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## AND NOW CHRIST SETS CHURCH BACK ON TRACK *DOCTRINALLY!*

By Herbert W. Armstrong

UNTIL about 1969 we in God's Church, *did* all "speak the same thing." By 1978 many of the ministers were speaking *different* things! God had withdrawn from us His blessing and power that for 35 years caused the Work of His Church to grow at the approximate rate of 30 percent every year over the preceding year!

What caused God to withdraw his blessing and power?

Precisely the same thing that choked the growth of the Church of God at Corinth from A.D. 56, 25 years after the Church was founded at Jerusalem. They were following different leaders, speaking different things, watering down the sacred and precious truths of Christ!

Christ's apostle wrote to the Corinthian Church, in A.D. 56, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

They were starting to follow different leaders teaching different doctrines. The Church was becoming divided! And a church divided against itself cannot stand!

Once such division starts among ministers it is a difficult matter to correct. For most who have gone doctrinally afield will today — just as in Corinth in A.D. 56 — not be willing to change back from error and watered-down doctrines to God's truth!

This same defection was occurring in the church at Rome. And God said through the apostle Paul, "Now I beseech you, brethren, *mark them* which cause divisions and offence *contrary* to the doctrine by which ye have learned; *and avoid them*. For they by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17-18). Jesus Christ showed me that, as much as it hurt, the No. 1 deceiver with watered-down doctrines, in authority, whom I had to mark and put out of God's Church, was my only living son whom I loved as only a father can. Other liberals have had to go since. God's church must be cleaned up! We must all speak the same thing, as God commands!

But *HOW?* How does Jesus Christ put His doctrines into His Church? How did He *in* A.D. 31? How in A.D. 1933?

Did THE CHURCH OF GOD, of A.D. 31, believe and proclaim the true doctrines? How did they come to believe as they believed? Did their doctrines come as a result of a vote of ministers on the ideas, opinions and convictions of the ministers in the Church?

*HOW* must the true Church of God *today* receive its doctrinal beliefs? Doesn't every human individual, by himself, know right from wrong — what is truth and what is error? Is not the ability to know right from wrong acknowledged by society as the test of sanity or insanity? Does not mankind automatically know what is truth — what is good and right — as

contrasted from what is wrong, evil and sin?

God says we in His Church must all believe and speak the same thing — we must be agreed on what is truth and right and good as opposed to what is evil and sin.

Brethren, we have not obeyed that command of Jesus Christ! We have not all believed the same thing! There *HAVE BEEN DIVISIONS* among us for that very reason!

We therefore have been guilty before God of disobeying his explicit command! I said, "*have been*". But God's time of trial and test is upon us! God says, through Daniel, that at "the time of the end, many shall be purified, and made white, and tried..." (Daniel 12:9-10).

God's sifting time is upon us! God is allowing those duped by Satan to bring upon us the greatest time of trial and testing that His Church has undergone in our lifetime!

When I pray, as I do many times a day during this supreme trial of the forces of State government of America's most populous state and the forces of the public press lined up against us, falsely accusing us, picturing us to the public as if already tried and proved guilty — as criminals — I not only petition God to deliver us, *but I also THANK GOD for this trial and test!* We are being strengthened by it! We are being brought closer to God and welded closer together than ever before! God, through this trial, is weeding out from our midst the liberals who did not believe or "speak the same thing."

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These I have loved sincerely, even as I have loved my own son!

I wonder, do we sometimes love even the sin *within us* that we hate to purge it out? At least I know how I have so sincerely loved those individuals whom Christ has been purging out — that we may all be united in speaking the same thing — speaking God's truth!

Now *HOW* may we obey Christ by all speaking the same thing, when we — especially a small portion of the ministers — have not all believed the same thing?

I can tell you how my son, when he was executive vice president, with a small group of liberals at headquarters, tried to bring us into harmony. Some of the ministers did not believe many of the doctrines Christ had put into His Church. A minority (yet perhaps close to a dozen field ministers) had liberal leanings — did not believe the same things Christ had put into His Church. So, *behind my back* — unknown to me, while I was in another part of the world carrying Christ's Gospel message into other nations — they produced what they called a Systematic Theology Project, *changing and watering down* — making more liberal — many doctrines Christ had put into God's Church.

Why did they do this? The one who wrote most of it stated to me in writing, "My only goal in coordinating the project was to bring doctrinal consistency, stability and unity to the ministry and the Church."

This reminds me of a saying we used to have on the tennis courts. "The idea was fine, but the execution was rotten."

These deluded and misguided "scholars" were in fact ignorant of the central truism; that the "same thing" we must all speak *must be what CHRIST speaks*; and for unity in what He speaks, the doctrines must be put

into the church *BY* Jesus Christ! Not by compromising, watering down Christ's teachings to satisfy rebellious liberals. Jesus Christ is the living head of the Church. They overlooked that!

So it has become necessary for Christ, the head of the Church, to set God's church back on the track of God's unity — not confusion by trying to satisfy rebellious men by compromising God's truth!

Now *HOW* did God put *His* doctrines and teachings into His Church in A.D. 31? — before many in the Church turned to another gospel (Galatians 1:6-7)? And how did the living Christ put God's doctrines and teachings into His Church today — before these "intellectual liberals" began trying to compromise and water down?

Only by His chosen apostles.

As I quoted in the beginning, in I Corinthians 1:10, Christ says we must all speak the same thing, *WHAT* "same thing" ? That which comes from the mind of Christ — "Let *this* mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

The Corinthian church was not in harmony. It was divided. *WE* had gotten out of harmony. *WE* were divided! Those who do have the mind of Christ and are surrendered to the Spirit of God are being used by Jesus Christ in *rooting out* that spiritual cancer from God's Church.

Ministers are being called in for conferences, The first thing we at headquarters are concerned about is *their attitude!* If the attitude is good, any doctrinal differences can be straightened out, and we may proceed in peace, harmony and UNITY in the faith — all speaking the same thing that Christ speaks! If the attitude is resentful, rebellious, bitter, the one having it is "hooked" on a spiritual drug far worse than physical heroin. I have warned against this attitude for

49 years — ever since I began to preach in 1930.

It is only common sense to realize that if everyone teaches what he, personally, believes, or if we follow different leaders, each speaking his own thing, we have only confusion!

Our teaching and doctrines **MUST COME FROM GOD!** Through Christ! And through His apostle!

But *HOW?* Must some speak what they don't believe? We must believe what Christ says, to be saved!

Jesus Christ is the Word of God in person. The Bible is the same Word of God in print! The very first man to be used in writing down the Word of God as Christ (in the Old Testament, Yahweh) inspired, was Moses, and he wrote more words of it than any other. Now did Moses Seek this commission for himself? No, Moses had been reared a prince in the palace of Egypt's pharaoh, and he probably cared little or nothing about being a leader for God.

But God called to him in the incident of the burning bush (Exodus 3).

Immediately Moses protested. "I'm slow of speech," he objected, "I stutter". God was a bit angry at this. But God said He had provided for that. He had appointed Moses' brother, Aaron, to be his spokesman. Moses accepted God's rebuke and became strong and faithful in the Lord.

*He believed what God said!*

God has always, in dealing with humans, worked through ONE MAN at a time — one who believed God! Some in ancient Israel challenged this one-man leadership. Some, likewise, have challenged it today!

First, Moses' own brother and sister challenged his one-man leadership. Miriam and Aaron said, "Hath the Eternal indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken also by us?" (Numbers 12:2). "And the

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Eternal heard it... And the Eternal came down in the pillar of the cloud, and stood in the door of the tabernacle, and called Aaron and Miriam; and they both came forth...My servant Moses is not so [as the others] who is faithful in all mine house...Wherefore then were ye therefore not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (verses 5-8).

"And the anger of the Eternal was kindled against them" (verse 9). And Miriam was afflicted with leprosy for a while.

Yet, though our members and ministers all know this, some are not afraid to speak contemptuously, in hostility, or defamingly against Christ's apostle today! They need not fear ME! For I will not turn on them or strike them.

Why then, do they not fear God? It must be one of two things. Either they do not really comprehend this teaching of the incident about Aaron and Miriam, or they do not believe that God has chosen me as His apostle and human leader today. Or, perhaps they think God is not the same yesterday, today and forever! In any event, this is a matter between them and Jesus Christ.

But there was an even *more* significant incident of opposition of Moses' leadership.

That is the case of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On. "And they rose up before Moses, with certain of the children of Israel, two hundred and fifty princes...famous in the congregation, men of renown: And they gathered themselves together against Moses...Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one if them, and the Eternal is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Eternal?" (Numbers 16:1-3).

They accused Moses of appointing himself — though there had been

ample evidence by the fruits of Moses' leadership and even miracles God did through him, that they were without excuse, just as many are today.

What happened to them? "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up...They, and all that appertained to them, went down alive into the pit, and the earth closed up on them: and they perished from among the congregation" (verses 32-33).

GOD IS ON HIS THRONE! And He is the same God! He has not changed! Once again, the same God is going, very soon now, to shake this whole world — to produce astounding miracles — and those who take His Work lightly and ought to know better are going to have to realize that He is the same God today!

We are in the trying and sifting time, right now, for God's Church! Notice it, in Daniel 12:9-10:

At "the time of the end Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried: but the wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall UNDERSTAND" (Daniel 12:9-10).

My children in Christ, can we not see that we are in that time, now? God is trying us as never before. He is drawing those of us who both love and fear Him closer to Him and to each other! He is permitting trials and tests, such as we never experienced before, to come upon us, so that we will rely on Him in unshaken faith! But the self-minded among us, even the few in the ministry, do not understand! They do not believe God is the same today and will act the same — in His own time! They do not *TREMBLE* at His Word (Isaiah 66:5). But they shall!

God has always worked through one man, primarily, at a time. God chose David and worked through him. Two of David's sons, at different times, conspired to wrest David's throne from him.

At this point I noticed beside my typewriter a letter I had not seen before from Queensland, Australia. I paused to read it. I quote a sentence from it that is apropos to what I have been writing. This member wrote:

"Take courage, Mr. Armstrong. God took it personally when Miriam spoke against Moses, and when Israel spoke against Samuel." How significant that this letter caught my eye at this stage of this article, The letter continues: "No doubt but that God also takes it personally when they speak (and act) against you (and His Church)."

In founding God's Church, Jesus worked primarily through one man, Peter, even though He originally chose His 12 disciples. Few have ever noticed how Peter was the real leader, Jesus had told His disciples to go NOT to the gentiles, but to the "lost sheep of the House of Israel." The "House of Israel" *never* refers to the Jews — always to the kingdom that became known as "the lost ten tribes." They were In Western Europe and Britain when Jesus gave this instruction.

Undoubtedly it was *after* Peter and the original apostles had left the Middle East and traveled to Britain that we read only of Paul and those under him.

Notice now Peter's preeminence. Few have ever put all these scriptures together as I shall now do. This shows PETER was leader.

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called *PETER*, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea...And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:18-19). This is the first mention of calling His disciples. It is significant that PETER is named first.

Matthew 10:2: "Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first,

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Simon, who is called PETER. "Notice PETER is called "the first."

Matthew 16:16-19: "...Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God, And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee [PETER], That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church...And I will give unto thee [PETER] the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou [PETER] shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou [PETER] shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

In Matthew 18 Jesus appears to be speaking to the 12 as a group, and in verse 18 the binding and loosing is again mentioned. The binding and loosing was given to APOSTLES, but Peter was unquestioned leader of the original 12 apostles.

John 21:15-17: The commission, "Feed My sheep" is three times given to PETER.

Acts 2:14: On the Day of Pentecost, it was Peter who gave the first sermon, converting some 3,000. Verse 38, Peter gives the instruction for baptism.

Acts 3:4, 12: It was Peter who healed the cripple. And it was PETER who gave the sermon to the assembled crowd, and God added 2,000 more to the Church.

Acts 4:8: It was PETER who spoke boldly to the rulers, after imprisonment, and, verse 19, said, "Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."

Acts 5:3, 15: It was PETER who spoke to Ananias and Sapphira, causing them to drop dead. Verse 15, it was Peter's shadow as he walked by that healed the sick.

Acts 5:29: Peter said "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Acts 8: Peter with John went to Samaria. Verses 18-23: It was PETER who rebuked the first pope, Simon the Sorcerer.

Acts 9:32-34: PETER heals Aneas.

Acts 9:38-41: PETER raises Dorcas from death.

Acts 10:1, 9: PETER used by Christ to be the first to open salvation to gentiles. Verses 19-24, circumcision not required.

Acts 11:1-2, 18: Apostles hear from PETER how God had granted repentance to gentiles and salvation with eternal life.

Acts 15: Here is the crux chapter, not generally understood. Paul and Barnabas had come to the church at Antioch. Certain Pharisees had come down from Judea and taught that "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." Paul and Barnabas have much dissention and disputation with them.

Now here was a classic example of how doctrines were put into the Church and doctrinal disputes settled in the Church!

It was determined that Paul and Barnabas and certain others go up to Jerusalem for apostolic settlement through the Holy Spirit.

"And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter." Now notice, "*there had been much disputing*" between the apostles and elders. They were not of one mind!

*How was the matter settled?* By the Holy Spirit, but through whom? "...PETER rose up and said unto them, Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago *God made choice among us.*" Notice, PETER was specially chosen, "that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, who knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Spirit, even as

he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."

Notice, it was God leading Peter, as chief apostle. For these gentiles to be required to be circumcised, would obligate them to become a debtor to do the whole [ritual] law" (Galatians 5:3). Therefore Peter concluded, "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear? But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they."

Peter had spoken! God had made choice among them, choosing PETER to open salvation to the gentiles, and, now, to SETTLE, this dispute over what God required of uncircumcised gentile converts. And that settled the matter!

Notice, once Peter had settled the dispute, "Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them." Paul and Barnabas were not disputing Peter's decision. They were NOT giving their input to the disputed question — the question had been SETTLED — by PETER! Paul and Barnabas merely gave the ministers gathered there the NEWS of what God had wrought through their ministry.

Then James rose. James was pastor of the Jerusalem headquarters church. In today's language, we would call him chairman of the meeting. He did not make the decision. PETER had already made it. He merely said, "Simon [PETER] hath declared..." And James merely CONFIRMED Peter's decision, making it official. That ought to make clear this crucial 15th chapter of Acts — the one classic example of settling any disputed doctrine in the Church. And, though there were other apostles, *God worked*

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*primarily* through ONE man — PETER! Has God changed? Or is He the SAME still today?

Finally, notice Galatians 2:7: “But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as the gospel of the circumcision was unto Peter.”

The Jerusalem conference (Acts 15) showed that Peter was predominant over even Paul, although Paul was the ONE MAN God worked through *primarily* in the ministry to gentiles.

The Church is *GOD’S* Church. The head of the Church, under God, is Jesus Christ. Under Christ, on the human level, is His chosen apostle, through whom He has *raised up* and *built* this SPIRITUAL TEMPLE to which the reigning Christ shall soon come in glory (Ephesians 2:20-21).

Now in closing, back to the theme of this article. God **COMMANDS** that we all **SPEAK THE SAME THING!** It must be that thing which the mind of Christ speaks — and He speaks only as the Father commanded (John 12:49).

All doctrines in the Church as it began, A.D. 31, were put in *by the apostles*.

All doctrines in the present Philadelphia era were put into the Church by Jesus Christ through His chosen apostle.

Now *WHY* does Christ use such caution in putting *HIS* doctrines into God’s Church through His apostle?

**LET ME MAKE THAT POINT CLEAR!**

You have just read a case in point — Acts 15. This crucial crux chapter has been misinterpreted, twisted and distorted. I have tried to take space to **MAKE IT CLEAR** in this article. The other apostles and ministers were all in confusion, arguing and disputing. But Christ silenced them by speaking

through His **CHOSEN** chief apostle. **PETER!**

Let **US UNDERSTAND!**

First of all, in human history. God spoke direct in person to Adam and Eve. They did not believe what He said!

But God *chose* Moses, and God chooses only a man who believes what God says. Moses wrote more words of the Bible than any person. The prophets were chosen by God — not by themselves — and they *believed* what God inspired and wrote it for us.

Christ came and preached to many **THOUSANDS**. Yet only 120 believed what He said! And even of the apostles, there was disputing until Christ spoke through **PETER**, whom *HE* chose!

In our day, God brought about my conversion in a manner **UNIQUE** in our time. He **CONQUERED** me, first, by making me realize 1) that what I had previously believed was untrue, and 2) that I had to **REPENT** and **BELIEVE** — that is, turn *from* former ways and beliefs, to a different way of life — **GOD’S WAY** — and to **BELIEVE WHAT GOD SAYS!** — my mind **SWEPT CLEAN** of all previous beliefs.

When Christ chose His apostle for this time, he chose one who, 1) does *believe* what God says, 2) *will not* compromise or water down truths and doctrines Christ has given and 3) has an open mind to receive further truth from Christ, and to be willing to acknowledge error when **PROVED** and turn from it! I do **TREMBLE** at the Word of God! I love it, and I **FEAR** to go contrary to it or to mislead you, my brethren and my children in the Lord!

As long as this Church believed and spoke **THE SAME THING** Christ put in it through **HIS** apostle, **HE BLESSED IT**, and it grew 30 percent a year for 35 years. But when my son

Garner Ted came to take over more authority than had been delegated to him, surrounding himself with a group of liberals, who **LED** him, and misled him into watering down God’s doctrines — under their false influence a Laodicean lukewarmness and indifference, losing the love of God’s truth, found root in the Church. Christ **BUILT** this Church through **HIS** chosen apostle! We did, perhaps imperfectly, but certainty in general, **SPEAK THE SAME THING!** We grew in Christ’ **KNOWLEDGE** and truth as well as in size and scope of the Work.

Then my son fell under the influence of a group of liberals, with whom he surrounded himself. He began to disagree with Church doctrines more and more! **AND GOD WITHDREW HIS BLESSING!**

For 10 months now, the living Christ has been setting His Church **BACK ON THE TRACK!** Also His college. The liberal element **MUST GO!** Either the liberals must **TURN FROM** their liberalism, as defined in my recent article in this edition entitled, “What is a Liberal?”, and put *IT* out of themselves and the Church, or they must go out with it! I hope the former.

God has allowed this terrible trial and test to come upon us, with the government of the state of California trying to take over and manage and operate God’s Church! In defiance of the Constitution of the United States! They do not, now, and they **SHALL NOT**, operate, manage or destroy the Church and Work of the **LIVING GOD!** His authority is infinitely greater than theirs. Perhaps, like those who crucified Jesus, they know not what they do (Luke 23:34). But they are drawing God’s Church closer to Him and closer to each other. Praise God for cleaning up His Church!