charge revolving around the home and the children.

In discharging his duty, man has a responsibility before the one for whom he works, or before himself and God, if self-employed. The employer has a responsibility before those whom he employs, before the community, and before God.

God calls this latent potential of success a power (Deut. 8:1–20). Why possess a power? Power for what?

In broad terms there are only two ways (avenues) to express or use that power. One is for purely selfish reasons—the aggrandizement of self. The other is to do good, to manifest concern for others *equal* to the concern for self.

To elucidate, let us understand a parable given by Christ. In Luke 13:6–9 we read: ". . . A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came and sought fruit thereon, and found none. Then said he unto the dresser of his vineyard, Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and find none: cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? And he answering said unto him, Lord, let it alone this year also, till I shall dig about it, and dung it: And if it bear fruit, well: and if not, then after that thou shalt cut it down."

Parables are object lessons taught by Christ. What is the meaning of this particular parable? The moral of its intent is simple and straightforward. Whatever exists—was created—has purpose. That purpose must be fulfilled. Why should it continue to exist—to consume space, energy, and effort on the part of others—unless it continues, or in some cases begins, to produce, justifying its existence?

In the case of the fig tree it yielded no fruits of service for others. It continued to consume only for "selfish" reasons. It was a drain on the soil and environment.

The teaching of Christ is that we are placed on this earth to serve. To be productive and helpful. Yet, sadly, human beings too often make one of two possible mistakes. Either they become leeches on society—not carrying their full share of responsibility—or they employ the fruits of success to satisfy themselves only. Both are equally evil in the sight of God.

The faithful labors to give. First he pays to God just dues, then he judiciously discharges his responsibility to family—wife and children—then he manifests a concern for those of the household of faith (to be spelled out later), and finally he assumes his duty to society—his community, etc. All these areas are made clear in God's Word.

How, then, do the principles of character and responsibility relate to economics and life?

1. We take care of our own lives—becoming no burden to others.
2. We take care of our own families—wives and children, other close relatives who need help.



3. In accord with spiritual principles laid out by God, we manifest a concern for the needy in the church—the household of faith.
4. Lastly, we discharge our debt to society in general.

In the final analysis, God's gift of success is not given for selfish reasons. In all respects, if properly handled, it is given for service. Yet, far too many have used this power for personal gain, stature before others, and personalized glory. Remember, each human being will be judged, at the appointed time, on how well he has used this power. Was it used for personal gain, stature, and glory; or, was it used for service?

We are now ready to see the interconnection between this power of success and the keeping of the Feast days. What is the real significance of the holy days? Is a mere physical presence at the appointed time and in the appointed place a real, genuine spiritual observance of the Feast? In this context one could readily ask: Is any man not working on Saturday and resting at home really keeping the Sabbath?

### Significance of Feast Days

One of the first principles a converted mind comes to understand and appreciate is this: Letter obedience is inadequate. For letter obedience still brings the penalty of death.

Letter (mechanical, physical) attendance at the feasts of God does not fulfill the intent and purpose of the statutes of God. The real issue goes beyond the physical to a state of mind. Why do we attend? What responsibilities are involved? Does any mere man have a natural right to come into the presence of God?

To fulfill the *spiritual* responsibilities, and thereby receive the approval of God, requires understanding. What are the reasons for which God requires us to come before Him? Since God is a purposeful Being, He does not command obedience without an apparent reason. There are at least seven very basic purposes for which God requires us to come before Him on the holy days. And these purposes all revolve around labor and harvest (Deut. 12:1). Israel was an agrarian society.

### Seven Reasons for Convocation

First: It is a time to congregate before the Lord to live joyously in the abundance God gave. A reward for diligent and purposeful labor (Deut. 12:7).

Industry and responsibility are always rewarded by God. God and Christ are workers. Work with an honorable purpose is satisfying. It generates health of mind and body. In unique and mysterious ways, honest, honorable, and purposeful labor gives peace of mind and a gratifying sense of satisfaction.

The Feasts of God afford us the opportunity to express that feeling of satisfaction. It is not wrong to take rightful pride (not arrogance) in fulfillment of responsibility—a job well done. We are instructed, ". . . there ye shall eat before the Lord your God, and ye shall *rejoice* in all that ye put your hand unto, ye and your households, wherein the Lord thy God hath blessed thee" (Deut. 12:7). Our presence before Him is the time and place of thanksgiving for His abundant blessing.

This concept alone reveals the need of fruitful labor on the part of everyone called of Him. How can one "revel" in the blessings of God if he has not produced fruitfully throughout the year? We must remember: The mere visible, physical presence of anyone before God does not fulfill the purpose of the command of God, You shall appear before me. To fulfill that command requires labor and faithfulness.

Let us carefully note a couple more texts. These texts emphasize the above concepts. "And ye shall *rejoice* before the Lord your God, ye, and your sons, and your daughters, and your menservants, and your maidservants, and the Levite that is within your gates; forasmuch as he hath no part nor inheritance with you" (Deut. 12:12). "And thou shalt bestow that money [second tithe] for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the Lord thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household" (Deut. 14:26).

Our appreciation and thanksgiving to God during the feasts must occur only at the appointed place. The feasts of God are unique and special times of thanksgiving.

Second: The Feast of Tabernacles, in a special way, is a time of expressing praise to God for His manifold beneficence. Reflect carefully. Is it possible to thank God for abundance if we have failed to fulfill a larger responsibility throughout the year? Have not many of our sorrows, dislikes, complaints at the time of the Feast been generated because our blessings from God were too small to express adequately our thanks and appreciation? Why? Because we have not faithfully fulfilled an eleven-and-three-quarter month responsibility before the time of the Feast. In this situation we find a failure comparable to that of keeping the Sabbath. It is Friday—the preparation day—which is violated, and not so much the Sabbath day itself. What the Sabbath could be if we always fulfilled the requirements imposed upon us regarding Friday! When the Feast is upon us, it is too late to make necessary provision for its observance. In such a situation, worry, complaint, and frustration replace the required thanksgiving and expression of appreciation.

Even though thanksgiving to God is a daily responsibility, the Feast of Tabernacles is a special and unique time of praising God. A fulfillment of that level of obedience and thanksgiving can be done only at the appointed time and the appointed place. Let us note: "Thou mayest *not* eat within thy gates the tithe [second tithe] of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offerings of thine hand: But thou *must* eat them before the Lord thy God in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou *shalt rejoice* before the Lord thy God *in all that thou puttest thine hands unto*" (Deut. 12:17–18).

First, we labor diligently—throughout the year—all that we put forth our hands to do. Next, we go before God at the appointed time and place to praise and honor Him.

Notice also: "Three times in a year shall all thy males appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose; in the feast of unleavened bread, and in the feast of weeks, and in the feast of tabernacles: and they shall not appear before the Lord empty: Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee" (Deut. 16:16–17). Again: "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto me in the year. . . . the feast of harvest, the firstfruits of thy *labours*, . . . and the feast of ingathering, which is in the end of the year, when thou hast gathered in thy labours out of the field" (Ex. 23:14–16).

To keep the Feast, one must diligently labor. Then, on the basis of God's great blessings, the laborer can go before God with appreciation and thanksgiving. For one to go to the Feast, not having adequately labored, he must go in the blessing of another. How can one, in this condition, fulfill the responsibility to rejoice and give thanksgiving? The answer is simple: he cannot.

Third: The Feast is the time of clearing our responsibilities before God. It is the end of a fiscal year, spiritually speaking. Let us note God's instruction to Israel, His people, through Moses. "And thither [the place appointed] ye shall bring your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, and your tithes, and heave offerings of your hand, and your vows, and your freewill offerings, and the firstlings of your herds and of your flocks" (Deut. 12:6). Note also verse 11. "Then there shall be a place which the Lord your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye *bring all that I command you*; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the Lord." Living in an agrarian society, with the feasts' revolving around the times of harvest, Israel's feasts were the appointed times in which she could clear herself of her obligations before God. Even though we live in an industrialized society, the general principle still applies. In the larger sense, the Feast of Tabernacles is the time when we must clear ourselves before God. We probably have paid tithes and offerings throughout the year. That is all fine and good. Nothing wrong with it. Yet, the command stands: Make sure you have absolved all liability before God so that you are free to rejoice enthusiastically before God, at the time of the appointed Feast.

Fourth: Properly keeping the Feast insures our future. Conversely, when we correctly plan for the future, the present takes on significant meaning. And where there is not acceptable futuristic planning, the fruits of this failure manifest themselves in a lack of diligence, perseverance, and purpose. In other words, our present status indicates what our future looks like. If we desire to experience a better future, the present is the place to begin.

God emphatically states: "Observe and *hear* [sink into both heart and mind] *all* these words which I command thee, *that it may go well with thee*, and with thy children after thee for ever, when thou doest that which is good and right in the sight of the Lord thy God" (Deut. 12:28).

Our insurance policy is faithful obedience to God, now. This faithfulness is significantly summed up in keeping the holy days. To take care of the future entails the necessity of judiciously discharging current responsibility. Work enthusiastically to keep the present feasts and the future will take care of itself. God has promised and inexorably bound Himself to carry out His part of the agreement.

Man's problem: He worries about the future. He should concern himself with the present. Carefully fulfilling the present assures the faithful of a successful future.

Fifth: Keeping the Feast is an expression of gratitude and appreciation for true spiritual freedom—liberation from the bondage of self and the world.

Bondage to self is so deceptive. When we negatively react to the Truth of God—commands and instructions—we are revealing the extent of our bondage. We all know, do we not, that the carnal mind is enmity against the laws, statutes, and ways of God? No human being of his own natural volition wants to live the Truth of God. He automatically responds on the basis of natural carnal fears, misgivings, and distrust. When this happens to us we must take control of our thinking, asking ourselves if our fears are what God promised for obedience

to His ways. We must ask ourselves, Can we trust God—place implicit faith and confidence in His promises and guarantees? Surely, no one called of God would challenge the veracity of the Word itself! No! What we do is question its application to us individually; or, we question the explanation given.

We are in bondage to the self until, by the power of God's Holy Spirit, we respond positively and confidently to all the instructions of God—manifesting total faith in God to carry out His promises and assurances.

To have the fulfillment, realization, of every blessing and promise of God in the future requires acts of faith in the present. We labor diligently so that we may faithfully obey at the present, which in turn guarantees our future blessings as long as we continue to yield ourselves into God's hand daily.

Until we can see and recognize our bondage, it remains impossible for us to remember such servitude. Do we love the Truth? Is observance—real observance, not just physical presence—a thrilling experience? Is it a time of rejoicing? If not, the problem does not lie with someone else! It lies with the individual who is drowning in sorrow, regret, misery, and unhappiness.

Sixth: The Feast is a unique time to subordinate the self to the common revealed will of God. We are implicitly informed: "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day, every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes" (Deut. 12:8).

One fractious individual can destroy the peace and equanimity of an entire group. Such an individual is under the severest censure of God. When it becomes obvious such a person does not will to change mind and heart, the instruction of God is explicit. He must not be allowed to infect others with his brand of virulent poison. He must be separated from the body.

Even those sincerely desiring to crucify the self and to put on the character and nature of God find the daily struggle for mastery enervating and disturbing—manifested in contempt for the self. There is no one who sins not—daily.

The feasts are annual opportunities to demonstrate the unanimity of the Spirit of God. These are times to subordinate completely the self to the will of God—oneness. No one is entitled to do that which he thinks is right. Are we not informed, "Ye shall not do after all the things that we do here this day [the normal, natural behavior of every individual], every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes"?

Seventh: The Feast is time and opportunity to share our blessings with others—those *less* blessed for reasons not of their own choosing. The instructions are explicit and clear. Let us carefully note them from God's Word.

"And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow*, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest" (Deut. 14:29). Here God speaks of the people's usage of third tithe! What about the second tithe?

"And thou shalt rejoice in thy feast, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite, the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, that are within thy gates. Seven days shalt thou keep a solemn feast unto the Lord thy God in

the place which the Lord shall choose: *because* the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thine increase, and in all the works of thine hands. . ." (Deut. 16:14–15).

It is the purpose of God to bless all who are faithful—all who willingly, and with a right heart, obey the commands and instructions which He gave for our good. Yet, for reasons possibly known only to God, some encounter circumstances which make it impossible for them to fulfill basic requirements laid down for His people. The stranger is probably not aware of the requirement incumbent upon him. (This category has a time factor. How long does a stranger remain a stranger?) The fatherless—those left without economic recourse. They are not of age; therefore, too young to work. The mother (widow) is probably loaded with responsibility for the care of her children. The obligation for the care of these "unfortunate" people falls upon those of sound mind and body within the confines of those who are addressed. Ancient Israel as a nation. The church as a New Testament entity.

### A Coalescing Purpose

Seven reasons have been advanced for the keeping of the Feast. Each and every one is crucial to God. Yet in a very real and broad sense there is another which encompasses all the others. It is found in Deuteronomy 14:23. ". . . Thou shalt eat before the Lord thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe [second] of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; *that thou mayest learn to fear the Lord thy God always.*"

The feast days are teachers. They teach us to fear and respect God at all times. If we continue unchanged in our overall character, or lack of it, we are not properly learning from the experience.

The feast days are teaching the seven basic principles mentioned above. By the fear of God we come to value labor and its objective purposes. We learn why we need to praise God and how to do so, to utter our heartfelt thanksgiving throughout the Feast. We learn, through fear of God—because of trials and difficulties experienced—that the Feast is a time to clear ourselves, economically, before God. We learn that our future is dependent upon how we behave and respond at the present. We recognize that real freedom is implicitly coupled with Feast obedience. We learn that self must be subordinated to the collective entity with whom God is working. And, finally, we learn the value of sharing with those who are truly the needy, not of choice. If we fear God, all these lessons will not only take root, but year by year favorable and acceptable growth will be apparent.

Now that we have learned all the above concepts, let us seek answers as to how these principles *must* be applied today. Since Jesus Christ came to magnify the Law, and to elaborate the principles through church administration during the time of the apostles, we should seek the answers basically in what we commonly call the New Testament Scriptures.

(1) *Who should receive second tithe assistance?* Since the Feast, to be kept properly, is a time for rejoicing in the blessings of God, everyone should make every effort to sustain himself and his family. Even widows should make whatever provisions they are able. There is scarcely anyone who cannot put a little together to fulfill so great a spiritual responsibility as keeping the Feast. It is a matter of fearing God and prioritizing our expenditures throughout the year.



The church—meaning working individuals who are abundantly blessed by God—makes up the difference. With God there is no free lunch. Someone must produce the abundance that others are allowed to share—but only when legitimately done in the sight of God.

Henceforward, assistance will be judged on the basis of how well the individual has applied the spiritual principles enunciated by God. The deserving need to fear nothing. They will be helped as God makes provision to the church. Those who fail to comprehend responsibility will have to learn what it means to fear God. You, as individuals, will be judged by the Word of God; we, as ministers, will be judged on the basis of how well we have administered that Word. All whose hearts are right have nothing to fear. On the one hand, the blessed will be more greatly blessed as he faithfully obeys; and on the other, those who have applied the Biblical guidelines will be assisted, as God provides—God reads hearts. He will bless us all as we yield our lives into His loving hands.

Here another point needs to be clarified. Under no circumstances should individual members decide who should be helped and who should not. God made the ministry responsible. See Hebrews 13:7, 17. That rule is equivalent to a husband in his own home. How many husbands would tolerate fifteen other men making administrative decisions in their homes? Would that not be confusion? It is the same principle in the church. Sometimes the ministry may know of certain individuals who should not be helped. Too frequently, as individuals we help those whom we want helped. We do not care whether the act of helping is right or wrong. But remember, God reads hearts. Let us do things systematically and in the order ordained of God.

(2) *Who should receive third tithe?* The instructions are simple and to the point. Let us merely quote them.

"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world" (Jas. 1:27).

"At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates: And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee,) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest" (Deut. 14:28–29).

"Honour widows that are widows indeed. But if any widow have children or nephews, let them learn first to shew piety at home, and to requite their parents: for that is good and acceptable before God. Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day. . . . But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. But the younger widows refuse: for when they have begun to wax wanton against Christ, they will marry; Having damnation, because they have cast off their first faith. And withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not. I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully. For some are already turned aside after Satan. If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed" (I Tim. 5:3–5, 8–16).

Are we teachable? Do we love the Truth of God? Do we really want to obey and thereby become the recipients of every blessing God has in store for us?

You can read the texts. You understand plain English language. You apply these requirements to yourselves. If there are questions, and obviously there are many legitimate ones, please do not hesitate to discuss the matter with a minister. There is no minister in this little fledgling operation who is not going to bend over backward in the direction of mercy. Can you trust that?

The Truth has been spoken. You have read it directly from God's Word. The ball is now in your court.

In conclusion, let us consider carefully the assurance of Christ given in Matthew 11:30. "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

In deep affection,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Raymond C. Cole". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Raymond C. Cole

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bryce G. Clark". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Bryce G. Clark