

A N U R G E N T M E S S A G E
T O T H E " T W E L V E "

from Herbert W. Armstrong, Oregon, of the "70."

Beloved Brethren:

You are assembled at this meeting in Detroit in what may prove to be the most momentous meeting since the re-organization of the Church. It is not possible for me to be with you, but since members of the "seventy" have, as I understand it, the right of counsel, and being heard, I take this means of sending to you this communication, and ask that you each read it solemnly and seriously before taking action on the subject of the Holydays of the Lord, which I understand is finally to be decided upon at this meeting.

Brethren, the REAL ISSUE is not these holydays. But the Devil will use this as his weapon to SPLIT UP OUR CHURCH if we permit. My real concern is not for the holydays---for no TRUTH of the Lord can remain hidden when God's time has come for it to be generally revealed---but my real concern is that, as it appears from this distance, THE FUTURE OF OUR CHURCH WILL BE DECIDED AT THIS MEETING. Unless you brethren are much in earnest PRAYER---unless each searches HIS OWN heart, and is actuated only by a Spirit of LOVE, and under the wisdom and guidance of God, then it appears that Satan has matters so arranged that a split in the Church is now inevitable. Brethren, IT MUST NOT HAPPEN! In Jesus' name, I beseech you to solemnly pray, and so yield yourselves to God that He may overrule the forces of evil which have so maneuvered that a split appears certain.

The REAL ISSUE is not the Holydays. The real issue is a two-fold fundamental policy which the Holyday subject is only bringing to a head. It is, 1st, the issue of whether the doors are to be permanently CLOSED against all advancing light and truth; and, 2nd, whether all members must believe and practise, and all ministers preach, all that we are told, and ONLY what we are told, by the Twelve or the general overseer, in matters beyond and outside our declared 40 points of Fundamentals. In other words, the issue is WHAT KIND OF A BASIS shall we have for UNITY? If we passed over the Holyday issue, some other question outside the 40 points would later bring this real issue to a head.

Brethren, there has been a tendency on the part of some---and I do not wish to mention names or make it personal, and I want to write this only in LOVE---to take the stand that the Church MUST NOT ACCEPT ANY NEW LIGHT! Pressure has been put on myself, for instance, not to look for or preach any new light from God's holy Word, in this way. I was asked whether I did not feel the Church of God had a saving message, and then asked if I did not feel, FOR THE SAKE OF HARMONY, that it would be better to stand where we are, and not to look for any further light. I believe that new light has been OPPOSED. I realize the motive has been CHURCH UNITY. Now this is a fundamental ISSUE, and the future of our Church hangs on how you brethren will, with the help and guidance of the Lord, settle this great issue. Unless you act wisely, and with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and with much LOVE in your hearts, the Church stands doomed, and I fear it will be split wide open as a result of this meeting. Therefore I ask you to read this THROUGH --to earnestly PRAY over this, and solemnly to seek GOD'S guidance, for He has committed to YOUR trust the future of His Church! It is your sacred trust.

I.

SHALL THE DOORS BE CLOSED TO ADVANCING LIGHT?

Let us seriously, prayerfully consider, and without prejudice answer, the following: Does the Church of God, at the present time, possess ALL the light the Holy Scriptures contain? Have we, as individuals who collectively form the Church of God, grown in grace and IN KNOWLEDGE, to the extent that we dare say: "We have ALL the truth; we have PERFECT, infallible understanding of the Scriptures; we have no error in any point, and there is now no further light that God can give us?" Brethren, certainly we shall devote ETERNITY to plumbing the vast depths of the sacred pages of God's Word!

The entire human race has gone astray. Like sheep (Isa. 53:6). Sheep follow leaders. One group forms one fold, and other folds follow other leaders. "We have turned every one to HIS OWN WAY." Contrary to GOD'S way, laid down in the Scriptures. The ways that SEEM RIGHT to a man, the ends of which are death. Each fold going the SAME WAY, and speaking the SAME THING! In perfect harmony and unison, ---BUT, CONTRARY TO GOD'S WAY! Is that a proper basis for UNITY?

Jesus is the GREAT SHEPHERD. He leads all repentant, willing sheep back into the RIGHT PATH. He set us an EXAMPLE, that we should FOLLOW His steps! His sheep, He said, hear His voice, and FOLLOW HIM. The true Church will do this.

Under Roman Catholic domination, virtually all true light became extinguished thru the dark ages. Then came Luther. He saw a little light. Calvin, Wesley, other leaders followed. Each had a certain amount of true light and a considerable amount of error. Large groups followed each leader, forming their separate folds. Each group, like the Catholics, enjoying unity and harmony, all speaking the same thing. But none spoke, altogether, the RIGHT thing! They followed their human leaders, RATHER THAN CHRIST and the BIBLE TRUTH. None has ever been willing to confess and purge out error. None has ever been willing to advance in light. All have stood where they were, WHY?---TO PRESERVE UNITY---TO KEEP FROM LOSING MEMBERS---and all have spoken the same thing.

But is this sufficient? We in the Church of God have stressed the need of HARMONY, of UNITY, of ALL SPEAKING THE SAME THING. Brethren, ROME has all that! The S.D.A.'s have it, better than we have. IS THAT A BIBLE BASIS FOR UNITY? Is "all speaking the same thing," of itself, SUFFICIENT?

Brethren, the Church of God stands this moment at the crossroads. It is OUR Church the Devil is wroth with. He cannot overthrow us, except by cunning and deceit. But he is so clever he can deceive us unless we are careful, and fully led of God's Spirit of Love. He knows our every weakness, and if the weakness of a policy of UNITY by all speaking the SAME THING, has been creeping into our minds to the extent we are becoming partially blinded to the necessity of speaking the RIGHT thing, then the Devil knows this and will attack us in this weak spot! Let us not pass by this issue lightly. Let us get to our knees as never before, and seek God for wisdom and guidance as never before. Jesus prayed earnestly that His Church might be ONE---but not one in error---not one by rejecting light and perpetuating error---but "ONE IN US," Jesus prayed the Father. One in TRUTH. Now God is LOVE---and to be one in God and in Christ is to be one in LOVE. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Love, and it is this Spirit of God which is to guide us into TRUTH. IF we have love, we may be led into truth. If we lack it, we lack the Holy Spirit and will only go farther and farther from real truth.

We are to be ONE---yes, but HOW? What is the BIBLE basis for unity? Jesus said "I am the Vine, ye are the branches." Now I do not, now, possess all truth. Neither do I believe any living man does. But if I am joined to the VINE, Christ, then as the sap flows into the branch and bears fruit, so the Spirit of God will flow in and thru me, and leading me gradually, NOT ALL AT ONCE, into more and more TRUTH. God's Word is a LAMP unto our PATH. We cannot walk in the WHOLE LENGTH OF THE PATH at one and the same time. We TRAVEL along the true path, and the Word continues to LEAD us. That is why we are commanded to GROW in knowledge, as well as in grace (II Pet. 3:18). None of us has ALL TRUTH at once. But if we accept a little truth, the Holy Spirit will reveal MORE truth. If we walk in that, we shall receive still more. We walk further down the path as the light of God's Word shines forth upon it. It is a gradual, continuous walk. We progress according to our willingness. The CHURCH must advance the same way. Now if I, having a certain amount of truth, am joined to Christ, then I have the Holy Spirit, leading me gradually and continually into more and more truth---and this same Spirit is the spirit of LOVE toward others who may not see EVERY point, at least, yet, exactly as I do. If YOU are joined to Christ, you, too, have that same love and charity, and are advancing in light. And it is CHRIST that joins us together---not any doctrines we mutually decide to agree upon! Can we see that beautiful truth, brethren? One of us might see a truth the other does not, as yet---but if we both have the Spirit of LOVE leading us, we have a basis of unity just the same, and it is the only BIBLE basis! The basis of doctrine, decided upon by certain men among us, IS THE BASIS OF ROME! I say, let us put away that false basis of unity!

The False Church and her daughters are joined together in an imitation of this true way. Joined by man-made DOCTRINES, contrary to Bible truth, and joined individually together OUTSIDE of Christ---joined in error, not in truth. Brethren, no one of us can Scripturally be joined to any other of us, or to the organization, direct, or in any manner at all except THRU CHRIST---THRU THE HOLY SPIRIT OF LOVE, which guides us gradually into more and more truth, some perhaps faster on some points, and others faster on other points. The individual is joined, individually, to CHRIST, thru the Holy Spirit. It is CHRIST that joins us together. Any other basis for unity in our Church is a FALSE basis, the basis of Satan the Devil, and one that will wreck our beloved Church and render it unfit for usefulness.

Here is a true incident. A friend of mine, a Sabbath-keeping minister, spoke to a certain Portland minister about the Sabbath question. The Portland minister admitted the truth about the Sabbath question. But he replied, "Yes brother, that may be the truth. But if I were to accept the Sabbath and preach it I would lose all my great following. I would lose my power to preach Christ to a vast multitude that I now reach by air, pulpit, and print. I have over a hundred thousand regular radio listeners. Now I believe our Church has ENOUGH truth to have, at least, a SAVING MESSAGE, brother. If I accept the Sabbath truth,

I will lose all my heavy supporters in my church, and my whole work might stop. Therefore I think it better not to look for any of this now light, brother--- I have a saving message, and this truth would break up my church." Brethren what do you think of that preacher? Then what shall we say, when we are approached, IN THE CHURCH OF GOD, with the same identical argument as a reason for suppressing the truth of God's annual Sabbaths? The principle is the same either way.

What saith the SCRIPTURE? We are commanded to GROW in knowledge. The Church is the individuals collectively, and it must continue to ADVANCE, and to GROW IN KNOWLEDGE if it is to be truly God's Church. No false church ever does. False churches perpetuate error. The TRUE Church will never hesitate to purge out error, and to accept truth now to it as God permits the light to shine.

If we refuse, God will REJECT US. (Hos. 4:6). Also II Thos. 2:10-12 applies if we take such a stand. Brethren, let us TREMBLE at the Word of God, a lot more than we tremble at the thought of losing members not led of God's Spirit enough to accept truth---or those so unspiritual, so devoid of LOVE that they will become bitter and split off BECAUSE they do not, yet, see it. Jesus tells us to WALK in the light while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us. If we do not, God will give us over to believe a LIE, that we may be damned, if we do not LOVE THE TRUTH! The Church that says "WE HAVE ENOUGH LIGHT, LET US ACCEPT NO MORE LIGHT," is a DOOMED CHURCH, rejected of God!

True, there has remained thru all generations the TRUE CHURCH. The little Flock undoubtedly has kept aflame the light of most essential truth. But has even THIS group of believers retained ALL truth, 100%? If so, what became of the apostolic form of organization? We know this was lost and had recently to be restored. DARE we say that other truth has not been lost, also? DARE WE CLOSE THE DOORS?

II.

MUST ALL MEMBERS BELIEVE AND PRACTISE, AND ALL MINISTERS PREACH, JUST AS THEY ARE TOLD BY MEN, WHETHER THE TWELVE OR OVERSEER, IN MATTERS BEYOND OR OUTSIDE THE 40 POINTS OF FUNDAMENTALS?

What, in other words, is the BIBLE BASIS for determining TRUTH, and what is preached---and what we must believe? Shall we look to MEN, and believe and preach what MEN tell us---whether the Twelve, or the seven, or the Overseers, ---or shall we be individually led of the HOLY SPIRIT to understand SCRIPTURE?

Now it appears that the tendency creeping into our Church is to consider that the TWELVE are infallibly inspired of God in INTERPRETING Scriptures, just as much as some of the original Twelve were inspired in WRITING it. For instance, a letter recently was sent out somewhat generally to brethren with this statement: "The Bible way to advance new doctrine is . . . to first take it before the Twelve, and the Church Elders. Acts 15th chapter makes this very ~~plain~~ clear." And again, another letter to this effect, "the Twelve, being led of the Holy Spirit, will decide whether this is truth." It appears to me that I see creeping into the Church the principle that the individual lay member, or the individual minister or evangelist is not to examine FOR HIMSELF any literature, any position, any side of a question, except that given us by the Twelve. That we are to look---for this is what this principle will lead to---not to God, not to our Bibles, but to MEN in certain positions in the church, for what we may believe and practice. If we come to that, brethren, then our members must look to MEN, not to God or His Word, for salvation. As one of the Seventy, I unalterably oppose any such policy in our Church, and hope it will never be adopted or practised.

When I considered joining the present organization, before doing so, I had assurance from some of the Twelve that, outside of the 40 points, ministers would be left FREE to advance in light, and to preach as they felt led. I have exercised that right and privilege, as I ALWAYS SHALL, for it is a Bible right and privilege, but it has brought upon my head some heavy opposition. I hope sincerely this matter may be settled at this meeting.

So let us consider. I ask each of you prayerfully to consider what I have to say before passing judgment. First, let us look into the 15th chapter of Acts. Paul and Barnabas had been preaching a long time at Antioch, before Gentiles. They were preaching the TRUTH. But certain men came down from Judea and taught CONTRARY to Paul's teaching, saying these Gentiles must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses. Now study verse 2. Because of this dispute, it was decided by those who knew the truth, to send Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem "UNTO THE APOSTLES AND ELDERS ABOUT THIS MATTER." It does not say Paul went to ask the "12" what he might or might not preach. Paul did not go to Jerusalem to LEARN

what was the truth, but rather to have the Twelve CONFIRM what he was preaching before those OUTSIDERS came in and stirred up trouble. And that is exactly what they did do---they merely CONFIRMED Paul's teaching, adding their authority to Paul's, so the brethren at Antioch would accept it.

Now there is no condition that must be borne in mind. THE NEW TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES HAD NOT YET BEEN WRITTEN. Paul did not have any SCRIPTURE on this matter to show them. And again, when they came to Jerusalem it was far different than this present meeting at Detroit, for THE TWELVE WERE DIRECTLY UNDER INSPIRATION FOR THE WRITING OF THE SCRIPTURE, and were inspired direct of the Holy Spirit, as is plain from verse 28, making FINAL a truth not yet at that time recorded in Scripture, and now REVEALED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT DIRECT, and to be recorded, as it is recorded here, IN SCRIPTURE. They were directly inspired for the writing of Scripture. You brethren are not, and I have faith you will never claim to be.

This 15th chapter of Acts, then, cannot be used to show that all the people on earth today must go to the Twelve to learn whether a doctrine is true, or to learn what they must believe. THIS, BRETHREN, IS ONE OF THE TWO GREAT ISSUES NOW AT STAKE. If the Church decides we must all be guided by the twelve, in all points, which amounts to letting the 12 study the Bible ~~for~~ for us, do our thinking for us, causing us to look to MEN and not to God for truth, and for salvation, then the Church is writing its own death-warrant, so far as usefulness at God's hands ~~is~~ is concerned.

Now how did Paul learn what was truth, and what to preach? Did he go to the Twelve? Did he preach what he was told by them, or any man? Notice Galatians 1:15-19. The Church already was operating with the 12, the 7, and the 70. But Paul did not go to them for instruction in what to preach. Rather, he says that WHEN God called him, and converted him, that he might preach, "immediately I conferred NOT with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then AFTER THREE YEARS I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him 15 days, but other of the Apostles saw I none, save James."

Now read on into the second chapter: "Then FOURTEEN YEARS AFTER I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation,"---what for? To ask them what to preach? NO! "and communicated UNTO THEM THAT GOSPEL WHICH I PREACH among the Gentiles." (Gal. 2:1-2). Paul received enlightenment of what was truth, and what to preach, BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Since the New Testament Scripture was not yet written, he received it by direct revelation. But, now, since it is written, ministers should learn what to preach BY THE HOLY SPIRIT guiding them, individually, into a RIGHT understanding of what is written in GOD'S WORD. Paul was directly inspired and used in writing a large portion of the New Testament.

There is no example in Scripture, and no command, to look to the Twelve, or any one man or group of men, to lead us into understanding of Scripture. Instead, Jesus warned of the FALSE PROPHETS that would appear. If we trust MEN, who shall we know who is false? When Paul came to Berea, the Bereans did not know whether Paul preached truth or false doctrine. They are commended, called NOBLE, in that they LISTENED with all readiness of mind, and then SEARCHED THE SCRIPTURES, WHETHER what he preached was SO! That is the BIBLE WAY for the individual! (Acts 17:10-11). We are commanded, as ministers and individuals, NOT to ask the Twelve or any men what is truth, but to "STUDY, to show thyselves approved unto God." This is to the individual SELF. We are commanded to SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES, not go to the Twelve. When HE, the SPIRIT OF TRUTH is come, HE, not men, will guide you individually into the TRUTH. Now Rome argues that since different men see things differently, they cannot be trusted to do this---they must look to an infallible CHURCH for truth. Rome holds the CHURCH is infallibly inspired of God, and cannot make a wrong decision as to doctrine. Brethren, are we going to accept the argument of ROME, or the truth of the SCRIPTURE? I find, by experience, that two different people, truly led of the Spirit, do, gradually, come to see the SAME THINGS in the Scripture, tho neither may realize the other has seen this truth. THAT IS BEING PROVED BY THE HOLYDAYS. I AM BEING AMAZED TO FIND HOW MANY, among both laymembers and ministers, in all parts of the country, HAVE BEEN INDEPENDENTLY LED TO SEE THIS TRUTH, none realizing the others were seeing and receiving it! God has been guiding MANY in His Church into this blessed light. Praise His name! The carnal mind cannot understand Bible truth. God reveals these things unto us BY HIS SPIRIT, not by inspired MEN. There is much more in the Scripture along this line, but I know this is sufficient for the Twelve.

III.

CONCLUSION: THE GREATEST OF THESE IS LOVE

And now in conclusion, the most important part of all, The REAL BASIS for unity. The REAL BASIS for coming into truth of doctrine. And that basis is, just