AMBASSADOR COLLEGE **Bible** LESSON 22

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

The Experience of REPENTANCE!

EVERYONE WANTS a satisfying, peaceful, interesting, pleasing, ABUNDANT LIFE. Yet nearly everyone is discontented, worried, often fearful, restless, bored, dissatisfied, with a sense of emptiness. Why?

The Eternal Creator *provided* for the life everyone wants, and seeks—yet only very few ever experience.

Very few understand the reason. Yet everyone *could* know! God has revealed the answer! GOD set in motion LIVING LAWS to PRODUCE HAPPINESS, peace, joy, and abundance. These LAWS ARE THE WAY to everything that everyone really craves and seeks—yet nearly everyone rejects *this way* and seeks it in the opposite direction.

Also, God made mankind *incomplete*, as we have been born—and as Adam was created. God formed *man* of the dust of the ground—of matter. Man is material. But God is a *spirit*. God made man to NEED A UNION WITH GOD TO HAVE GOD'S *CHARACTER* AND *DESIRES*. The physical being alone is not complete until united with the spiritual. Unlike any other material being, such as animals or plants, man was made "in the image of God"—so that the very HOLY SPIRIT of God Himself can actually enter *within man*—the spiritual thus uniting with the material. Thus God OFFERED FREELY to Adam—and He offers, through Christ, freely to us today, to put within us *His Holy Spirit*, which is His very immortal *life*. THUS the very *mind* of God—the divine *love* of God—the DIVINE NATURE of God—the *faith* of God—the POWER OF GOD—the *character* of God, all emanating from God, can come within man, as the gift of God's love to him!

Man is not *complete*, as God created him to become, until he has this union with his Maker—this fellowship—this father-son relationship—this companionship. Why, then, do men not have this priceless gift which God actually yearns to bestow upon every person?

God knew that man *could not* have this perfection of character which it is His purpose to create within us, by instantaneous fiat creation alone. It requires time. Knowledge, submissiveness, decision, cooperative will, self-resistance, self-direction on man's part, teaming up *with* God. This perfection of character can come only through *experience*—with man's consent and willingness.

Therefore God created mortal man with HUMAN NATURE, which, like the power of gravity, exerts on man a DOWNWARD PULL that is HOSTILE TOWARD GOD AND GOD'S WAYS. MAN MUST COME TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF HIS NATURAL REBELLION AGAINST GOD'S RIGHT WAYS. He MUST come to EXPERIENCE GENUINE *REPENTANCE* OF HIS HOSTILITY—his resentment of submission to authority—his own wrong thinking and acting.

Repentance Brings Happiness

God will not give ETERNAL LIFE to any person who will not be willing to live a happy, joyful, interesting, ABUNDANT and useful LIFE. All men do yearn and hunger for that kind of life. But all have been seeking it by RUNNING DIRECTLY AWAY FROM it. Man has been reaping what he has sown—discontent, unhappiness, strife, violence, suffering, fear, death.

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263
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God's CONDITIONS TO RECEIVING His HOLY SPIRIT are REPENTANCE, which is toward God the Father, and FAITH which is toward our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. These reconcile us to God. True repentance—experiencing a genuine ABHORRENCE OF THE SINFUL, REBELLIOUS SELF—turning *from* hostility and disobedience, *to* a loving Saviour and a loving Father in complete unconditional surrender and spirit of obedience—plus faith in the atoning work of Jesus Christ—remove the great barrier that has cut us off from God. Thus the very first step on *the way* toward real and everlasting happiness is a genuine, deep, and complete *repentance* (Acts 2:38). Only then is one really for baptism.

Yes, REPENT! There is THE THING THAT IS GOING TO TAKE REAL ACTION—self-mortification—unconditional *surrender*—complete *giving in*—on your part!

PERHAPS *YOU* HAVE NOW COME TO THE POINT WHERE YOU REALIZE THE GREAT NEED OF HAVING GOD'S SPIRIT TO *CHANGE* YOU. You now comprehend the *emptiness* and *futility* of life without a living union—a personal *fellowship*—with the true God, whose nature you now understand more fully.

THIS is A CRISIS TIME IN YOUR LIFE!

God's conditions of belief and baptism may seem easy for you to meet. But *not so with* REPENTANCE! Normally, YOUR own HUMAN NATURE and vanity WILL *REBEL* AGAINST FULLY REPENTING.

So what does "*repent*" really mean?

Understand *clearly!* In the last lesson, we learned that God, the Creator of *all* things, created within Adam and Eve their *carnal* nature. This evil nature, by inheritance, has been passed on down to all of us today. Because it was *natural* for them by the *nature* which God placed within them, Adam and Eve partook of the *forbidden* tree of the knowledge of both good and *evil* (Gen. 2:17; 3:6).

Adam and Eve gave in to their *evil pulls*—their nature of *selfishness*, *vanity* and *rebelliousness* against authority—with which they were created. And that is exactly what we, their descendants—born with the same evil nature—are doing today!

So "REPENTANCE" MEANS simply that we HAVE COME TO A FULL REALIZATION WE HAVE REBELLED AGAINST OUR MAKER—His Way and His righteous Law—that this is *wrong* — terribly *evil* — *sinful* — that we have come to ABHOR OURSELVES for our self-willed, rebellious, sinful past; that we are truly BROKEN UP about it and READY now, with God's help, to *bury* our old natures, TO *quit sinning*, QUIT REBELLING, to surrender unconditionally, AND to OBEY GOD with all our hearts—from here on and FOREVER!

When we are finally brought to real repentance, WE MEAN BUSINESS. We are ready—in *every phase* of our lives—to say: "*YES*, LORD . . . *THY* WILL BE DONE." In real repentance, we have become completely *sick* and *tired* of our own selfish ways—*and those of this world's society*. We are truly *sorry* for our mistakes and sins—and we are *most willing* and *ready*, through God's Spirit within us, to make a *permanent change*. We are now READY TO "TURN AROUND AND GO THE OTHER WAY"—*ALL* THE WAY—*GOD'S* WAY.

LEARNING THIS GREAT *LESSON* OF OUR OWN HELPLESSNESS, MISERY and inadequacy *apart* from God is THE REAL *PURPOSE* OF LIFE! That IS *WHY* GOD HAS PERMITTED "THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD" to continue—with all of its trials, tests and frustrations.

Man must learn that he *needs* God—that he is *incomplete* and *frustrated* without a vital, personal fellowship with his Maker.

God, having taught us this *great lesson*, can *finish* His creation by placing within us His Holy Spirit—His very *nature* and *character*—which will give us the spiritual *power* to overcome and crush out the selfish downward pulls of human nature. The Holy Spirit will give us this *power*—and great *joy* and inward *peace of mind*.

You were born *incomplete*—in great *need* of personal contact with God through His Spirit. *YOU* NEED to face that fact squarely and—asking GOD'S GUIDANCE AND HELP—TAKE *ACTION* ON IT!

The Turning Point

The TIME OF REPENTANCE is the CRISIS in your life! It is the TURNING POINT IN YOUR ENTIRE DESTINY!

DO NOT UNDERESTIMATE THE IMPORTANCE of this matter. Repentance spells the DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SUCCESS and OBLIVION! It is only when you have been made willing to totally *surrender* your stubborn will to God that He will grant you His Spirit. And *only* through the power of God's Spirit within you will

you ever be able to keep your mind in *subjection* to His will—to overcome *selfishness, vanity* and *sin.*

LATER, IF you are in the resurrection—literally BORN of God AT THE RESURRECTION YOU CANNOT SIN, for the Holy Spirit—the very *nature* of God—will remain in you (I John 3:9).

YOUR *WILLINGNESS* IS THE *QUESTION!* Your *willingness* to help build the kind of *character* which God wants—through CONSTANT SURRENDER NOW WITH THE AID OF GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT, to Him and His ways—is the *most important* question in all of life! Yet it is a question to which most people give very little thought.

Most PEOPLE ASSUME that God's only purpose for us is that we go through a sentimental experience they call being "saved" and are then taken to "OUR REWARD" which is usually depicted as a "heaven" of IDLENESS AND EASE, a "happy hunting ground," a "mansion in the sky," or whatever each particular group wishes to call it. The basic idea, though, is that we just bask in the light of God's countenance and lie around all day. There is NO NEED to exercise CHARACTER—*no decisions* to make—*no responsibilities* placed upon us—*nothing whatever to do!*

We just *take it easy* supposedly, and, like the sun —as the songwriter says—we "roll around heaven all day." HOW WRONG!

If, as these people believe, God's only purpose is to get us "saved"—and if, as so many believe, all there is to getting "saved" is accepting Christ as Saviour, then *why* is it that God does not *instantly* take each one of us to our "reward" as soon as we accept Christ—*away* from all the continuous trials, heart-aches, and sufferings of this life?

BUT THE ANSWER, briefly stated, IS that GOD CREATED the human family—US—FOR A VERY GREAT PURPOSE—a purpose that most professing Christians, and even most ministers, have missed entirely.

GOD Almighty is THE SUPREME ARTIST. You see His artistry in the magnificent sunsets, beautiful landscapes, awe-inspiring mountains, in the star-studded sky. God's work of artistry is *creation.* He is the Supreme Almighty Creator of all.

But now, IN MAN, GOD HAS SET HIS HAND TO PRODUCE the CROWNING PINNACLE of HIS own works of CREATION. Yes, even higher than the angels. In man He is creating PERFECT, righteous, HOLY CHARACTER! And *that* is the highest, most lofty achievement that even the Supreme Almighty Creator can accomplish!

God's *purpose* in having brought *you* into this world—and in permitting you to live and breathe—is to create in and through you his own supreme MASTERPIECE of creation!

It's true that YOU, *AS YOU NOW ARE,* certainly are NOT very IMPORTANT—certainly are of very little consequence—so far as your own inherent ability and capacity is concerned. You are FULL OF FAULTS, WEAKNESSES, short-comings. You have bad habits. You have sins—"secret sins"—that you have not yet mastered and overcome, which *no one* knows anything about except just *you—and* God!

Then can you REALIZE the SOBERING TRUTH that it is the purpose of the Everlasting God to make out of *you*—sinful and unworthy and incapable though you have been—an immortal, spiritual and holy *character* so pure, and noble, and righteous that ultimately the eternal God Himself can look upon you with loving pride as the *supreme* product of all His creative power through eternity? Can your mind grasp the awful greatness—the solemn *immensity* of that truth? And it *is* truth! It ought to fill you with awe—*with wonder!* GOD *Himself* WILL DO THIS CREATING. *HE* WILL DO THE WORK. *HE* is the divine SCULPTOR.

Surrender Into God's Capable Hands

BUT this character will not be created in YOU *unless* and *until* you, yourself MAKE THE DECISION—unless and until you simply *HUNGER* AND *THIRST* FOR THE PURE, HOLY CHARACTER OF GOD TO BE *BUILT* INTO YOU—unless and until you, yourself, desire this mortal flesh and its cravings and desires AND tempers *crucified*—until you REPENT BITTERLY AND DEEPLY OF SIN, AND EXERT YOUR UTMOST EFFORT to put it down and hold it under, crying out earnestly to God with broken, contrite heart continuously, *believing,* TRUSTING HIM to forgive you and to fill you with His love, His understanding and wisdom, His faith, His power, TO SIMPLY TAKE YOU INTO HIS CAPABLE HANDS and make of you what He purposes, and what you are utterly incapable to make of yourself. Yes, you have your part in this too—but it is *God* who will impart to you His righteousness—His *very own* holy and righteous *character!*

If you will *repent,* and come to God through JESUS Christ the Saviour, trusting in His precious shed BLOOD for the remission of every sin you ever committed, trusting the risen, Ever-Living Christ as High Priest to come literally inside you, through His Holy Spirit, and to mold, fashion, shape your character—then you will see that the Creator is *still creating,* in you, the very highest work of all His works of creation! Yes, Christians are being *created* in Jesus Christ "*unto good works*" (Eph. 2:10),—"*created* in righteousness and true holiness" (Eph. 4:24).

For this tremendous *purpose,* you are made of

mortal clay—made subject to pride, vanity, passions and tempers and desires of the flesh. CHARACTER is something which CANNOT BE INSTANTLY CREATED. It grows, and is developed through *experiences of overcoming*—and these REQUIRE TIME. It requires the life-time, during which you must suffer TEMPTATIONS, encounter obstacles, endure TRIBULATIONS, OVERCOMING SELF. BUT God promises you His *power* to draw on to help you. IT ISN'T *REALLY* YOUR DOING—it's *God's*. Your part is to *repent*, surrender fully, wholly, unreservedly into His hand—seek Him, cry out to Him, *trust* Him. And GOD EVEN GRANTS you the UNDERSTANDING AND SPIRITUAL CAPACITY TO ENABLE YOU TO REPENT! But you have your part in it, of course—else there would be no *character!*

YES, the *very* PURPOSE of THIS WORLD, populated as it is with carnal-minded people who have produced an over-all evil, *unhappy* world, is TO BRING MEN TO REPENTANCE!! It is to make them realize they should have *different minds.*

WATCH THE LITTLE CHILD—its resentments, ANGER, JEALOUSY, COVETOUSNESS of another's toys, flares of temper. Its nature is *yours —made plain!*

MAN, swayed by human nature, and Satan and his demons, has followed the path of destruction—of polluting, perverting, destroying everything he has been allowed to handle and use and control. He has PERVERTED the SACRED WORD OF GOD, polluted his own mind, DISSIPATED his BODY; he has FAILED TO TRAIN or has mis-taught his children; he has manifested RESENTMENT, envy, HATRED toward neighbor, sought to get the best of his neighbor in a deal; tried to get more out of life than he has put in it, which is DESTRUCTION rather than construction; PERVERTED the human food supply; turned scientific and technological developments into engines of destruction until now, unless God steps in, he would annihilate human life from off the earth.

Trust God—and Do Your Part

Yes, we ourselves, are *seeing* all these things. WE SHALL HAVE TO WANT THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD WITH SUCH FERVOR and burning desire that we are WILLING TO FIGHT our own SELVES, to suffer trying to control and master ourselves—*and finally to* THROW OURSELVES ON GOD'S MERCY, TRUSTING in HIS POWER—THE HOLY SPIRIT—in order TO OVERCOME!! God is the *perfect* character, and His purpose is to create in us, by development and with our consent and active determined effort, His own perfection until we become like *Him!*

THE FIRST BEGINNING TOWARD FULFILLMENT OF YOUR PURPOSE ON EARTH IS TO *REPENT*—repent of these wrong things, customs and practices.

LESSON 22

Repentance Demanded from the Beginning

1. We know that this present WORLD is EVIL. Hasn't it been evil FROM the very BEGINNING? Gen. 2:17; 3:6; 4:8; 6:5.

COMMENT: This world has always been evil. The preponderance of downward pulls within HUMAN NATURE HAS MADE IT SO.

2. So is it strange that we find the PEOPLE of the world IN EARLY TIMES were CORRUPTING GOD'S WAY OF LIFE the same as mankind has always done? Gen. 6:12.

COMMENT: Notice the words "CORRUPTED" and "HIS WAY." God has always had "*His* way" by which He proposes that man must live. The way of not giving in to down-pulls.

3. Isn't IDOLATRY one of the downward pulls which God placed within the natures of *all* people? Gal. 5:20. But isn't this a violation of one of His commandments? Ex. 20:3-5.

4. Now let's see if God called upon people to *repent*, from the time of Adam. Can IDOLATRY be ANYTHING which ONE PLACES in his affection AHEAD OF OBEDIENCE TO GOD—anything—his POSESSIONS OR WHATEVER? Ezek. 14:4. Remember in Lesson 21 we found that it can be. Isn't this one of the downward pulls within their natures that God was commanding they repent of following? Verse 6. Notice the words "SETTETH UP IDOLS IN his HEART" in verse 4. And note especially the COMMAND "*REPENT*" in verse 6.

COMMENT: Yes, human nature has *always* been the same and GOD HAS ALWAYS DESIRED that MAN REPENT OF yielding to his own vanity and REBELLING AGAINST his MAKER.

Although this CALL TO REPENTANCE was directed TO the ANCIENT ISRAELITES, it was a CALL TO *ALL* ANCIENT PEOPLE. It was addressed to that nation because they, as descendants of Abraham, have the *salvation promises* which were later opened to *all* peoples.

5. Was God forming *character* in these early people by asking them to *repent* and TURN FROM

their EVIL PULLS, just as He is today? Deut. 30:15-16, 19. Weren't they asked to CHOOSE? Same question. Choosing rightly DEVELOPS CHARACTER! Doesn't GOD CREATE EVIL FOR THIS VERY PURPOSE? Isa. 45:7.

COMMENT: No wonder this is only *a* day of salvation. God was only putting these Old Covenant people through the *practice*. They could not actually keep spiritual intent of the commandments of God which were against their carnal natures, for the *power* of the Holy Spirit with which to do so was not yet given. Nevertheless, in calling on people to *repent* in those days, God PUT them ON NOTICE that THERE was A BETTER WAY OF LIFE, if they could only keep it! A chance for these Old Covenant people to keep the commandments of God is coming. The bones of Ezekiel 37 which are to be clothed with flesh into which air is breathed, give a clue. But more on this later.

6. *Whose* way are people to *turn from* in repentance? Ezek. 33:9.

COMMENT: Many do not understand what "repentance" means. But here we see plainly that it is the TURNING OF MAN FROM HIS WAY—the things WHICH BY NATURE SEEM *naturally* RIGHT TO HIM. The Old Covenant Israelites could not think straight. They had *carnal* minds. They did not yet have the Holy Spiritual mind of God within them. They were "not all there." GOD WAS LETTING MAN LEARN THE HARD WAY, and letting their lesson be a lesson to us who can have the Holy Spirit, and need *not* learn the *hard* way.

7. Did Zechariah 1:4 also verify the fact that repentance is a *turning from* the natural way of man?

COMMENT: God called on Israel to repent. If your Bible gives dates in its center reference column, you will note that God was *still* calling on Israel to *repent* hundreds of years later. Down through the ages it has always been God's command.

8. Does God want all to forsake their unrighteous *thoughts*, even though they do not *act* upon them? Isa. 55:7. If all are to "TURN FROM" something, what were they to "TURN TO"—*keep*—in place of these? Eze. 18:21.

9. But even in Old Covenant times, when the Holy Spirit was not available then so they could keep God's commandments, did God inspire Isaiah the prophet to prophesy that the Holy Spirit of *power* would later become available so that all *could* keep God's commandments? Isaiah 55:1-3. Notice the word *waters*. At that time did God foretell that now, since Christ came—He could be *near* to us, through the Holy Spirit we may have placed within us? Verse 6. What does God tell us, the wicked, through His prophet Isaiah, to do because the Holy Spirit of *power* can be within us? Verse 7.

COMMENT: This is an *amazing* chapter. Verses 1-11 deal with the *action* of the Holy Spirit within our lives and allied subjects, in our day—*since* the time of the coming of Christ. Verses 12 and 13 describe the changing power working within people and its results in the millennial Utopia.

COMMENT: This is important. Prophecy is merely the means by which God gives His *plan* in advance. GOD, at creation, put carnal human nature within man. He KNEW, for this reason, that OLD COVENANT ISRAEL WOULD NOT KEEP His COMMANDMENTS. He was LETTING MAN WRITE A HISTORY for all the billions of people who would come after them OF WHAT MAN, of himself, COULD NOT DO WITHOUT the *power* of the HOLY SPIRIT. That is why, even before this history-writing period was over, God was prophesying the coming of the Holy Spirit of *power* for all mankind.

10. How many years before Christ's coming did God reveal, through this prophecy of Isaiah 55, His plan of making the Holy Spirit available?

COMMENT: A Bible that gives the date references on its pages will show that God revealed, through Isaiah 55, this event over 700 years before it actually happened.

11. Did God inspire Ezekiel the prophet to make a special direct plea to Abraham's descendants, the Israelites of our day, to *repent* after the Holy Spirit became available so they could really do so? Ezek. 33:7,11.

COMMENT: This warning to *repent*, given years after ancient Israel became lost in captivity, is directed directly to Abraham's *descendants* of our day because Abraham had the salvation promise, and this was transmitted on down through his seed, Israel, and finally became *possible* through His one *great* seed, Christ. But salvation comes only *after* repentance. So Abraham's *descendants* must repent. People of *all* nations must repent if they are to receive salvation.

12. Notice! Did DANIEL PROPHESY THERE WOULD COME A TIME WHEN MANY WOULD BE ABLE TO REPENT AND TURN TO TRUE RIGHTEOUSNESS? Dan. 12:3.

COMMENT: Notice that this prophecy was given in a time when they did not have the *power* of the Holy Spirit which would enable them to turn to true righteousness. But also notice that many would be righteous in a future day. *Our* day, when the power of the Holy Spirit is now available to make it so!

Repentance Now Demanded!

1. Did Jesus know that the Holy Spirit—THE HOLY SPIRIT OF POWER—was NOW to be

made AVAILABLE to all mankind immediately after His ascension into heaven so that it would now be possible, for the *first time*, FOR ALL TO KEEP the COMMANDS OF GOD in the Spirit and so be ready for immediate transformation into God's Kingdom—*IF*—they would first REPENT? Matt. 4:17.

2. And didn't the Holy Spirit of *power* come at Pentecost, just as Christ knew it would? Acts 2:4. And didn't Peter immediately tell people how they should receive the *power* of the Holy Spirit with which to overcome their carnal natures? Acts 2:38. Is the most difficult condition again mentioned here? —NOTICE AGAIN THE WORD *REPENT*.

COMMENT: Yes, *REPENTANCE* IS THE HARDEST THING MAN HAS TO DO. Man has formed little *ways* of his own. These he has fashioned to suit his own little *carnal* mind. But repentance—*turning around* and *going the other way* THROWS his OWN "LITTLE WORLD" INTO CONFUSION. JUST LIKE a HOUSE-CLEANING. Things must be UPROOTED and CHANGED, and THEN EVERYTHING is in BETTER condition THAN EVER! FOR GOD SAYS that HIS THOUGHTS AND WAYS are *not* our thoughts and ways, and that His thoughts and ways are FAR HIGHER THAN OURS (Isa. 55:9). That's why there was "NO SMALL STIR ABOUT *THAT WAY*"—*God's* way, BROUGHT ABOUT BY REPENTANCE (Acts 19:23) in the time of Christ's original apostles.

3. Did Christ say that REPENTANCE should BE PREACHED AMONG ALL NATIONS? Luke 24:47. Why? Acts 17:30,31.

COMMENT: This is all inclusive! EVERYONE IN THE WORLD IS TO REPENT! God here commands every person in this world to repent—turn FROM their PRESENT WAYS! For a day of judgment is coming. *Now* is the time for repentance.

4. Doesn't Romans 3:23 verify the fact that ALL HAVE COME SHORT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS by their own efforts?

5. Are ALL people FILTHY BY GOD'S STANDARD? Pslams 14:2-3. Is there a single one that is *really* good? Verse 3.

COMMENT: Many feel that they are poor *good* humble folk who have not done anything really *wrong* in their lives and so have little, if anything, to repent of. But your Bible says *all* have *carnal minds* and that ALL have SINNED. Are such people *perfect?* Christ commanded, "Be"—BECOME—"YE therefore PERFECT even as your Father which is in heaven is *perfect*" (Matt. 5:48). They as well as us, NEED to *REPENT* SO THEY *CAN* RECEIVE GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT AND BECOME PERFECT. For your Bible says, "So then they that are in the *flesh* cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the *Spirit, if* so be that the Spirit of God *dwell* in you. Now if any man have *not* the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His" (Rom. 8:8-9). EXAMINE YOURSELVES! Are you *sure* you were ever converted? Remember it is the *few* who find the *real* way to salvation now.

6. What are the repentant to turn from? I Pet. 2:11.

COMMENT: The "fleshly lusts" spoken of here are the DOWNWARD PULLS that GOD HAS PLACED WITHIN the fleshy brain of us SO that WE MAY *COME TO DESIRE* TO RESIST THEM, be *REPENTANT* ABOUT the EVIL ACTS THEY CAUSE us to do when we let our guard down, and long to the utmost that they be crushed out of us. Peter here commands that we *abstain* from giving in to these fleshly pulls. We now know that this is impossible except through *repentance*.

7. If anyone *remains* unrepentant—impenitent—what does he lay up for himself? Rom. 2:5. And what will be his ultimate fate? Ezek. 18:20.

COMMENT: *Everyone* must ultimately REPENT! THERE IS NO OTHER WAY. IF they set their will forever NOT to DO so they will be DESTROYED FOREVER in the holocaust of fire which will end the existence of this present earth and destroy everything except those who are transformed into spirit beings (II Pet. 3:10). They will be destroyed in the fire which will be so enormous that it will look like a great lake of fire (Rev. 20:15).

Why God Asks Us to Repent

IS GOD FAIR WHEN HE ASKS US TO REPENT? The PRESENT WORLD is ON the ROAD TO DESTRUCTION! Honest persons are admitting that world conditions bear this out. THE REASON? SIN!

GOD COMMANDS that we REPENT OF OUR SINS, and TURN AROUND and LIVE A LIFE that is FREE FROM SIN. What is SIN? There are TWO DEFINITIONS—the *WORLD'S* definition, AND the *BIBLE'S* definition. The WORLD'S DEFINITION is that sin is the WAY to act and live THAT GIVES THOSE WHO DARE to do so INCREASED PLEASURE, fun, good time, enjoyment. The "forbidden fruit" that is sweeter, more desirable.

This CONCEPT, though unrealized, IS that GOD is *unjust* and UNFAIR, forbidding us really to enjoy life. Consequently, sin is the desirable way forbidden, or at least frowned on, by respectable society under religious influence. If sin is to be enjoyed, it must therefore be in secret unless one is to defy society or be branded with disgrace—or so it used to be, though society today is becoming

broader minded, more tolerant of sin, permitting more and more what previous generations forbade.

This concept was aptly illustrated by the death-bed confession of an atheist. His daughter came to his bed-side and asked:

"Father, now that you know that you are going to die, which do you now think is best—your atheism or Mother's Christianity?"

"Well daughter," the dying man replied, "I still believe my way is the best to *live* by, but I'll have to confess at last that your mother's religion is the best to *die* in."

That's the common conception. People *unthinkingly* have a picture of a god who is unfair—who expects people to give up the worthwhile things of life, deny one's self enjoying life, and live a life of *un*happiness in order to be "saved." And ACCORDING TO THIS VIEW the way to cheat God is to live in sin and enjoy life, and then SQUEEZE THROUGH AT THE LAST MINUTE BY a DEATH-BED CONFESSION!

This concept is Satan's MASTERPIECE DELUSION, fastened on an unthinking world! It pictures the god of Herbert Spencer's distorted imagination—a monster, who "saves" people through *fear* of *penalties* unless they forsake "more desirable ways" for his "narrow and unhappy way." It hides God's love, turns God's Law of Love into an evil thing, CHEATS HUMAN BEINGS OF a happiness, peace, success and JOY that could be theirs through a discernment of the *true* values!

THAT IS THE *WORLD'S* DEFINITION OF SIN.

BUT what does the Text Book for *really* joyous living—the *Bible*—whose all-wise author is the Eternal God, define as sin?

"SIN," DEFINES THE *BIBLE*, "IS THE TRANSGRESSION OF THE *LAW*" (I Jn. 3:4). "The LAW is SPIRITUAL" (Rom. 7:14). And "The law is HOLY, JUST, and GOOD," God says (Rom. 7:12). And "*Love* is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10). Is there anything wrong in that? No. It is *good!*

What is *righteousness?* "All thy *Commandments* are *righteousness*" (Ps. 119:172). Sin is the transgression of LIVING LAWS God has set in motion. These Laws are ALIVE. They are ETERNAL, IMMUTABLE, INEXORABLE! (Ps. 111:7-8).

When we TRANSGRESS them, THERE IS A PENALTY. There is NO ESCAPE from the penalty! That is why God *gave* His only Son to *pay* that penalty for all who accept it, in our stead. THE LAW has been set in motion, and it is THE MOST POWERFUL, IRRESISTIBLE THING IN ALL THE UNIVERSE! Relentlessly, it moves on, always claiming its penalty without fail! That Law is *so strong—so irresistible*—SO IMMUTABLE—that it TOOK EVEN the LIFE OF GOD-IN-THE-FLESH, JESUS CHRIST, the very Son of God! IT WAS STRONGER THAN *HE!* It claimed His life, when He took on Himself your sins and mine! When those sins of *ours* were upon Him—those "sweet" but forbidden fruits!—*He* came under the penalty in *our* stead; and then not even the life of Jesus Christ was strong enough to *prevent* that inexorable Law from claiming its penalty—*death!*

JESUS DID NOT DO AWAY WITH THE LAW. The LAW DID AWAY WITH *HIM*—with His physical, earthly life! It is only because God raised Him from the dead by a resurrection that He now lives! He didn't end the *Law*—no, the *Law* ended His life! And the Law will end *yours,* unless your sins are all on Jesus! The Law is *eternal,* immutable and eternally active.

Yes, the LAW of God is not evil, but GOOD! It is love! It is the WAY TO PEACE, to HAPPINESS, to JOY! KEEP IT, and you will BE HAPPY. BREAK IT, and you will SUFFER! THE LAW IS GOD'S GREATEST GIFT TO MANKIND—given to make man happy, to lead him into the full abundant life, to *protect* his happiness and give him ETERNAL LIFE THROUGH KEEPING the Law! But you and I have broken the Law—sinned—and death is the penalty. The blood of Jesus pays that penalty—takes away past sin, reconciles us to God. Then God gives us His *Holy Spirit*—the Spirit of *love*—"THE LOVE OF GOD"—GOD'S KIND OF LOVE—"SHED ABROAD IN OUR HEARTS BY THE HOLY SPIRIT." And this is a *spiritual* love, in us, which *ALONE* CAN FULFILL, OR KEEP, GOD'S LAW! Only these having the Holy Spirit within them can inherit eternal life! All others are sinners, and the penalty of sin is death! It is *ONLY* THOSE thus KEEPING the Law who KNOW PEACE, HAPPINESS, JOY!

The commands, precepts and other TEACHINGS OF the BIBLE PULL THE GLOSSY, ATTRACTIVE COLORING OFF OF SIN and REVEAL IT FOR WHAT IT IS!! REMEMBER *that!* DON'T FORGET IT! These stand for *the way* which will bring true happiness! And they point out to us that living any other way than by these is a snare and delusion! Humans seek fun, pleasure, enjoyment. SIN usually GIVES a TEMPORARY SENSATION OF PLEASURE, or exhilaration. But it's FALSE as hell itself! BECAUSE ALWAYS there's A KICK-BACK! Sometimes it's the headache of the "morning after." It exacts an *exorbitant price* always collected later—but it's a RELENTLESS COLLECTOR! And its FINAL PRICE is DEATH! It's a mighty POOR BARGAIN! God help us to discern the true values from the false!

You now know that God has placed within you a preponderance of downward pulls, and that all have given in to these to the extent that all "to-

gether have become filthy," and that "there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Ps. 14:2-3). Too, you know that Christ has now called upon you to *repent*—that is, turn *from* your old fleshly ways, and turn *to* His ways. In a *general way* you now understand the downward directions which you must *turn from*, and IN A *GENERAL WAY* YOU NOW UNDERSTAND the WAYS of God which YOU MUST TURN TOWARD. But that is *NOT* ENOUGH!

The Bible tells WHAT to Turn To and Turn From

YOU MUST KNOW *SPECIFICALLY* WHAT YOU MUST *TURN FROM*, AND you must know *SPECIFICALLY* what you must turn TOWARD. *SPECIFIC*, GODLY, CORRECT ACTION IN EACH DAILY EVENT as you live your day's life is the only THING BY WHICH you will be JUDGED AND receive SALVATION! Where does God command us to receive the *SPECIFIC* directions so that each of our daily actions may be correct in *His* sight? Let us understand!

1. Can we TRUST OUR OWN UNDERSTANDING?—our own mind to tell us what and what not to do? Prov. 3:5.

COMMENT: HOW CAN WE POSSIBLY DO SO? WE are born with minds that are ONLY "HALF THERE." They have not the Holy Spirit of God within them. WE *CAN'T* THINK STRAIGHT, as far as spiritual matters of salvation are concerned. The predominance of our DOWNWARD PULLS *DISTORT* our THINKING towards *lustfulness*.

2. When one who does not have the Holy Spirit within him does depend upon his unconverted mind to tell him what is *right* and what is truly wrong, to where do these ways of *his* lead? Prov. 14:12. Does God repeat this again, for *emphasis*, in Prov. 16:25?

3. WHEN people DO THIS, do they MISS OUT ON THE WHOLE PURPOSE of WHY God PUT them HERE ON this EARTH—TO LEARN to SUBMIT themselves TO THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD? Rom. 10:3.

4. Then is it not the Law of God which must point out to us what wrong—sin—is? I John 3:4.

COMMENT: It is the LAW OF GOD, and NOT our CONSCIENCE, that EXPLAINS WHAT *WRONG* IS!

5. If God's laws and precepts, the following of which leads to *salvation*, are not to be found within *our own minds*, then just where *are* these laws and precepts to be found which we are to follow if we are to be transformed at Christ's coming? II Tim. 3:15.

COMMENT: The OVER-ALL LAW of God is the Law of LOVE. The lesser ramifications of this great law are given separately as *PRECEPTS*—they are GIVEN SEPARATELY IN THE *BIBLE*. These must be followed.

COMMENTS: The *Holy Scriptures* are to be found in—and *compose—your* Book the Bible! They are there and nowhere else. Not even in your own carnal mind! You'll have to follow the *Bible* and not your own carnal mind, which, in its feeling of *uncertainty*, is constantly accusing and excusing itself. It will then not feel the *necessity* of doing so. For WITH GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT, AND the FOLLOWING of the BIBLE, the MIND will be AT EASE! It will *know* the truth.

6. Does II Timothy 3:16, 17 verify the fact that the Bible is profitable for reproving and correcting one into God's way of life?

7. What does Prov. 6:23 show that reproof and instruction from your Bible are?

COMMENT: The commandments, reproofs, and instructions found in your Bible LEAD INTO A NEW *WAY* OF LIFE—*GOD'S* WAY. The JOYOUS and ABUNDANT WAY OF LIFE here, and life *eternal* hereafter! Let's QUIT FOLLOWING *MEN* who have self-appointed themselves as "authorities." Let's follow *Christ's* command in Mat. 4:4 to "LIVE BY EVERY WORD OF *GOD*." Let's get back to the *true* teachings of the Bible!

8. What happens when people do NOT FOLLOW the SCRIPTURES IMPLICITLY? Mat. 15:14.

COMMENT: People FALL INTO error, a SPIRIT OF *ERROR*.

9. By what standard will people be judged in the *final* judgment where they are to receive life everlasting or eternal death? John 12:48-50.

COMMENT: Christ preached the way to salvation when He lived in the human form here on this earth. But remember also, that it was He, in spirit form, as God of the Old Covenant, who inspired the Word of God to be written then for us *now*. And it was He who inspired His servants after His death to both preach and write His Father's Word.

10. IS IT JUST ENOUGH TO PRAISE GOD IN THOUGHT AND WORD, or are we commanded to put God's instructions into actual *use* in our daily lives?—isn't the answer "NO"? Mat. 7:21. THIS IS IMPORTANT!!

11. When something new comes up in our daily lives and we are undecided just what God would want us to *do* about it, what does God command? I Thes. 5:21.

COMMENT: God commands us to PROVE such THINGS. Find all scriptures relating to the proposed course of action and bring them to bear in making that decision. The ONLY INFALLIBLE GUIDE IS God's *BIBLE! REPENT* AND *DO* HIS WILL!