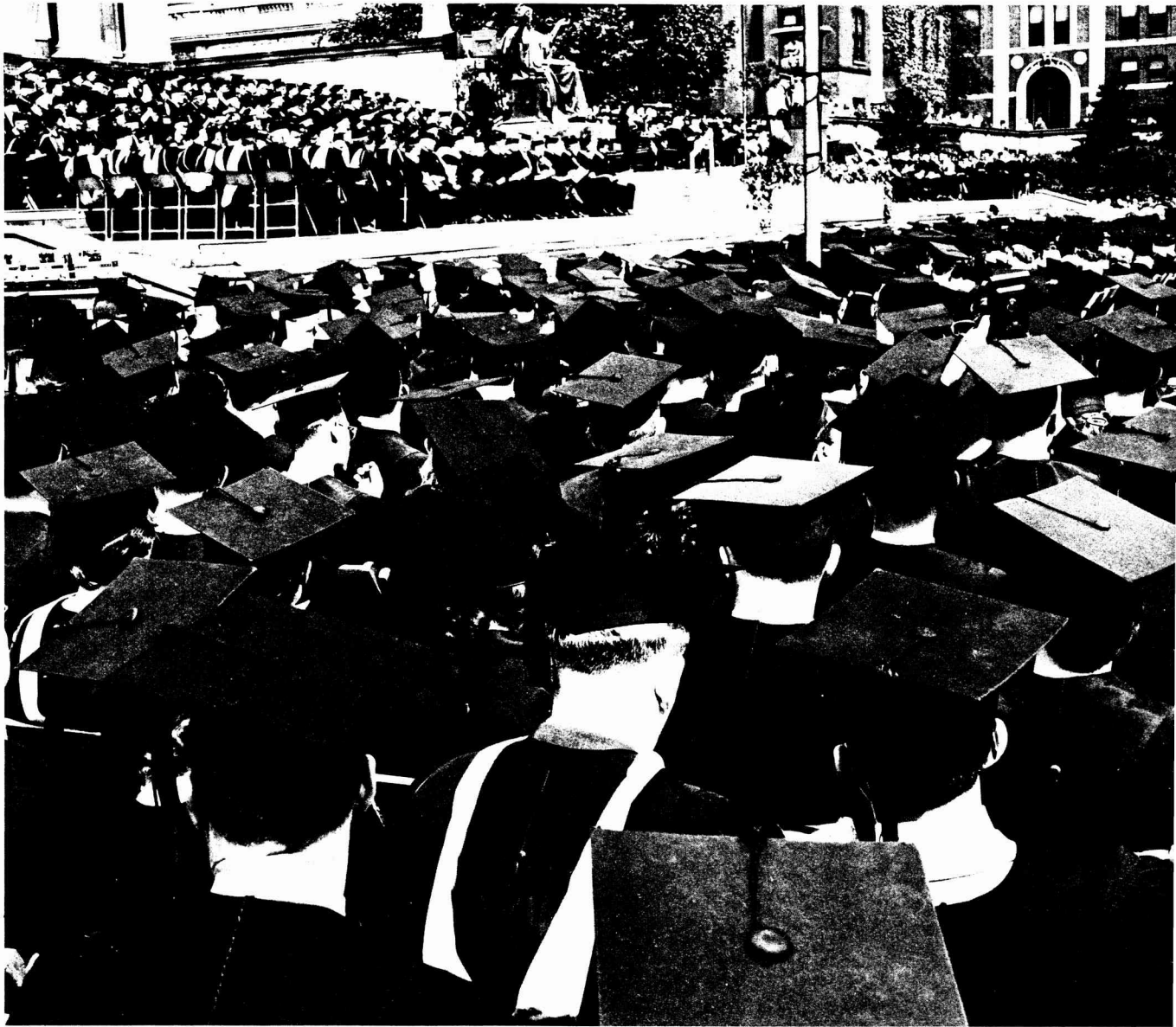


**AMBASSADOR
COLLEGE**

BIBLE

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



Knowledge Without God

LESSON 23

an open letter from

THE STAFF

YOU ARE now beginning to really UNDERSTAND Bible prophecies, and the great PURPOSE being worked out here below — if, that is, you are diligently studying the Bible with the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course.

A new way of life has been opened up before you.

But why were you in almost total *ignorance* of the real meaning of life, of Bible prophecy and of world affairs all the years before you began this study? Let's understand the reason.

The little word *my* is a precious one to most people. They lovingly speak of *my* opinion, *my* job, *my* house, *my* country, *my* religion and *my* God.

We RESENT being told that *our* opinion, *our* faith, or *our* religion is wrong. We like to continue to believe what we have been accustomed to accept as true. Everyone HATES to admit he has been wrong.

Yet, in all this maze of religious babylon, *somebody* HAS to be wrong!

One of the *least understood* principles in all the Bible is that God has purposely *blinded* this world and is letting it go its own way to *learn vital lessons* during the last six thousand years of human history. In Revelation 12:9, God describes Satan as, "that old serpent called the Devil, and Satan, which DECEIVETH THE WHOLE WORLD."

Hard to believe, isn't it?

Yet — *in many places* — your Bible shows that this *whole world* has been completely DECEIVED in spiritual things. Remember that a deceived person *doesn't know* he is deceived. He is sincere. But he is *sincerely* WRONG!

The great false religious system dominating our Western world today is pictured in Revelation 17. God describes this false church as a fallen woman — a *great whore*: "With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the *inhabitants of the earth* have been made DRUNK with the wine of her fornication" (verse 2).

Because of false teachings and false concepts assumed since childhood, people are *spiritually* DRUNK — having a distorted outlook — so that they are *unable to see spiritual truths*. Like a *drunken person*, they are stupidly SATISFIED in the foggy, hazy, confused spiritual state in which they find themselves.

They THINK they are all right — on the sur-

(Please continue on page 14)

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE LESSON 23

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About Our Cover . . .

About to receive their diplomas, these university graduates are now prepared to begin "earning a living." But "educated" as these men and women may be, they have *not even begun* to receive a TRUE education! For even as the ancients "did not like to retain God in their knowledge" (Rom. 1:28), modern education *rejects* the source of true knowledge, and the very BASIS of true education! This lesson shows why. It exposes the sentimental "gospel" of professing Christianity for what it is!

Ewing Galloway

SALVATION IS EDUCATION!

IT'S HARD to believe, but it's true — millions have *believed* on Jesus Christ and are NOT "saved."

Millions actually worship Christ *in vain!*

Your Bible reveals the *whole world* has been DECEIVED about the true way to salvation! There's a reason why.

Basis of True Education

The cause of all this world's unhappiness, sorrows, sufferings, poverty and *religious confusion* is WRONG education, and the LACK of education!

But *why?* How can this be true in our "enlightened" age?

Simply because the world has thrown away the BASIC TEXTBOOK of true education — the *Holy Bible!* The world has gotten all mixed up. The world does not realize just WHAT the Bible really *IS!*

The Bible is the FOUNDATION OF ALL KNOWLEDGE — and the *true approach* to the acquisition of all discoverable knowledge.

Do you know what is the very *trunk* of the tree of true knowledge?

It is the PURPOSE for the very existence of human life on earth! It is to know the *meaning* of life. It is to discern the *true* values from the false. It is to know THE WAY to peace, happiness,

abundant well-being, and *eternal life* — THE WAY to what fundamentalists call "salvation."

What *IS* salvation? Is it a place — a geographical location? Is it a changed *condition*? Is it a change of *composition*? Exactly HOW do we obtain it?

Nowhere but in the BIBLE can one find *this basic necessary knowledge!* God inspired the Bible to be the very BASIS of all true education.

True Knowledge Rejected

Many today believe "the Bible was not written to inform man's mind" and that it is "not Biblical" to say the Gospel of Christ is an *educational* message! This has been the common conception — since the so-called "old-fashioned gospel" of the evangelical fundamentalist Protestant denominations was first introduced as the "new-fangled" religion several hundred years ago.

But this so-called "old-fashioned gospel" is NOT the true Gospel Jesus Christ brought to mankind! It is *not* "the faith once delivered to the saints." Yet millions have SUPPOSED it is! They have supposed that the "Gospel" is a sentimental, nebulous, ethereal sort of *emotion* — that it's irrational and UNrelated to the MIND.

They *suppose* that this "gospel" came out of the Bible! Therefore they ASSUME that the Bible is an impractical book of maudlin sentimentality,

Students at this college have not learned the real purpose and meaning of life. Not even the greatest educational institutions of this world can impart knowledge they do not possess!

H. Armstrong Roberts



utterly unrelated to rational *knowledge*. Thus the Bible has come to be regarded as outmoded superstition — a book of fables — the writings of an ancient race of Jews ignorantly searching for a national concept of God.

So “thinkers,” *without* thinking, and *without* checking to SEE what the Bible really is, or what it says, have relegated it to the scrap heap of outworn superstition. The “educated” have thrown it out the window, *without* searching to PROVE their biased assumption.

And many of the followers of evangelical Protestantism have supposed that “the Bible was not written to inform man’s mind, but merely to *change man’s* HEART.” They have accepted a sanctimonious sentimentalism, in which they get to “feel” that they are spiritual, and that they are “saved,” largely *shutting up their minds* against the rational teachings of the Bible.

No wonder the men of science, and the educators of this world have ASSUMED that the Bible contains nothing rational — but only senseless, sentimental superstition, entirely irrational!

A Change of MIND

If the Bible was written to “*change man’s heart*” — and indeed it was — how can what is written there change man’s *heart*, if it is never understood by the MIND? *Obviously it can’t!*

Just what does the Bible mean when it speaks of man’s “heart”? The word “heart” is used, in this sense, to imply the *attitude of mind*! The Bible says: “the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked . . .” (Jer. 17:9). It is not referring to the organ that pumps blood inside man’s chest. It is referring to man’s *nature* — his attitude, or spirit, or tendency of MIND. It is referring to his natural CHARACTER!

But HOW does God go about *changing* this deceitful, wicked nature — this “heart” — this attitude of *mind* in man?

What is the Gospel Message for doing that — for giving “salvation”?

Jesus began His Gospel Ministry and teaching, saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: REPENT ye, and BELIEVE the Gospel” (Mark 1:15). He said there are two conditions WE must perform — *repentance and belief*!

On the great day of Pentecost when Peter had received God’s Holy Spirit, he explained the WAY of salvation: “*Repent*, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38).

Here again we find two conditions — *repentance and belief*. To “be baptized” is the out-

ward ceremony of the *inward believing*. Example: the eunuch said to Philip, “see, here is water: what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, if thou *believest* with all thine heart, thou mayest” (Acts 8:36-37).

Yes, God requires *two* conditions which WE must do. Then God does the “saving” — the converting of our minds by His Spirit which He will give us upon fulfilling these conditions. His Holy Spirit will then *lead* us along the way to salvation. It will impart to us the faith, love and power necessary to *overcome* and CONTROL the downward pulls of our sinful human nature. This is how God changes or converts our *minds*!

But *how* does one come to repent? What does the word “repent” mean?

The dictionary definition of repent is: “To *change one’s MIND*.” And the Bible says, “Godly sorrow worketh repentance” (II Cor. 7:10). This is done in and by the *mind*!

And how does one *believe*, in order to be “saved”? Again, one must believe with the MIND.

Salvation Is Education

The very last words of the apostle Peter’s letters were: “but grow in grace, and in the *knowledge* of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (II Pet. 3:18). And notice the FOUNDATION of knowledge — the *starting approach* to wisdom: “The fear of the Eternal is the beginning of wisdom: a GOOD UNDERSTANDING have all they that do His commandments . . .” (Ps. 111:10). You can *understand* and gain *knowledge* only with the MIND!

Now what does *study* mean? Do we “study” with our minds — or our hearts? We find this instruction and teaching: “STUDY to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth” (II Tim. 2:15). That is a command! One can STUDY, and *rightly divide* the Word of God only *with His MIND*!

God teaches — yes, *commands*! — that the Scriptures are to be studied — with the mind. Otherwise, how could we know God’s will for us? So we find this command: “Wherefore be ye not unwise, but UNDERSTANDING what the *will* of the Lord is” (Eph. 5:17).

What a tragedy that *millions* have been deceived into a FALSE “salvation” inoculated with the spiritual poison that “salvation” and the “Gospel” are concerned only with a sanctimonious mental anesthetic, *shutting up the MIND* to God’s real truth, accepting the counterfeit of a sentimental “feeling” of piety.

What, then, *IS* the Holy Bible?

It is the revelation of the BASIC all-important knowledge which is otherwise utterly inacces-



Ambassador College, Keystone Press

TWO EXTREMES — Two concepts of, and approaches to, the "Gospel of Christ" are illustrated in these photos from the British Isles. Procession at top took place in Belfast, Ireland. Below that is Scottish "pop" priest advertising "preach-ins" for young adults. Mod "Flower Girls" and well-known disc jockey cheerfully assist in his campaign.

sible to the *mind* of man — the knowledge of *what* man is; of *why* man is; of the true values; of THE WAY to peace, happiness, abundant well-being, success, and to ETERNAL LIFE.

It is the FOUNDATION OF ALL KNOWLEDGE —

scientific, physical, and *spiritual*. No one can be properly EDUCATED except by and through it.

No one can know the way to *eternal life*, except by what the Bible contains. And that is exactly what we will study with this lesson.

LESSON 23

Origin of False Education

True education began in the Garden of Eden. Immediately after creating the first man, God began instructing Adam in the *way* of abundant living and eternal life.

False education also started in Eden when Satan came along. He planted *doubts* in Eve's mind. He PERVERTED all God had taught the first man and woman! Let's begin to understand.

1. Did God *begin* Adam's education by teaching him what to eat? Gen. 2:16. Did this include the fruit of the "Tree of Life," which we know represented the Holy Spirit and eternal life? Verse 9. Was the instruction in verse 16 actually a COMMAND given by Almighty God?

2. Did God also WARN Adam that the fruit of one tree would be *poisonous* — FATAL — for him to eat? Verse 17. What was God *really* teaching Adam in these verses?

COMMENT: By showing Adam what to eat, God began to teach him the way of life which results in great physical and spiritual blessings. And in showing him what not to eat, God began to point out *another way* of life which *produces* misery, anguish and untold suffering — the way which ultimately ends in EVERLASTING DEATH!

And so, God revealed two *ways of life* to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. They were free to *choose which way* they would *live*.

3. Now let's momentarily jump ahead about fourteen centuries to be sure we understand. Did God place before ancient Israel *two different ways* of life? Deut. 30:19. Were they *free to "CHOOSE"* which way they would go? Did God *advise*, and in fact, COMMAND Israel (as He did Adam) to "*choose life*" — to choose the way of OBEEDIENCE to God which results in great blessings?

COMMENT: Man has been a *free moral agent* from the beginning. Each of us is *free to choose* whether to live God's way and reap tremendous blessings, or REJECT His way and experience a *miserable life* of curses ending in DEATH!

4. But what did Satan, the Serpent, *lyingly* instruct Eve concerning God's warning? Gen. 3:4. And what did gullible mankind — Adam and Eve — *do* after listening to the Devil's very ap-

pealing deception? Verse 6. Didn't this *seem* — to their carnal human way of reasoning — like the "pleasant" and proper course to follow, even though God warned that disobedience would result in *death*? Same verse.

COMMENT: Satan offered the first humans a *counterfeit way* to abundant living and eternal life. It is the way of following the dictates of human nature which actually leads us AWAY from God and all we really desire.

This is the wretched and miserable way mankind has followed ever since — the way which results in suffering and death! Influenced invisibly by Satan and his demons, and assured visibly by Satan's *human agents*, man has readily yielded to his own downward pulls.

God wants us to learn from Adam and Eve's terrible example so we WON'T *follow in their footsteps*!

5. Did Jesus call Satan the "father" or originator of all lies? John 8:44.

COMMENT: The Devil personally taught in the Garden of Eden — and has continued to teach through supernatural thought implantation and through his human "ministers" — that obedience to God is NOT NECESSARY for salvation!

These false teachers will tell you there is *no way* by which you, *personally*, can keep God's commandments. They teach that Christ kept God's Law for you, and that all you have to do to be "saved" is just believe that He did, and "accept" Him as your Savior.

Nothing could be further from the truth!

These men are merely *continuing* Satan's false teachings by urging mankind to go ahead and disobey God, meanwhile assuring us with the Devil's *lying words*, "YE SHALL NOT SURELY DIE" (Gen. 3:4).

God *means* what He says! Disobedience to Him results in DEATH!

Notice what Jesus taught concerning salvation: "If thou wilt enter into [eternal] life, *KEEP THE COMMANDMENTS*" (Mat. 19:17). That is *why* God commands us to REPENT and begin OBEYING Him. He wants to GIVE us *eternal life*!

God does not command us to do the impossible. In Acts 2:38, He instructs us to "*repent* and be *baptized* . . . and ye shall receive the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT." God *promises* to give us His

Spirit of *love* and *POWER* by which we *CAN KEEP His Commandments* — but *only* if we first fulfill His conditions!

6. Could there have been a *change* in God's standards and requirements since Christ's death? Mat. 5:17-19 and Heb. 13:8. Therefore, has God's message always been one of *obedience* to His Law?

COMMENT: We need to realize the Devil and his demons are literal, *live* and *active* spirit beings whom we must *RESIST*! They are able to conceive of all kinds of ways to appeal to the downward pulls of our evil human nature.

Because of these downward pulls, Adam and Eve immediately followed Satan's false teachings. For the Devil's ways *appeal* to man's base nature!

Down through the centuries, carnal-minded man has continued to reject God's revealed way of life. So today we find ourselves living in a confused and deceived, chaotic civilization. Every phase of this Babylonish system we live in is established on principles diametrically *contrary* to the laws of God!

7. Why has mankind been so willing to "fall" for Satan's lies from the beginning? Rom. 8:7; 1:21-22, 28.

COMMENT: These ancient people, led by their *inherently rebellious carnal minds*, did NOT want to follow the way of life God revealed in the Garden of Eden. Therefore they *rejected* God and His true knowledge.

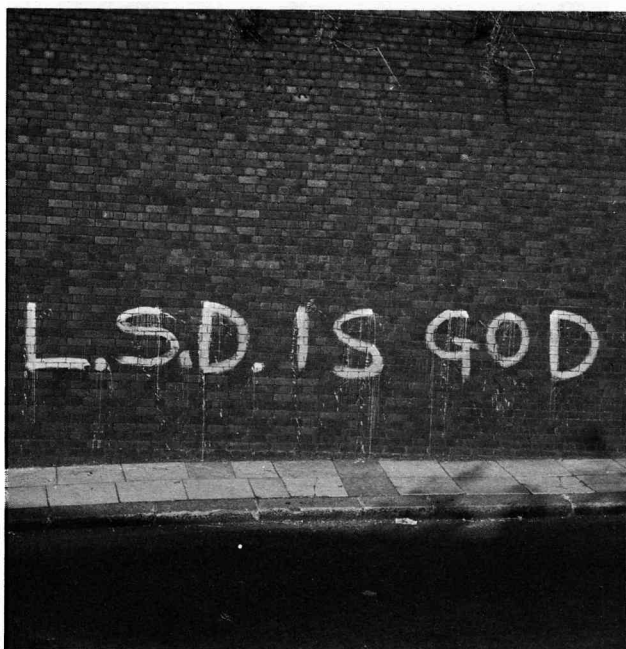
As the ancients groped in the dark, seeking to learn about "the unknown" without God to lead them, they *speculated* their way into the pagan philosophies that have come down to us today — the teachings of Aristotle, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus and Virgil — which have formed the *very basis* of MODERN EDUCATION!

And so even as the ancients "*did not like to retain God in their knowledge*," modern education has no place for *God* or His divine revelation — the Holy Bible!

This, then, is the origin of *today's* educational system! It begins by saying, "God is *dead*"! It launches man on the road of human search for "truth" and "understanding" *without* God. It follows the way which "*seemeth right*" to the carnal mind — the way which ends in *UTTER OBLIVION*! (Prov. 16:25.)

God reveals that His inspired Word is the very *BASIS* or *FOUNDATION* of all true knowledge. But today carnal man continues to base his way of life upon the opinions of other *God-rejecting*, *CARNAL-MINDED MEN*. And so our modern educational system is a *confusion* of some truth mixed with *MUCH ERROR*!

We need to understand that spiritual conversion involves the process of *unlearning* this wrong knowledge, as well as *learning* God's true knowledge. But we can't begin this process until we first look into God's Word to see what He *really teaches* — to learn the basic knowledge God intends us to *LIVE* by and *BUILD* upon!



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Inscriptions found in London, England. They are the fruits of a God-rejecting, permissive society deluded by modern education — both secular and religious!



Warnings Against False Teachers

1. Does Jesus warn us against *false* ministers? Mat. 7:15. And did Paul warn that the DEVIL's ministers would *masquerade* as God's true ministers? II Cor. 11:13-15.

COMMENT: Jesus warns us to beware of those who *seem* to be God's ministers, but are in reality — though unwittingly — the "ministers" of the Devil!

2. Christ calls upon all people to *repent* (Mat. 4:17). But was the "mystery of *iniquity*" — a religious system of *lawlessness* not calling for repentance and obedience to God — already at work a very short time after Christ's death? II Thes. 2:7.

3. Did this movement have its ministers, some of whom even claimed the rank of "apostle"? II Cor. 11:12-13. And was Paul sorrowful because he knew they would try to deceive the Corinthians? II Cor. 11:3-4.

4. What did Paul warn concerning *our time* when this world would be in its death throes — just as the end of this age looms imminent? II Tim. 4:3-4.

COMMENT: Do you realize the full significance of this dangerous condition? It means the vast majority of professing Christians today believe in *false* doctrines of salvation!

The churches of this world have a *DEAD FAITH* which is mere belief in Christ, *WITHOUT OBEDIENCE TO GOD!* They *have not really re-*

pent because they are NOT KEEPING God's Commandments — a *CONDITION* required for salvation. God says a dead "*no works*" faith produces only *DEATH!* (James 2:14-26; Rom. 6:23.)

Jesus taught: "*IF* thou wilt enter into [eternal] life, *KEEP the commandments*" (Mat. 19:17). Then He enumerated enough of the Ten Commandments to show it was this particular law that must be obeyed *as a CONDITION* to receiving eternal life.

You can't *earn* eternal life. God *gives* it as a *FREE GIFT* — but only to those who "keep the Commandments" — God's Law. He will not give eternal life to those who *continue living in sin*. And what is sin? "Sin is the *transgression* of the *LAW*" (I John 3:4).

5. Is the Law, which includes all of God's Commandments, immutable and eternal? Ps. 111:7-8.

COMMENT: For six thousand years the world has been going the way that "*seems*" *right to man*. No wonder it is in such chaos and confusion!

The *WAY of this world* has brought nothing but unhappiness, emptiness, discontent, poverty, sickness, disease, chaos and despair to all people! It has produced none of the *good things* God wants to bestow upon mankind!

The sooner man begins to live by God's Law, the sooner he will profit — both physically and spiritually!

God says: "*Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call ye upon Him while He is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Eternal, and He will have mercy upon him: . . . for He will abundantly pardon. For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the Eternal*" (Isa. 55:6-8).

This is the way to salvation! This is the way to find God! Seek Him by forsaking your own ways and thoughts — the ways you have thought to be right in your own eyes!

Since the BIBLE contains *God's way*, we must turn solely to its teachings for guidance. It becomes *our guide for righteous and successful living!* That is why Jesus said man shall live by *every word of God!*

The Bible must be the *SUPREME AUTHORITY* over our lives. We must therefore, and henceforth, *study* the Bible — *not* just carelessly, but *study* to *LEARN GOD'S WAYS*, and to *live by every Word of God*, instead of by human conscience!

What Repentance IS and Is NOT!

1. Did Christ say that people can actually *worship* Him, acknowledging that He is Lord, and yet not enter His Kingdom? Mat. 7:21. How



Wide World

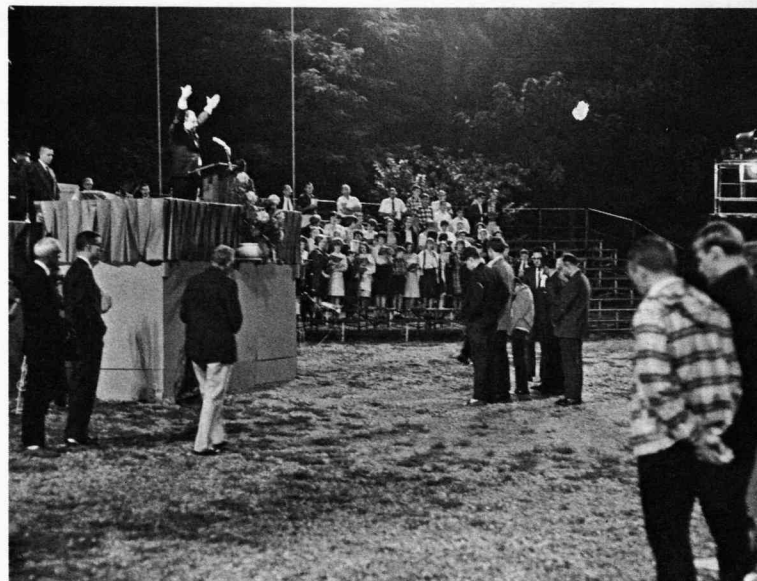
New York City pedestrians pause to hear a woman preacher expound her version of the "Gospel of Jesus Christ."

else can they *worship* Him, and yet not be born of God at Christ's coming? Mat. 15:8-9. Then *who will enter God's Kingdom?* Mat. 7:21, last part.

COMMENT: It's difficult to believe, but it's true — in *today's* religious confusion MILLIONS have supposed they had salvation spiritually — they have *believed on Jesus Christ* — but are NOT SAVED because they *refuse* to obey God.

Listen to what else Jesus said about people who want to worship Him *without obedience* to God's Commands: "Howbeit *IN VAIN* do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of *men*. For, *laying aside the Commandment of God*, ye hold the tradition of *men*... Full well ye *reject* the Commandment of *God*, that ye may keep your *own* tradition" (Mark 7:7-9).

Man would rather do almost anything else than surrender himself to God. His carnal nature *rebels* at the thought of submitting to God's Law! Therefore men have substituted their own laws and customs for God's commandments,



Wide World

Not really knowing the Bible definition of "repentance" and "belief in Christ," many have made their "decisions for Christ" at meetings like this.

3. What is the end result of this world's kind of *sorrow*, or "repentance"? II Cor. 7:10, last part. But what kind of sorrow for sin does God accept, and where does it lead? Verse 9 and first part of verse 10.

COMMENT: It is commonly believed that a *temporary remorseful feeling* over past mistakes and mere *acceptance* of Christ is all there is to being "saved." Are *you* like many thousands of others who have "made their decision for Christ" in this manner, and have "given yourself to Him" to be saved *by Him*, without any further effort on *YOUR PART*?

God says such "repentance" is totally unacceptable and will end in *death*!

True repentance — "Godly sorrow" — means to *turn around and begin living the opposite way* — God's way! *That* was Jesus' message! (Luke 13:3; Mat. 19:17.) We cannot allow our carnal God-rejecting minds (Rom. 8:7) to continue ruling our bodies if we are going to be acceptable to God and born into His Kingdom!

4. If one has truly repented and received the Holy Spirit, will his whole mind be *renewed spiritually* — will his thinking and outlook become CHANGED from what it used to be? Rom. 12:2; Eph. 4:22-24 and Col. 3:9-10.

COMMENT: A true Christian is a *new SPIRITUAL CREATION* being created into God's *character image*. Although it is a spiritual matter, involving God's Holy Spirit, this *change* takes place in the *MIND*.

The *FIRST* step toward spiritual renewal of the mind is *repentance*. Repentance literally means "a change of *mind*." The *SECOND* step



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This is one reason why so many reject and ridicule the Bible and *true* message of Jesus Christ!

thinking they can still receive salvation by merely *believing* in Christ as their Savior.

2. Human nature wants to *BE* right, but it doesn't want to *DO* right! So people often say, "Well, here's the way *I* look at it" — thus putting themselves in the place of the *Bible*. If it "looks right" to them, it becomes their law. In other words, they try to be *self-righteous*.

Just what does Isaiah 64:6 say about *our* "righteousnesses"? And what did Jesus say about those who "trusted in *themselves* that they were *righteous*"? Luke 18:9-14.

which is *acceptance* of, and *faith* in, Jesus Christ as personal Saviour, also takes place in the mind.

The **THIRD** step is baptism, after which God *places within* our minds the gift of His Holy Spirit which *renews*, or changes, the mind with God's spiritual knowledge and understanding.

5. Is a spirit-begotten Christian being created to *perform* "good works"? Eph. 2:10 and 4:24. Notice the words "created in *righteousness* and true holiness" in Eph. 4:24. And what is "righteousness"? Ps. 119:172. Then isn't it plain that true repentance is accompanied by OBEEDIENCE to God? Acts 5:32. *Of course it is!*

6. Must true Christians also *grow* in God's grace and knowledge? II Peter 3:18.

COMMENT: In other words, though we perhaps have never thought of it in this light before, true spiritual conversion *is* education! And TRUE EDUCATION *leads to conversion* — a *changing* of our minds to think and act more as God does and says in His textbook for righteous living.

If the experience of repentance does not lead to our thinking and doing completely differently than we used to, it is NOT TRUE REPENTANCE!

Man is the highest mortal being God created on earth. And his *mind* is the highest part of man's faculty which, above all else, elevates him above dumb animals. God intends that our minds be developed, trained and *used* to His honor and glory!

Further Warnings Against False Teachers

1. What did Jude exhort true Christians to do? Jude 3. Why? Verse 4.

COMMENT: Jude was urging Christians to earnestly strive to maintain the truth they had received from the apostles, for there were already in his day *false preachers* creeping into the church and *perverting* the true way to salvation — just as Paul had prophesied they would a few years earlier!

These false teachers were turning the *grace*, or forgiveness, of God into "lasciviousness" — into *license to disobey God!* They were twisting the meaning of the Scriptures to excuse their own disobedience to God's Law. These false preachers were beginning to introduce the idea that God's Commandments were done away, or changed.

This is exactly what we are hearing today!

2. What does God say about these so-called "ministers" who say they *know* Him, yet do NOT keep His Commandments? I John 2:4.

COMMENT: God says they are *LIARS!!* You can't trust a *liar* to teach you the true way to salvation!

How *different* the Word of God is from the teachings of men! God makes it very plain that to be a true Christian, one has to follow Jesus and *obey God's commandments!*

You were born into a world that fills the minds of people with *false education* from early childhood. And because we like to be well thought of, to be "liked," and to be "accepted," people are trapped into conforming — into following the false teachings of this world like *blind sheep!*

But through these lessons and His Word, God is now calling you out of the corrupt system of this world to learn and follow the truth — *before it's too late!* You don't have to be like those of whom Christ said: "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their **HEART** is *far from me*" (Mark 7:6).

Yes, through this Course and the Bible, you are *getting back* to the "faith once delivered"!

How to Recognize God's Church

1. Is the Bible to be the *source* of our doctrine? II Tim. 3:16. Does God's true Church *keep* His commandments? Rev. 12:17.

COMMENT: Jesus promised He would build *His Church*. He prayed that His Church would be ONE, not many divided and confused denominations. But He also **WARNED** there would arise *many false teachers* and ministers who would found many *different churches* which would *profess to be the Churches of God*, and through these would deceive the *many*.

The *Church Jesus promised* to build is *composed of those who are filled with and led by the Spirit of God*. Through the Holy Spirit, Jesus has guided it into His truth *through all ages* despite enemies from without who try to creep within, *professing* to teach the truth.

It is a Commandment-keeping Church, NOT a *political* organization. This Church faithfully retains the "testimony of Jesus Christ" recorded in inspired scripture. This Church recognizes Christ as its Living Head and it is subject to His government.

Do you realize the one *basic difference* between God's true Church and all others — the difference between it and *the world*? That difference is the *source* of its religion. IT IS THE **BIBLE!**

But in order to appear "acceptable" in the eyes of others — in order to avoid the uncomfortable feeling of *inferiority* — people by *nature* would rather accept the beliefs and practices of the *world about them*.

The **CHURCHES OF THE WORLD** *profess* to be-

lieve in God. They even claim to believe and *follow* the Bible—but by reading their *own* meaning into it. They seem to believe that God speaks to man through his *conscience*, and then carelessly *assume* this squares with the Bible.

But believe it or not, the actual *source* of the beliefs and practices of nearly all people is *society*—this world! And, realize it or not, this is the very essence of “*worldliness*”! (Write for and study our *free* article “What is Worldliness?”)

2. Does the Bible also say the Scriptures are for our reproof and correction? II Tim. 3:16.

COMMENT: Have you ever heard someone say to a friend: “I’m terribly upset—I believe I have been wrong about my beliefs, and I think I made a *mistake* in forming most of my opinions.” Have you? It’s highly doubtful! The *carnal* mind doesn’t *like* to be corrected and admit mistakes. But the *repentant* mind *will* take correction and ADMIT ERROR!

Notice this scripture says the Bible is profitable for *reproof* and *correction*. And for instruction in “righteousness”—our obedience to God. The Bible, then, becomes our BASIC GUIDE for living, once we turn around and go the other way—once we *repent* and begin OBEYING God!

Repentance Is Unconditional Surrender

One of the world’s well-known preachers said he cannot imagine a loving Christ coming to this earth as a war-maker and conqueror. Most of professing Christianity is in for quite a *surprise*—for this is exactly how He is coming! (Rev. 17:13-14; 19:11-16.)

Carnal-minded man is *hostile* to—at WAR with—Christ and His Father’s Law (Rom. 8:7). Christ would far rather shake this world until its inhabitants’ teeth rattle, than let them go on in their rebellious, sinful ways until “there should no flesh be saved [alive]” (Mat. 24:22).

But—*right now*—before Christ comes to FORCE this world into surrendering to Him, He is calling upon men to **VOLUNTARILY SURRENDER** to His authority!

To “repent” simply means to *surrender* ourselves to God’s will **UNCONDITIONALLY**!

During World War II, when the Allied High Command called on Germany, Italy and Japan to surrender, they demanded *unconditional* surrender, which meant the defeated Axis Powers gave themselves up completely—without any strings attached—to the victors.

This is what Christ demands of us today!

Allied armies then *occupied* the conquered territory, enforcing the will of the occupying powers. Similarly, once we completely surrender—repent—to Christ and are baptized, God’s Spirit comes within us. It begins to influence *our* ways of thinking, acting and living. No one



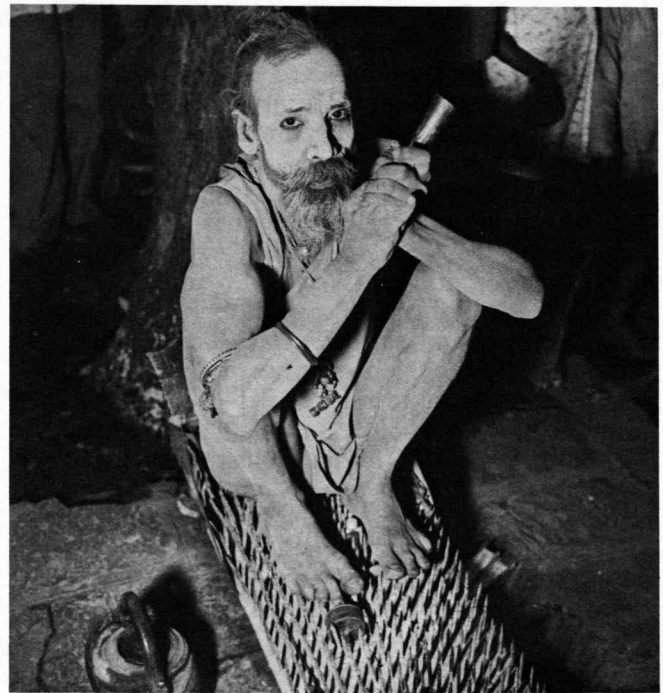
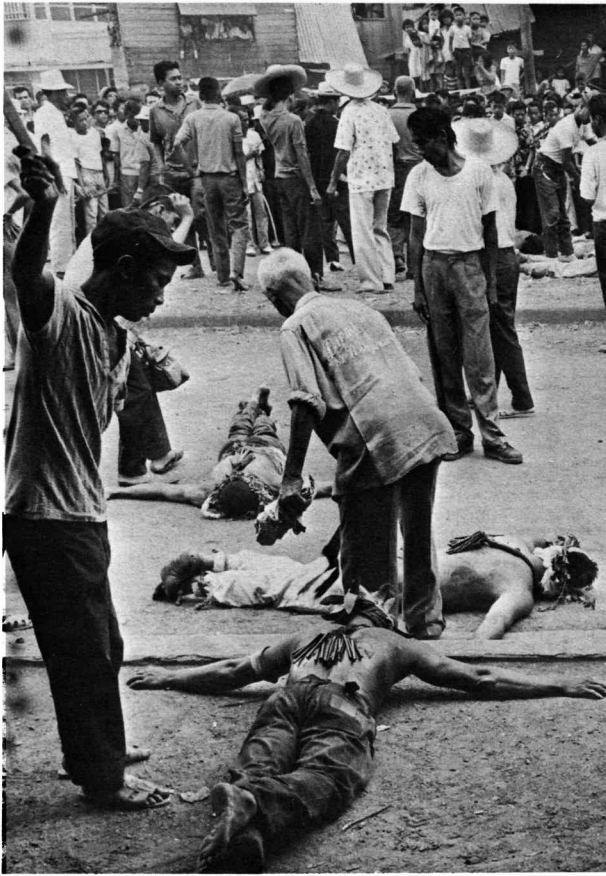
Wide World

General Douglas MacArthur signs World War II Japanese unconditional surrender documents aboard the USS Missouri, Sept. 2, 1945. But unconditional surrender is not just for Japanese. God demands the unconditional surrender of every human being in true repentance.

thought it strange that the Americans, British or French should claim the right to tell the defeated Axis Powers what to do—to interfere with and regulate the lives of the conquered. This is the right that God claims once we have completely surrendered to Him.

Even so, the *occupying* Holy Spirit does not come within us for the purpose of taking away our free moral agency. It won’t *force* us to do anything! It will only lead us in the right direction and give us added strength to *follow* its leading. We *could* REBEL again, and be at war again if we so choose. But if we continue to rebel, our *final* defeat—the Lake of Fire—might well be compared to an all-out annihilating nuclear holocaust with *no chance of surrender*! Let’s not choose *that* way! But rather follow God’s Spirit as it helps, directs and empowers us to practice our merciful Conqueror’s *way* of life!

1. Did Jesus Christ say no one who put any



Wide World, H. Armstrong Roberts

other person or thing *ahead* of Him could be His disciple? Luke 14:26, 27. Does this extend to include the person's own *life* also? Verse 26.

COMMENT: "Hate" in verse 26 means to love *less* by comparison.

2. Did He say that whoever would quit being his old sinful selfish self, and give up or "lose" his life to Christ, would live? Mat. 16:24, 25.

COMMENT: Jesus is actually talking about giving one's life in *total obedience and service* to God — even DYING for Him, if He should require that of us — in return for *eternal life*!

3. Is surrendering to Christ something to be considered lightly? Or must we first "count the cost" — realizing what surrendering to God really entails? Luke 14:28-33.

COMMENT: These lessons are showing you what *God requires* of those who would follow Him. The question is: what are *you* going to do about it?

A Fuller and Richer Life

Does our *unconditional surrender* of self to God also mean He wants all our MATERIAL GOODS too?

Of course not!

We have a *multi-trillionaire Heavenly Father*! The *earth* is *His*, and the fulness thereof! He doesn't need anything *from* us, but we *desperately need everything* from Him!

God does not demand penance or torture from *true* Christians. It is His will to BLESS those who surrender to Him! At left, devout Flagellants voluntarily submit to whipping and flogging as an "act of faith." Above, a poor Hindu "Holy Man" sits on a bed of nails.

God *wants* us to keep *everything* that is *good* for us, according to His divinely revealed laws! He wants us to give up only those things which are *bad for us* — especially doing those things we *do* which are motivated by our evil carnal nature.

1. Jesus came to call us *out* of this *troubled world*. But did He also come to make possible a fuller and richer life? John 10:10.

COMMENT: This means He came that we might have a happy, joyful and productive life *here and now*! A life just *filled* with interest, zeal and USEFULNESS. *He did not tell us to bend our backs under a mountain of human woe and suffering!* Or to do penance and live in poverty and misery!

Conversion does not mean you cast all material things aside. Instead, conversion makes possible for the first time our intelligent *use* of God's material creation *according to His Laws*!

2. Did Christ say: "Throw material wealth and physical pleasures away and seek *only* the Kingdom of God"? Mat. 6:33.

COMMENT: Notice again what He *did* say: "Seek ye *FIRST* the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and *all these things shall be ADDED unto you.*"

So it is not the giving up of material things that God is interested in — it is the *attitude* you have toward them! Seek *first* the Kingdom

of God, and *then* (secondarily in importance) shall these other things be *added* to you. God wants to BLESS US with material things — *not take them away!*

Let's be *balanced* in our thinking about these things. Let's understand the working of God's mind. We are here to learn how to *use* the material world, not *abuse* it. We are here to learn how to be happy and how to make others happy, too.

If you seek *first* the Kingdom of God with the wisdom and understanding of the Holy Spirit God promises to place in your mind, God will *richly bless* you both spiritually and physically. You will have an inward joy and peace of mind and assurance of eternal salvation, as this confused and chaotic world grows more and more hectic each day!

Now Is YOUR TIME to Repent

Man is now engaged in a momentous struggle, the *result* of which could well prove to be the *total destruction of human life from this planet!*

Yet almost no one understands the real *cause* of this world's chaotic conditions, and of the wretched plight of millions of human beings.

The apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, foretold these precise times. We have now entered the last days of this age when the unrestrained pulls of carnal nature are now bringing this world into a final convulsive climax — the results of which Christ said would be the complete annihilation of man from this earth, were He not to intervene.

1. How did Paul describe mankind in general today? II Tim. 3:1-5. Notice especially verse 5.

COMMENT: Yes, people *profess* Christianity — they attend churches — they have a "*form of godliness*," but that mere outward *form* and *ceremony* is NOT enough!

God demands a *complete reversal* in the natural evil inclinations of mankind. In other words, TOTAL REPENTANCE of following the ways that seem right to human conscience, and a complete *turning around* to begin following the way of God as revealed in the Bible!

2. What else does God have to say concerning this present evil world we have all had a part in? I John 2:15-17 and Rom. 12:2.

COMMENT: Here is the very *starting point* on the way to salvation! God commands us to COME OUT of this world and FORSAKE ITS WAYS! Not to be conformed to its ways, but to become like Christ by allowing the Holy Spirit to come within us and *help change us!*

This world is now teetering on the brink of *utter oblivion!* Terrible suffering lies just ahead for those who are not under God's protection.

Are you *neglecting* your opportunity for sal-

vation and safety in these trying times, and in the absolutely hideous days just ahead? Are you THROWING AWAY your opportunity for *eternal life* in preference to the corrupt, *temporary* lusts of the flesh and the temptations of this world?

The apostle Paul was inspired to write: "How shall we escape, if we *neglect* so great salvation?" (Heb. 2:3).

Yes, *How shall we?*

The biggest question you now face is this: *what are you going to DO about it?* Now is your *time* to repent and receive God's Spirit. *It's later than you think!*

Your Faith Is Necessary

Let's understand exactly what part your own *personal faith* or belief has in repentance, and in your receiving of God's Holy Spirit.

1. Does God state that Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sins so He might deliver us from this present evil age and provide us access to the Father? Gal. 1:3, 4 and Eph. 2:18. Are we to BELIEVE this with all our being, having *faith in Christ's sacrifice* for our sins? Acts 20:21.

2. Must WE also *believe* — have faith in — Christ's gospel message concerning the imminent establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth? Mark 1:15. (This obviously *includes* belief in Christ as our Savior and coming King.) Must we also repent to ultimately enter that Kingdom? Same verse.

3. Must we repent and believe to receive the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:38. (Baptism is the outward expression of our inward believing.)

COMMENT: God requires *two prior conditions* on YOUR part before you can receive the gift of His Holy Spirit.

First, you must REPENT of sin! Second, you must BELIEVE IN Christ as your Savior. But you cannot believe in Christ unless you also believe His message — the Gospel of the Kingdom of God (Mark 16:15-16).

However, *neither* your repentance, your obedience, *nor your faith* can result in salvation! They are merely PRIOR CONDITIONS. But when you supply these two conditions of repentance and personal faith, then GOD STANDS BOUND BY HIS PROMISE to give you His Holy Spirit which imparts Christ's *righteousness and His faith*. THESE are the ingredients that "*save*" and ultimately result in ETERNAL LIFE!

Let's be *sure* we really understand what KIND of faith is required for salvation.

The Faith That SAVES

Millions have been deceived into falsely believing they *have* a "salvation" which they do

NOT yet have at all! *God help us to really understand!*

It is *not your* faith in Christ — a faith YOU supply by believing in Him as Savior — that saves you. It is CHRIST'S FAITH, which *He* supplies and places in you by His Holy Spirit, which will ultimately save you! Notice this vital truth in your Bible.

1. Does God plainly state that we are saved through "faith"? Eph. 2:8. But is this *our* faith — the kind of faith that we can humanly supply? Or is this kind of faith a "gift" from God? Same verse.

COMMENT: Notice that the particular faith spoken of in this scripture is "*not of yourselves.*" This is another kind of faith!

The faith that really saves is *given to us* by GOD — it is a GIFT FROM HIM! You don't supply it, or work it up.

2. By *whose* faith are we justified or made blameless in the sight of God? Gal. 2:16.

COMMENT: Notice Paul does not say, by *your* faith in Jesus Christ — he says by "*the faith of JESUS CHRIST.*" Paul is talking about CHRIST'S FAITH — the faith HE has and uses — the same faith with which He performed all His miracles — the same faith by which He lived. It is *His* faith, placed by a miracle — as a gift direct from God — *into you!*

3. Wasn't it to prevent man from thinking he can save himself, that Paul had to point out this was a *special kind* of faith? Eph. 2:9. Notice the words "*lest any man should boast.*"

COMMENT: Millions have been deceived into believing that WE must somehow supply the *faith* that brings salvation! If WE could work up, or if WE could supply this *faith* by which we are saved, *wouldn't that*, in fact, amount to our producing

our own salvation by the very WORKS of *supplying this faith?*

Paul was very careful to point out that this faith is "*not of yourselves*, lest any man should boast!"

4. Is this *saving* faith imparted to us through the *gift* of the Holy Spirit which God promises to give us after we repent, believe and are baptized? Acts 2:38 and Gal. 5:22.

COMMENT: You must first repent and believe *in Christ*, as a condition, a prerequisite, in order that you may receive the faith of Christ. His faith is placed miraculously within you by the Holy Spirit!

How clear it becomes that there is really *nothing* we, of ourselves, can actually do to save ourselves! Yet we must comply with God's *conditions* before He will set His hand to save us. Our role is to REPENT and *surrender our will* — *our whole being* — to God and His Word, and then trust Him by the FAITH OF CHRIST to clean us up spiritually and ultimately give us eternal life.

But the longer you put repentance off, the harder it will become. *Why* it should be difficult to just go and throw oneself on God's mercy, ask His forgiveness, and give *oneself* to Him, is hard to understand. Yet something in the human nature within us will keep tempting one to PUT IT OFF. That temptation is *not of God*, you may be sure!

If in your heart you *do* want to turn to a FULL and JOYFUL life filled with God's Spirit, then WHY DELAY? Yes, now is *your time* to repent! Don't look for a certain feeling, but just *repent*, BELIEVE and OBEY God. That is the true way to salvation.

(To be continued)

an open letter from

THE STAFF

(Continued from page 2)

face at least. But deep down inside is the haunting realization that *something is missing* — their religion seems EMPTY — God seems UNREAL somehow, and so very, very far away.

Unknowingly, and in most cases sincerely, most of YOU have in the past been deceived by false preaching — which originated and proceeded forth from Satan the Devil through his demon spirits, which inspire and influence the religious system and false ministers of our day!

It is time to WAKE UP to this *reality!*

In these last days, before the second coming of Jesus Christ, you need to KNOW whether or not you are *prepared to meet your God!* With

an open mind, you should be willing to *prove* whether or not you have ever been *really converted.*

Misplaced confidence in a FALSE CONVERSION is a *great* and MORTAL deception which could very easily cause one to forfeit *eternal life!* It is such *dangerous* deception because one's own personal VANITY will, in many cases, prevent one from admitting that *he or she has never been converted!*

Are you willing to FACE this possibility? Are you willing to CHANGE if God shows you *through His Word* that you have never really been converted before?

God's Word says: "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his" (Rom. 8:9). In plain language, you must have Christ's Spirit in you or you are not a Christian — you have NEVER been converted!

A truly converted person is *filled with* and

LED BY the Holy Spirit of God. God places and lives His very *life* within us through His Holy Spirit. By this means, we are *begotten of Him* as children and thus partake of *His very nature!* "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they are the sons of God*" (Rom. 8:14).

Frankly, in the past, most of you didn't even know WHAT the Holy Spirit is, what it is supposed to do in your life, and *what* is to be the real result of being led by God's Holy Spirit.

In Romans 5:5, God tells us: "The *love of God* is shed abroad in our hearts *BY the Holy Spirit* which is given unto us." Through His Spirit, God gives us *His love*. Thus we partake of *His nature* — *His character*. And God's character is expressed in the *spiritual principles* contained in the Ten Commandments — *obedience to God's Law*. "For *this is the love of God*, that we *keep His commandments*: and His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).

God's Spirit leads us to OBEY Him as our Maker and Ruler.

The apostle Peter was inspired to write of "the Holy Spirit, whom God hath given to them that OBEY him" (Acts 5:32).

Real conversion, then, involves a real *surrender to obey God and His Laws*. In Acts 2:38, Peter was inspired to tell *HOW to be converted*. He said: "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*"

Frankly, most people attending the churches of this world and having been "baptized" by them, never really knew WHAT to *repent of!* They didn't know WHAT sin really is.

At the time of baptism in most churches, most people sincerely intend to "do better" or to "make their peace with God." But since they have not been taught the Bible definition of sin, they completely fail to realize how ROTTEN and SINFUL they have really been!

They don't *really* REPENT! They aren't broken up about the wretched state of their lives and their own human VANITY and *selfishness*, which expresses itself in all of us.

And such people don't immediately begin to *study* and UNDERSTAND the Bible. They just continue to go along with the customs, the ways and the traditions of this world. Their lives are not actually CHANGED. They don't come to *personally* KNOW GOD!

Speaking of *converted* people, Jesus said: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, *he will guide you INTO all truth*: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you *things to come*" (John 16:13). A truly converted person, then, will be guided into *new TRUTH* by God's Spirit. He will come to *under-*

stand and GRASP Bible prophecy — or *things to come!*

Genuine *conversion* actually REVOLUTIONIZES a human being's life! It is a *renewing* of his *mind* — his *attitude* — his *character!*

He comes to really KNOW God — to constantly *study* and UNDERSTAND more and more of God's Word — and he is able to *pray* and talk to God in a personal way. He receives constant *answers* — he is *blessed* — he grows more like Christ every month and year of his life!

The sad truth is that most professing Christians haven't even begun to get ready to START to begin on the road to this kind of Christian life!

The Almighty God, Who created our minds and our human nature, repeats twice a warning for us in the book of Proverbs. He warns: "There is a way which *seemeth* right unto a man, but the end thereof are the *ways of death*" (Prov. 16:25; 14:12).

It is only human nature to believe that *your way* is right. But God says that the way that SEEMS right to a man ends up in *death!* Remember that the wages of sin is DEATH (Rom. 6:23).

The greatest stumbling block that prevents most people from accepting the *truth* and being *truly converted* is their own VANITY. Most people have grown up in and attended some church or another. And they hate to admit that they have *never been converted!* Human nature makes them want to maintain their own righteousness.

God has inspired an *entire book* in His Word to deal with this common problem of human beings. It is the book of Job — one of the least understood books in all the Bible.

The primary lesson in this entire book is that God HATES our own human *self-righteousness!*

Notice Job's attitude throughout this book! "God forbid that I should justify you: till I die I will not remove *mine integrity* from me: *MY righteousness* I hold fast, and will not let it go: *my heart shall not reproach me* so long as I live" (Job 27:5-6).

Job again voices his real attitude in Job 31:6: "Let me be weighed in an even balance, *that God may know MINE integrity.*" Even Job's carnal friends could sense his own self-righteousness and vanity. "So these three men ceased to answer Job, because he was righteous *in his own eyes*" (Job 32:1).

Finally, after dealing *personally* with God and learning about his own *insignificance* and utter *weakness* and *wretchedness*, Job at last REPENTED. "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but *now mine eye seeth thee*. Wherefore I ABHOR myself, and *repent* in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5-6).

But the real question remains: Have you ever come to really ABHOR *yourself*? Have you truly

REPENTED as Job did? Have you *totally* SURRENDERED yourself to God and given your very LIFE to Him to use as *He sees fit*?

God *commands* us to quit justifying the *self*! "Let the wicked forsake HIS *way*, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon" (Isa. 55:7). But perhaps you don't think you've been wicked?

The Almighty God declares: "There is NONE righteous, no, *not one*" (Rom. 3:10). Again, He states: "FOR ALL *have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God" (verse 23).

Yes, we have *all broken God's Law*. And professing Christianity is STILL breaking His Law and *trying to justify doing so*!

God thunders: "For my thoughts are NOT your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Isa. 55:8-9).

This means YOU and ME! *Don't* apply this to someone else — apply it to YOURSELF!

Many of you reading this editorial think you are already "saved" — when the truth of the matter is that you NEVER have come to the place of *total surrender* to God and His *absolute* RULE over your lives! *If* this includes you, then you have NEVER received of God's Holy Spirit and been begotten as His spiritual son.

That is WHY you may not have been able to really understand Bible PROPHECY before! That is WHY you never really *understood* the great PURPOSE being worked out here below. And that is why God always seemed so far away — SO UNREAL.

This lack of God's Spirit is the reason that you were not continually GROWING in grace and in knowledge — and that you have lacked vital scriptural truths so many years of your life.

It is time to AWAKEN and begin *real* CONVERSION!

You should apply these lessons to your own SELF. And you should strive NOT to get your feelings hurt by the correction and the exhortation which is here given in deep LOVE!

Remember that when Jesus was showing His disciples that they had to literally "eat" of Him and His message, many got their feelings hurt and drew back. "Many therefore of his disciples, when they heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" (John 6:60.) But Jesus asked the twelve, "Will you also go away?"

Then Peter gave an answer which has the *same significance* today. He said: "Lord, to whom shall we go? *Thou hast the words of eternal life*" (verses 67-68).

What our STUDENTS SAY

"I don't know how I am to write this letter after Lesson 23! It is what I have been looking for all my life, and so plain I can't understand why I did not see the way before. This is the most wonderful lesson I have had so far. As it says, the story about 'just believe and you are saved,' falls flat!"

—Man, Otaki, New Zealand

Believed False Doctrines

"I have learned from the Bible and the Correspondence Course that several things I had assumed to be true were actually false doctrines. Also I have received answers to questions that other ministers and teachers had answered with, 'You are not supposed to question God.' Thank God that at last I have found the answers."

—P. H., Minot, North Dakota

Feels Secure

"I want to thank you for the literature I have been receiving and especially the Bible Course. For the first time I can see the picture of life as a whole. This knowledge makes me feel so much more secure about why, where and who I am. I can see more and more the purpose of this present world and our lives today."

—Joan H., Blackhawk, Pennsylvania

Re-enrolled

"I am requesting that you start sending me the Correspondence Course again. I had gotten away from reading, studying and praying, and now I'm at my 'wits end.' I didn't realize until now just how much peace of mind can be obtained from knowing God's truth and striving to be obedient. I'm so thankful that God is a forgiving and loving Father."

—K. L. B., Bossier City, Louisiana

• Request Granted!

"I just completed my daily study in Lesson 19 of the Correspondence Course. This study of the Bible is truly an answer to prayer. As long as I can remember, I would read the Bible, and just simply couldn't understand what I had read. I prayed often for God to give me understanding of His Word, then the Correspondence Course came out. I enrolled, and now thanks to God I am on the road to understanding His instruction book."

—J. G., Birmingham, Alabama