AMBASSADOR COLLEGE

BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

Statesmen Praying in a World That Has Forgotten God

LESSON 45

an open letter from

THE EDITOR

I WONDER how many of our students are like one who said to me recently: "Well, I'll tell you why I'm not a Christian. It isn't that I don't believe in God or in being converted—I believe it, all right — and I've often *wanted* to be a Christian — but somehow it just all seems SO FAR OFF — SO UNREAL."

Of course, the things we see, and handle, come in constant daily contact and association with, all seem REAL.

Everywhere we see *life, motion,* REALITY! Here it is, close and real—and *living!* And most wonderful of all is your own self—the marvelous mechanism of your body, and still more wonderful, your mind — performing all its functions. And about you is *every need* to keep you fed, breathing and living.

But there are many *other* things you need! How about the need of wisdom and guidance when important decisions which may alter your whole life are at stake? How about needing a Great Power that can, and will if you are in contact and ask it, give you favor in the eyes of another when disfavor could cause you great trouble? How about the need of an all-powerful Friend to deliver you from real or threatened calamity or loss? How about One to turn to when you are about to lose a loved one, or in time of grief? How about the need of One who is both able and willing to prosper you, cause things to turn out right for you, guide you and protect you through life? How about the *need* of One who has inherent immortality and is able and willing to impart ETERNAL LIFE to you as His gift?

Yes, there are *other* things you NEED! You stand in greater NEED than you probably ever stopped to realize! And the One who sends the rain — *and* the sunshine — upon the just and unjust alike — who provides food, and air, and other basic necessities for all, is more REAL than what He provides — and *just as able and willing* to establish PERSONAL CONTACT and continuously supply your *every other need* as well — including deliverance from every trouble, wisdom, guidance, faith in place of worry, assurance in place of doubt, security in place of uncertainty, favor in the sight of others, healing when sick — all these and countless other needs *He stands committed to supply,* because HE HAS PROMISED — upon condition you become His, establish and

(Please continue on page 14)

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LESSON 45

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About Our Cover . . .

Representatives to the Manila peace conference of 1966 bow their heads in silent prayer. Shown are the chiefs of State of the U. S., Southeast Asia and Australia. President Johnson of the United States is third from the right.

Sincere men the world over have prayed for world peace. Yet there is no real peace. Why haven't their prayers been answered? What is the answer to unanswered prayer?

Philippines' Free Press Photo 1266

SEVEN CONDITIONS TO *ANSWERED* PRAYER

THINK for a moment! Why do so *very few* professing Christians make a habit of daily prayer?

And of those few who *do* pray, many look upon prayer as a *psychological* release, an emotional outlet, a "balm for the soul." Prayer, they reason, helps you to "get things off your chest."

Many assume that prayer's only tangible benefit is that it gives you a "positive mental outlook."

But a God who literally *hears* and ANSWERS? Never!

What Is Answered Prayer?

Is prayer only a religious "peace of mind" pill to make one *feel better?*

Not at all!

Real answered prayer is not "kidding" yourself into believing that God has answered because you can think "positive" thoughts. Real answered prayer is NOT the mere "working out" of events by themselves.

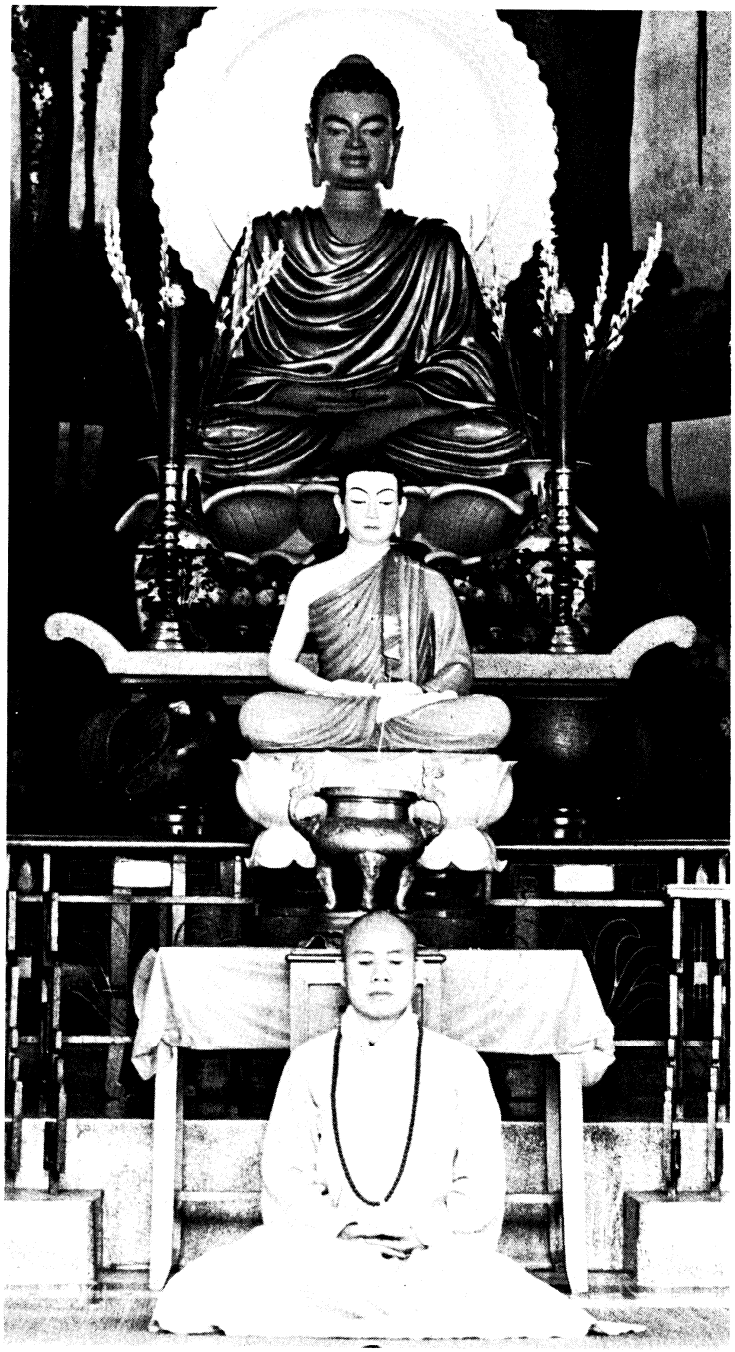
Answered prayer is *not* psychologically "adjusting" yourself into believing your prayer was answered if your prayer was never HEARD in the first place!

Real *answered prayer* is a divine, supernatural and completely MIRACULOUS intervention — a *direct answer* from Almighty God Himself! It is the result of being *obedient* to God's laws, asking *according to His will* and then BELIEVING IN FAITH until the answer comes! IT IS RELYING ON THE ALMIGHTY *GOD* HIMSELF!

Many of you have longed for, but never yet experienced this kind of prayerful contact with God. And because you haven't, you don't really *KNOW* GOD EXISTS.

Many employ ceremonial prayers, chants and responsive readings in church services. But when they are at home *alone* they are unable to communicate with their Creator — the Eternal *invisible* God. They are used to *people, pictures, candles* and STATUES being around them when they pray.

The invisible God seems far off — *unreal.* Since their forms and ceremonies — their pictures and idols — have had no real POWER to SUPERNATURALLY INTERVENE and answer prayer, it seems difficult to believe that the invisible God of the Bible should have this power.



Wide World Photo

PRAYER IN A PAGAN LAND — Sitting beneath a statue of Buddha, this monk in Saigon demonstrates what Buddhists believe to be the proper position for prayer and meditation.

The God of the Universe

There actually *exists* a REAL God who sits at the controls of this universe. He is an active, LIVING God. He controls all power, energies and forces!

He sits on a magnificent throne overlooking a dazzlingly beautiful, court-like, crystal-clear sea of glass. Surrounding Him are twenty-four great, impressive *spirit beings* who are His counselors. Immediately around His throne are four more *spirit beings* of even greater office, power and brilliance. And at His right hand is the *living* JESUS CHRIST!

Out from His throne proceed *lightnings, thunders, voices* — and *angelic messengers* going to and from the earth. For this is the very throne of the *true* GOD! (Rev. 4:1-6.) Here sits *Almighty* God, the Ruler and Sustainer of the entire universe! The very heavens reverberate with *THUNDER* when He speaks!

Do You "Know" This God?

Are YOU *familiar* with the God described above? Are you *acquainted* with Him? Do you PRAY to *this God?*

You *should!*

For great and powerful as the true God is, He *delights* in the man who will *seek to know Him, talk to Him* in prayer and LOVE HIM!

God has created man *in His own image.* He wants men to *draw close* to Him, to *imbibe of His character,* to become *His sons!* The God of the Bible DELIGHTS in the prayers of the righteous (Prov. 15:8).

The trouble is, very few people today know *the God of the Bible.* They have invented their *own* "god."

The *personal* Spirit Being of whom Jesus spoke and *to whom He prayed* — they know not. The God who CREATED this earth out of spirit energy, the God who actually *sustains laws* and *forces* with His power — they don't know.

The *personal* God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — of Peter and Paul — they are not aware of. The great GOVERNOR over men and nations — the One who has made literally *hundreds* of *specific predictions* in Bible prophecy, and *has* and *is* bringing them to pass — this LIVING *GOD* they know not!

This God of the universe has literally hundreds of promises written down for you in His Word, saying, that under certain terms and conditions, He will actually CAUSE certain things to happen for you if you will ask Him.

You will see promises about outside *supernatural help* everyone needs from time to time. You will find promises to deliver you from trouble when you get into it, to supply your every necessity, and to *fight* your personal battles for you — even to *heal* you when you are sick. Yes, even to PROSPER YOU FINANCIALLY!

This God of the universe will do *all* these things for you if you will *ask* Him in BELIEVING PRAYER!

Examples of Answered Prayer

Real believing prayer is *direct contact* between man and his Creator. And *answered prayer* is perhaps the most outstanding PROOF of the actual reality, the sure existence of Almighty God! Here are a few examples of how God will help us when we ask for it in believing prayer.

After God led His people Israel out of slavery in Egypt, they REBELLED in the wilderness. When Moses climbed up into the fastness of Mount Sinai to meet with the Creator God, the Israelites plunged into idolatry and sexual lewdness.

1. What did the people ask Aaron to make for them when they saw that Moses delayed in coming down from the mountain? Ex. 32:1. Did Aaron make them a golden calf to worship? Verses 3-5.

2. Then what did God declare to Moses? Verses 7-8. Did God actually plan to *destroy* the nation of Israel? Verses 9-10.

COMMENT: God's wrath was stirred! The God who later came in the flesh as Jesus, was ready to ANNIHILATE the children of Israel because of their wickedness and sensual debauchery! A WHOLE NATION was about to be destroyed!

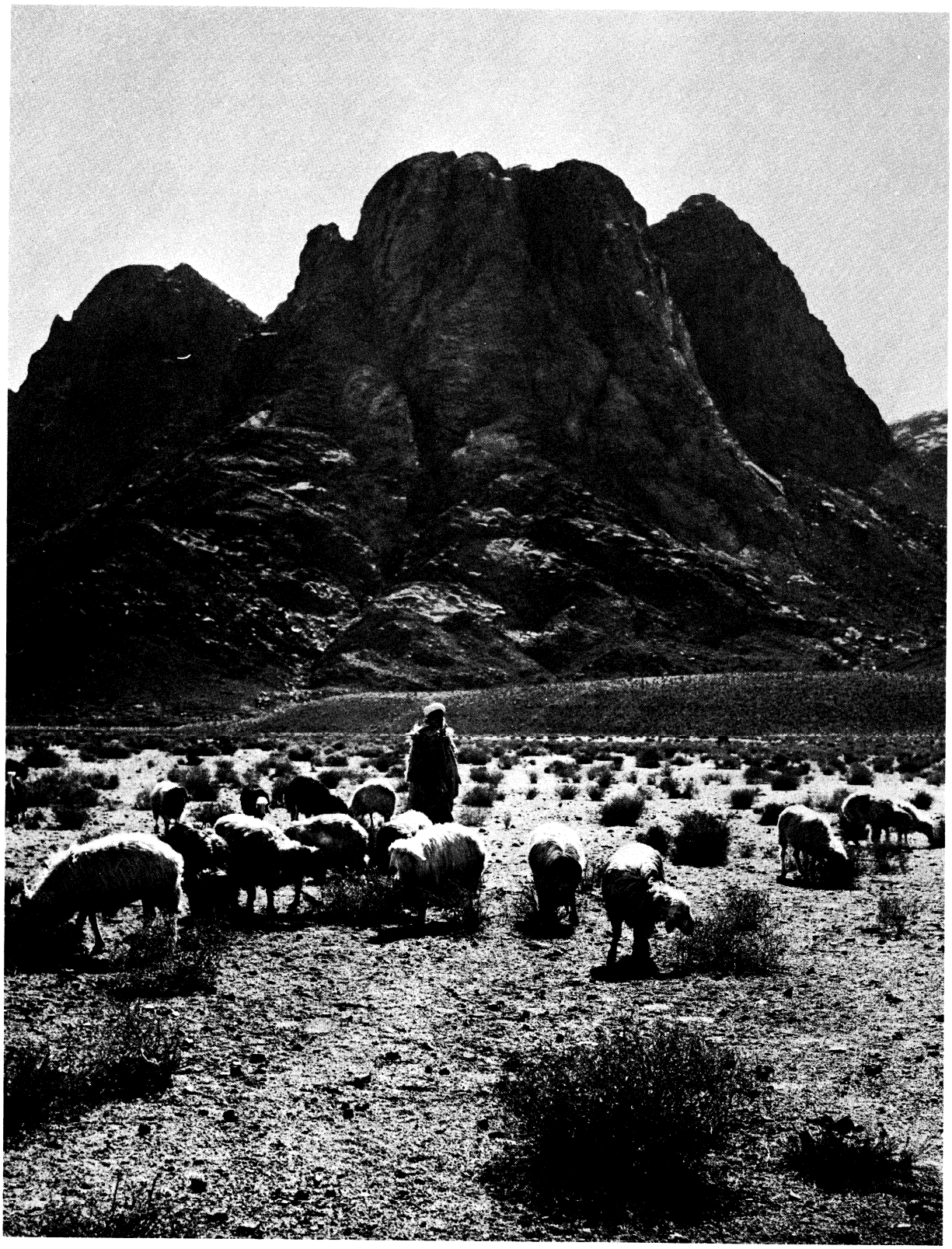
3. Did Moses immediately intercede on the behalf of Israel and *ask* God to spare the nation? Verses 11-13.

COMMENT: Without hesitation Moses fell on his knees and *earnestly* prayed that God would spare the nation. In utter humility and deep concern, he *fervently* BESOUGHT God to spare His people, whom He had redeemed from Egyptian bondage. Moses reminded God of His glorious promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and *pleaded* with Him to turn from His wrath.

4. Did God *hear* Moses' fervent prayer? Did God actually CHANGE His mind and spare the nation of Israel because of *one man's prayer?* Verse 14.

COMMENT: Moses' prayer CHANGED the entire course of HISTORY! It changed the future of an ENTIRE NATION!

5. Notice another example from the Old Testament. Elijah, the prophet, was a man "subject to like passions as we are" (James



Matson Photo Service

A shepherd tends his flock before Mount Sinai. On this mountain Moses fervently prayed that God would spare Israel from utter oblivion!

5:17). He had *human nature*. He was *weak*. And yet, what did he *earnestly* pray might happen? James 5:17-18. Turn to I Kings 18:17-39 and read of another astounding answer to Elijah's prayers.

COMMENT: Elijah *served* God wholeheartedly. He walked with God, *talked with God*, OBEYED God. Elijah *knew* God was there. He knew God *answered prayers*. So he put his WHOLE BEING into his prayers.

And God ANSWERED!

King Hezekiah's Fervent Prayer

In II Kings 20:1-11, we read the account of how Hezekiah, King of Judah, was about to die and sought God's deliverance.

Hezekiah was sick in bed with a malignant boil. But he knew that God was an all-merciful God, and would help him personally — if he was willing to *ask* for it in believing prayer.

1. Did Isaiah the prophet report to the king that he had better put his affairs in order — that he would never recover and should prepare to *die?* II Kings 20:1.

2. Then what did Hezekiah immediately do? Did he *fervently* beseech God in prayer to spare his life? Verses 2-3.

COMMENT: Hezekiah knew God's *promise* to HEAL those who call upon Him. He also knew that there had to be an heir to the throne of David to rule after him — but no heir had as yet been born.

Above all, Hezekiah *knew* that there is a God in heaven who CONTROLS the laws of the universe and the forces of nature, and yet is *vitally concerned* with each individual member of His creation.

Hezekiah knew God's will, remembered God's promises, and as soon as Isaiah's footsteps had faded from the room, he turned his face to the wall and put his *whole heart* into a *FERVENT PRAYER TO GOD.*

Hezekiah prayed for himself. And yet it was not a selfish prayer. He only explained his needs. It was a short prayer, not more than 30 or 40 seconds long, but it was EFFECTIVE!

3. Even *before* Isaiah had crossed the courtyard, did God intervene and ANSWER Hezekiah's prayer? Verses 4-6.

COMMENT: In *spite* of the fact God had previously told Isaiah that Hezekiah would die, He heard and *answered* Hezekiah's fervent prayer. *God even added fifteen years to his life!*

What an astounding *result* of prayer!

BUT THAT WASN'T ALL!

4. Did Hezekiah *further* request a *special sign* that he would be healed? Verse 8. Was Hezekiah given a *choice* of the sign? Verses 9-10. Did God actually cause the sun to REVERSE ITSELF in the heavens? Verse 11.

COMMENT: Because of Hezekiah's faith, obedience, and fervent prayers, God Almighty not only *healed* him and added *fifteen years* to his life, but *He actually caused the sun to* REVERSE ITSELF *in the heavens!*

This was *not* an "optical illusion." Even pagan historians record this miracle. God's miracles are *real!* "For with God NOTHING SHALL BE IMPOSSIBLE" (Luke 1:37).

The end result of God's intervention in Hezekiah's life was the birth of Prince Manasseh, heir to the Davidic throne! (II Kings 20:21.)

Jesus Christ's Example

Turn to John 11 and the account of the death of Lazarus, a close friend and disciple of Jesus. Here is one of the *shortest* — and MOST POWERFUL — prayers recorded in the Bible!

1. Was Lazarus already dead *four days* when Jesus arrived at his tomb? Verse 17.

COMMENT: When Jesus arrived at Lazarus' tomb, He *wept* (verse 35). He was moved inwardly because of the unbelief of those present, and their lack of faith and understanding that He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead.

2. What was Jesus' conversation with the Father when He arrived at the tomb? Verses 41-42.

3. When Jesus had thus prayed, what *command* did He THUNDER FORTH? Verse 43. Did Lazarus actually step out *alive* from his tomb? Verse 44.

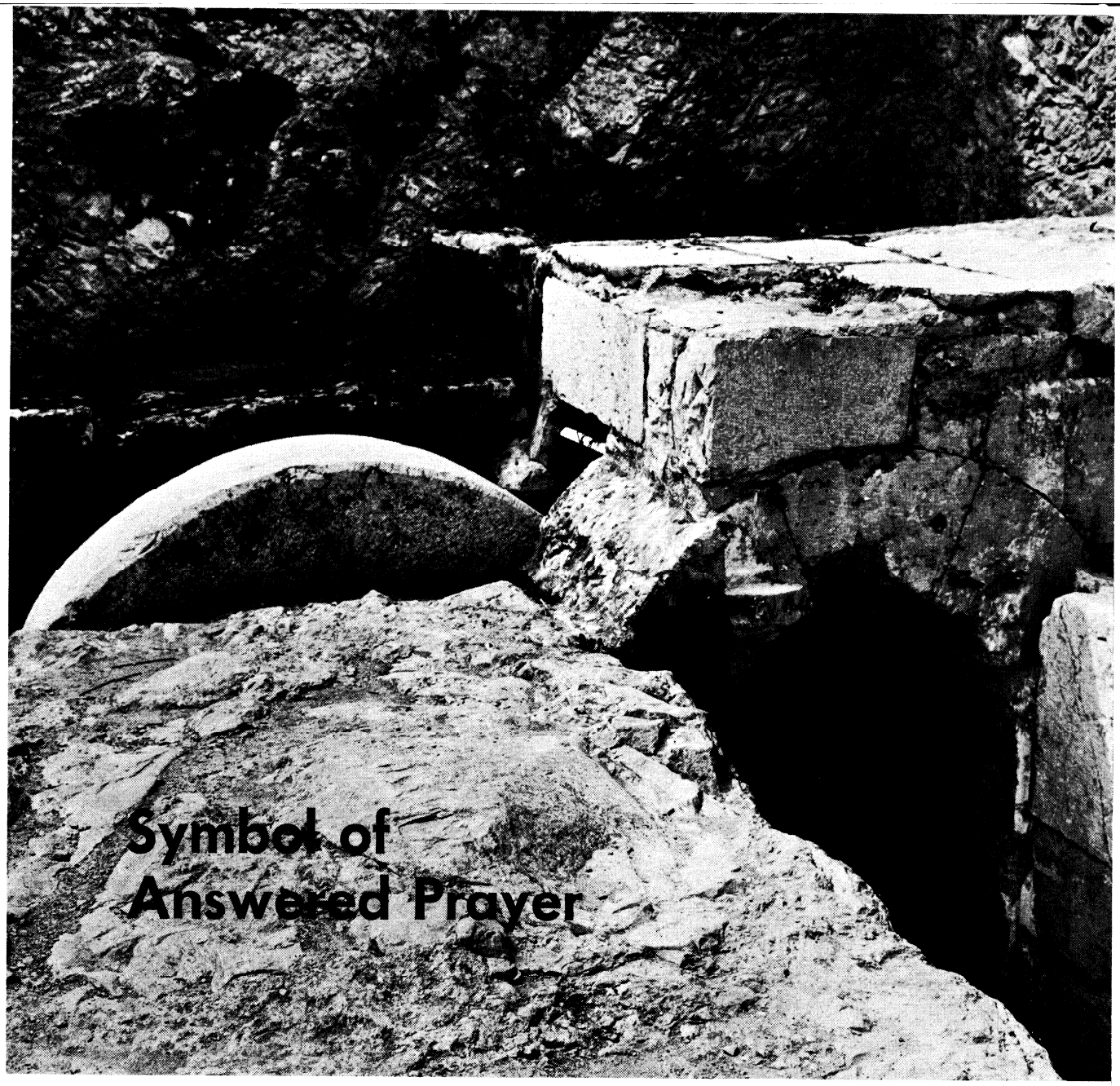
COMMENT: What a *miracle!* What an example of ANSWERED PRAYER! Jesus had real FAITH. He literally *walked* and TALKED with God!

This kind of prayer is NOT a "balm for the soul" or a "psychological release." It is REAL! It is *effective!* IT *ACCOMPLISHES MIRACLES!*

Answered Prayer Today

Listen to the words of Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong recalling the early years of his God-ordained Christian ministry:

"Time after time came when I actually needed some of these things — and by this time had come to *believe* what God had written and promised — I followed His instructions: I prayed! I *asked* for what He had promised. I set myself to yield to, and OBEY this God of the Bible. And believe it or not, the *answers CAME* — yes, MIRACLES were performed! I learned that there really was *someone* there when I prayed to this God — there was really *someone* who actually HEARD, and who actually ANSWERED!



P. Gross Photo

Herod's wife's tomb. It was from a tomb similar to this that Lazarus stepped out *alive* after Jesus prayed to the Father.

"One time I was in immediate and desperate need of a very small amount of money — 10 cents. The need was so *urgent*, I had to ask this invisible God whom I could not see, to send this dime to my home immediately. The need was so immediate I had no time for a long prayer — only some twenty to thirty seconds. But as I rose from that prayer, a man was even then in front of my home, on the way in with that *exact amount* of money! It was brought to me IN LESS THAN A MINUTE'S TIME!

"I have had such petitions to that great invisible God answered *hundreds upon hundreds of times!* And SO CAN YOU — if you can ever get to *really know* this great universe-ruling Creator — if you will *unconditionally* OBEY Him as He commands in the Bible — and if you will implicitly and unswervingly BELIEVE what He has promised there!"

God has *continued* to support this WORLDWIDE ministry! This very Work of Almighty God is supported by the fervent PRAYERS of its dedicated *Co-Workers* around the world!

When you hear Mr. Armstrong's voice explaining the plain truths of the Bible over your own radio, you are a *witness* to ANSWERED prayer! The powerful voice of *The* WORLD TOMORROW broadcast booming through your radio receiver is an ANSWER to the prayers of thousands around this world!

WHERE IS *PROTECTION* FROM DISASTER?

Wide World Photos

At left is main street of Varto, Turkey, after killer quake devastated the city without warning. Above and below, a tornado smashes homes like a giant fist! The great God who controls the forces of nature, promises *protection* from such disasters for those who trust in Him.

Bob Taylor Photo

God heard the fervent, moving, heartfelt prayers of Abraham, Moses and Elijah. He heard the prayers of David, Samuel and Hezekiah. He heard the prayers of Jesus, the apostles and *all* His servants.

But does God similarly answer YOUR PRAYERS?

These examples of answered prayer that we have just studied show clearly that "The effectual *FERVENT PRAYER* OF A RIGHTEOUS MAN *AVAILETH MUCH*"! (James 5:16.) Prayer can change the course of HISTORY. It can effect MIRACLES!

But so often it doesn't!

Why?

What about YOUR prayers — *if* you pray at all?

The prayers of most people lack real power and effectiveness for a very simple reason — they really DON'T KNOW *HOW* TO PRAY!

The Bible reveals *seven basic conditions* which you should fulfil to be certain of *answered prayers.*

Let's notice what they are.

(1) Know God's Will

1. Does the apostle James show that the children of this world — fighting and warring as they do — *fail* to receive help because they often neglect to *ask* for God's help? James 4:1-2. And when they *do* ask, is it only for their own *selfish* ends? Verse 3.

COMMENT: To ask God for something for purely *selfish* reasons — to consume it on our own desires — is to "ask amiss." Some have the well-known prayer "disease" called the "GIMMEES"! This is the wrong attitude to have in prayer, and you can expect no answer from God to such a prayer.

2. To get answers to our prayers, what *example* did Jesus set that we should follow? John 5:30, last part. Are we to *understand* the WILL of God? Eph. 5:17. How can we get to *know* God's will? II Tim. 2:15.

COMMENT: By STUDYING God's will, which is revealed in the Bible, you will begin to think more as God thinks. You will come to *know* what God's will is in every circumstance. If you believe and know that God is *love,* that His will is for *our good,* then you will want to pray according to God's *will.*

You need not always have a specific promise in the Bible to know that something is God's will. Through experience and God's guidance, you will learn how to apply the *principles* of God's revealed will to any situation which may arise.

4. If we pray according to *God's* will, can we KNOW that God will answer our prayers? I John 5:14-15.

COMMENT: Asking according to God's will is the overall *fundamental condition* to answered prayer. All other conditions could be grouped under this one because they are the *specific points* of GOD'S WILL in regard to prayer. The following six, together with and magnifying this first condition, will insure *answered* prayers!

(2) Believe God

Most people do not realize that a *lack of* FAITH is simply a *disbelief* that God will keep His promises or back up His Word. Have you ever thought of it that way?

If we *doubt* any of God's many promises to do certain things for us, if we will just *ask* Him, we are actually making God out a *liar!* But real faith, as we learned in a recent lesson, is not an "emotional feeling" that you generate by thinking certain thoughts over and over.

You don't "talk yourself into," or "think yourself into" real, believing faith. Godly faith is simply your willingness — through the help of God's Holy Spirit — to quietly and patiently *trust* God to perform His Word. Abraham had that kind of faith.

1. What did the apostle Paul say about Abraham and the faith he had in God? Rom. 4:20-21.

COMMENT: Abraham relied *completely* on God to perform His promises.

Do you?

If you lack real *faith,* ask God to give it to you. For as you know, faith is one of the *gifts* of God's Holy Spirit (Gal. 5:22).

2. Is faith an absolute prerequisite to receiving answers to our prayers? James 1:5-7.

COMMENT: A man who *wavers* will not receive an answer to his prayer. "For let not *that* man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord" (verse 7).

God has made hundreds of promises in His Word which we can claim. Do you *completely* TRUST God to keep His promises, regardless of what they may be, or do you *doubt* God's ability to perform His promises, and thereby label God a *liar?*

3. Are we also told that faith alone — without any works, or actions, on *our part* — is worthless — "DEAD"? James 2:20.

COMMENT: To have answered prayers, you must have *faith.* But you must also *act* on that faith by OBEYING God!

(3) Obey God

Another condition of answered prayer is one which is neglected and violated consistently by most professing "Christians." This hinges direct-

ly on the before-mentioned fact that very few people today really *know* the true God.

People do not look to God as the AUTHORITY in their lives. Instead, they make a "god" out of this world's society and its customs, traditions and religious practices.

1. Does it really make a difference *who* or *what* we serve and obey? Rom. 6:16.

COMMENT: If you obey the ways of sin practiced in this world, you are putting this society and its pagan customs *in place of* the *true* God!

But God wants more than "lip service." He requires actual OBEDIENCE!

2. What does God label the person who says he "knows God," and yet does *not keep* His commandments? I John 2:4.

COMMENT: If you haven't learned to fear the true God and accept His Word as the *authority* in your life, then you don't even really *know* God!

3. Can those who *persistently* refuse to keep God's commandments really expect Him to answer their prayers? I Pet. 3:12. What is "doing evil" — what is *sin?* I John 3:4. Does sin *cut you off* from God? Isa. 59:1-2.

COMMENT: Here is one of the major reasons why so many prayers are NOT answered. God will not listen to a person who rebells and DISOBEYS His Word! God will not listen to the prayers of someone *continually* LIVING IN SIN!

4. But does God promise to *hear* the prayers of one who searches his own life, *puts away* SIN, and turns to God in heartfelt *repentance* and OBEDIENCE? John 9:31 and Daniel 10:12.

COMMENT: First, there must be REPENTANCE! Sin must be put away. Idols — anything which separates us from God, anything we tend to put *before* God — must be crushed, absolutely *shattered!*

Are you truly SEEKING God's way? Are you daily repenting of SIN, and putting it out of your life? Have you really surrendered your life and whole being to God?

And yet, does God *sometimes* even hear the earnest prayers of the unconverted? Yes, in certain instances He does. God Himself has blinded the eyes of the many at this time (Rom. 11:7-8). It is *His responsibility* that they don't know the truth yet. So God does sometimes hear and answer the prayers of those who, in ignorance of the full intent of His law, are not conscious of their sins, but *obey Him as far as they know.*

The lepers and cripples who came to Jesus to be healed didn't know all of God's truth. But they did realize that Jesus was sent from God and could heal. And *they acted on what they knew.*

So it is a matter of your *heart* or *attitude.* If you come to God in a humble, repentant spirit and are determined to obey Him *to the best of your knowledge and ability,* He will hear your prayers! But this is *no excuse* for anyone who KNOWS the truth to DISOBEY God!

5. Can true Christians have a special confidence that God *will answer* their prayers *if* they are OBEDIENT? I John 3:22.

(4) Fear and Humility

Modern man has a cocksure, self-sufficient attitude and thinks he can get along fine without God. He neither fears God nor respects God's Word as the *authority* in his life. He is vain, egotistical, self-important. Is it any wonder that God fails to answer the prayers of such men?

1. What is the *first* prerequisite to a knowledge of God? Ps. 111:10.

COMMENT: We need to *fear* God, realizing that our lives are in His hands. We must be humble, realizing that the life God gave us is but "a vapor" (James 4:14). Carnal man needs to realize that he is only *dust* and shall return to dust unless and until he receives the Spirit of God, which is the begettal of eternal life. Eternal life is a *gift* from God (Rom. 6:23), not something we already have. We should also realize that any talents we may have are ours *because God gave them to us!*

When we can approach our Creator in *that attitude* — respecting His power and authority over our lives — then He will hear our prayers.

2. When Christ was a fleshly, mortal man, did He *fear* God? Heb. 5:7.

COMMENT: When we fully realize our own utter helplessness and complete dependence upon God, then we will cry out to God as Jesus did.

3. What did Peter say we should be clothed with? I Peter 5:5-6. Did the *self-righteous* Pharisee of Luke 18:10-12 pray with humility? How did the publican pray? Verse 13. *Who* was heard of God? Verse 14.

COMMENT: The Pharisee's prayer did not ascend to God. He was merely praying "with himself." God will not hear haughty, proud, SELF-RIGHTEOUS prayers! God does not answer if you pray in a conceited, proud, "holier-than-thou" attitude!

Rather, when we approach God's throne, we must be conscious of our own utter UNworthiness — we must enter God's presence with an attitude of HUMILITY! God *heard* the prayer of the publican who would not even so much as lift his eyes to heaven; but the prayer of the strutting Pharisee went unheeded.

The attitude of *humility* and *Godly fear* is vital in prayer, and at *all other times.*

PRAYERS OF THIS WORLD

A Brahmin of Northern India sits on the projected end of a log and offers prayers to his sun-god. Below, Hindus perform "The Sacred Thread" ceremony. Ritual initiates young boys into the caste of Brahmin.

A. L. Syed, P. R. Shinde Photos

(5) Be Fervent

It is common today for parents to teach their children memorized prayers. The father often mumbles a hurried, routine prayer of thanks at the dinner table. The minister either reads or recites from memory an eloquent prayer which *sounds* very impressive.

But is God impressed?

The "fruits" show that God rarely hears such prayers, for they are usually *not answered.*

1. Does God reveal *His attitude* toward such prayers? Hosea 7:13-14.

COMMENT: Notice the rendering of these verses in the Moffatt translation: "though it was I who redeemed them, they have lied to me; *they never put their HEART into their prayers.*" They don't "cry out" to God with their *whole being* as the ancient prophets did — and as Christ did when He prayed.

2. How fervent was Jesus in His prayers? Heb. 5:7.

COMMENT: When Jesus Christ prayed to the Father, He *meant* it! He did not approach God merely to "pass the time." His prayers had deep MEANING. He *felt* them. He was deeply MOVED on many occasions when He communed with God. He was *emotionally* affected by the urgency of the situation.

3. How fervently and earnestly did Christ pray on the evening before His crucifixion? Luke 22:44.

COMMENT: Jesus needed strength from God for the coming ordeal. He needed to get really close to God. He knelt down and began to pray that *God's* will, not His own, would be done.

Christ prayed *fervently!* He prayed EARNESTLY — with all His heart!

Are your prayers meaningful — to *you?* If not, then how do you expect them to be moving to God?

David was another who was often moved deeply when He prayed to God. Many of the Psalms reveal his depth of emotion and deep feeling. You ought to study them.

4. What are some examples of David's heartfelt, sincere prayers to God? Ps. 4:1 and 6:2-4. Was David often moved to *tears* when he cried out to God in fervent prayer? Verse 6.

COMMENT: Have YOU ever prayed with such depth of emotion and feeling? Have you ever prayed with such a sense of URGENCY?

Have you ever really *wholeheartedly* called upon God?

This kind of prayer achieves real RESULTS! This is the kind of prayer which is WELL-PLEASING in God's sight. God is deeply moved by such earnest, sincere *heartfelt* prayer!

5. What does God say to those who have never prayed this way? Joel 2:12-13.

COMMENT: In James 5:16, we read, "the effectual FERVENT prayer of a *righteous* man availeth much." We have to pray *fervently, earnestly, zealously,* if we expect God to hear.

Put your *whole heart* into your prayers and see the amazing results!

(6) Be Persistent

Some, if God doesn't answer right away, begin to lose faith and *give up* praying. They forget that, although God promises to answer when we ask according to His will, He *nowhere* promises to answer RIGHT AWAY! God does not tell us exactly HOW or precisely WHEN the answer will come.

1. Is this why Jesus gave the parable of the importunate widow? Luke 18:1.

COMMENT: The Goodspeed translation correctly renders the words "not to faint" as "*not give up*"!

Jesus gave this parable to show that even an unrighteous judge would finally hear the pleas of a widow who *kept coming to him.* So we should KEEP PRAYING to God, *even though He sometimes doesn't answer right away.*

2. Is God building *patient faith* into our characters if we have to wait on Him to answer a prayer? Jas. 1:3-4.

COMMENT: WAITING on God, in *patient* faith, seems to be one of the hardest things for humans to do!

How many of *us* are willing to be *persistent* in prayer, until God answers? How many are willing to WAIT on God to send the answer? How many are PATIENT? If God doesn't answer your prayers immediately, exercise patience and *keep praying* until He does answer.

But don't *nag* at God! He has supreme wisdom to know *when* and *how* would be best to answer your prayers.

So occasionally *remind* God about your particular problems or afflictions. Don't *cease* praying about them. God is *bound* to perform His part in His *own* time.

He *always* keeps His promises!

(7) Use Christ's Name

The seventh condition of answered prayer is the correct use of Christ's *name.* This is a greatly misunderstood subject, and the use of Christ's name is often abused.

1. After Jesus had been with His disciples for over three years, and had taught them *God's will* and how to obey it, what did He instruct

them concerning the use of His name in their prayers? John 16:23-24.

COMMENT: These verses give us the privilege of employing Christ's name — asking by His *authority* — when we pray to God the Father. But most people misunderstand *how* we can ask "in Jesus' name."

When our government sends an ambassador to another country, he is given *authority* to carry out certain business *in the name* of the United States government. He can act *in the name* of our government because it has conferred on him the *authority* as its chosen representative to carry on certain business on its behalf.

But his authority is *limited* to do only what the government has specifically authorized him. If he exceeds his delegated authority, his actions are *null* and *void* and will *not* be backed up by this government.

Likewise, Christ has given His ministers the privilege of performing certain functions in His name — or *by His authority*. For example, God's ministers are given authority to baptize the repentant and perform marriage ceremonies *in Christ's name*. And *all* of God's children can rightfully ask the Father for things "in Jesus' name" when they know it is His *will* — that His authority stands behind it.

But just rattling off words "in Jesus' name" to a prayer that is CONTRARY to God's will and Christ's will is of *no avail whatsoever!* You need to *study* Christ's Word to know more about the principles of His will so you may ask *by His authority*.

2. Do those who *abide* in Christ have the privilege of praying in Christ's name? John 15:7. How does one *abide* in Christ? Rom. 8:9. And does God give His Holy Spirit only to them that OBEY Him? Acts 5:32.

COMMENT: Yes, Jesus' *words* must abide in you. You must ask according to *His will*. And you must abide in Him — *belong to Him* by having His Holy Spirit dwell within you!

So to pray "in Jesus' name," you must at the same time be *yielding* to His will to the best of your knowledge.

3. Does praying "in Jesus' name," which means *by His authority*, also mean that you are praying *through* Him as your High Priest? Heb. 4:14-16.

COMMENT: Jesus Christ — our "High Priest" — was tempted in all points like we are. He understands our weaknesses. *It is* His revealed will to help us in time of need and to help us live a more abundant life (John 10:10).

Praying in Jesus' name is a great privilege. Use Jesus' name *correctly*, and your prayers will be *answered* because of the AUTHORITY conferred through Him!

Results Will Follow

If you faithfully conform to these seven *conditions of answered prayer* — with God's help, you may then have *absolute confidence* that God will hear and answer your prayers. You will be changing, growing closer to God each day. You will be actively seeking and doing His will.

This *intimate contact* with the Creator of Heaven and Earth will give you a peace of mind and quiet confidence that *nothing* can destroy. But your confidence will not be in *self*, but in the greatest POWER there is! In *every* trial and problem, you have the right to call on the Supreme Power — the active, living God who reveals Himself in the Bible.

(To be continued next lesson)

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an open letter from

THE EDITOR

(Continued from page 2)

maintain contact, trust Him and obey Him!

God is more *real* than you or I—or any of the things about us.

Why then, does He seem so far away, until it seems He has faded in the distance? Why does He seem mysterious and unreal? Why do the objects with which you come in daily contact, your friends, your pleasures, seem *more* real—when actually they are less so?

You may say, "Because I can *see*, *feel*, and *hear* these things or people."

But that is not really the reason at all.

You don't see the air you breathe, but it seems very *real* to you. You cannot see, or hear, or feel the power of gravity, yet it seems very *real* to you, and you know that if you slip it will pull you down in a fall that might hurt you.

Perhaps you say, well, these things are real to me because they are close to me. But that is not the reason. GOD is as close as any of these—He, too, is REAL, and He is CLOSE! Yet He seems unreal and far away!

Now let me tell you the REAL REASON.

If you are away from a childhood chum for 35 or 40 years, never hear from or about that person in all that time—are totally out of contact with him—he finally seems like a faint, dim, far-off dream or figment of the imagination. He doesn't seem REAL any more.

But, if there is another childhood chum you also have not seen in the same 35 or 40 years,

but with whom you have kept constantly in touch all these years — constantly corresponded, even talked over long distance telephone frequently, heard about from mutual friends who have been *with* this old chum — then that friend, even though you have not seen him, will still seem *real*, and *close*.

God seems unreal and far away *only to those who have not established, and are not actively maintaining close personal contact!* It is not a matter of distance or visibility — it is a matter of CONTACT.

Even though you read the Bible, and pray — if you have not established personal *contact* with God, you just won't understand much of the Bible or be much interested in it, and your prayers will not seem to go as high as the ceiling! You can't *keep up* a contact which has never yet been *established!*

Yet God is the SOURCE of *everything!* — of *your* EVERY NEED! In HIM you must live, and move, and have your being — and you have never yet BEGUN to really live until you are living *in Him!* You are now making mistakes you would not make if you had His guidance — mistakes which are costly, and from which you suffer! You are suffering pains, heartaches, fears and troubles because you have not established contact with the only One who can help you! You NEED HIM!

And you *can* find Him, if you'll seek Him — you'll find Him CLOSE, not far away. But something has been standing BETWEEN you and Him — a far greater barrier than a literal iron curtain. *Your sins* have formed an impregnable wall, so that you can't establish contact — can't reach — can't enjoy communion with the One you need most of all! And your sins are your transgressions of His loving LAW — His great immutable spiritual Law given in love to bring to mankind success, accomplishment, peace, happiness, and joy! In breaking the law you have severed yourself from *these* goals, too!

Yet THAT GREAT WALL CAN BE BATTERED DOWN — *instantly* — NOW! There need be no delay. God in His wisdom and mercy *knew* you would sin and separate yourself from Him. He provided a way for you. He GAVE His only begotten Son to pay the penalty you have incurred, *in your stead!*

It matters not how BLACK your past has been. No matter how terrible are some of these *secret* sins you have never confided to anyone. They don't *need* to stand between you and your greatest NEED, which is God. Jesus Christ was made flesh, and He who never sinned died to pay the penalty of all *your guilt*. Why then should *you* carry this guilt around on your conscience any longer? Why let it separate you from God? Every bit of it is PAID IN FULL, by the blood of Jesus Christ — His very lifeblood. But God Almighty resurrected Him to eternal LIFE, and today He *lives* as YOUR LIVING SAVIOUR from your guilty past, *if* you will accept Him as such!

If you *want* to find God — be a Christian — you *can* — and here's how: First, you'll have to REPENT — *turn from* the old life of sinning, and surrender your SELF wholly to God — give your life to Him, to serve Him and to live by His perfect laws and right ways that will bring you only blessings. You'll have to be IN EARNEST, for no one can deceive God. Then, ACCEPT JESUS CHRIST as your personal Saviour. Don't put it off. Don't say, "I don't know how," but DO IT NOW! Take the "bull by the horns" and DO IT — you know you ought to, so exercise your WILL and DO IT! Just go to a room ALONE — close the door — and with no one else around, except just you and God alone — GIVE YOURSELF TO HIM, ask Him to FORGIVE all your past sins — confess them to Him. Everything may be HARD, until you ADMIT YOUR SINS — but the minute you acknowledge them, the unseen power that has caused you to hesitate, and put it off, and has made it seem so difficult (the power of the devil), will let loose, and YOU'LL BE *FREE* — you'll know you are now GOD'S — the contact will be ESTABLISHED! You can talk to Him, and HE WILL HEAR! You can pour out your heart to Him, and He will LISTEN — and comfort, and come close and give you what you NEED.

Jesus Christ came into this world and died to reconcile YOU to God the Father — to join you to Him — to *establish contact* for you! Accept this, and know the GREAT PEACE that will come over your soul!

Then you must be baptized — not into any religious denomination or organization, but into CHRIST JESUS. Each summer we send out teams of consecrated young men, graduates of Ambassador College, or fully ordained ministers to baptize those who have personally requested it. Why don't you write me, if you wish to be baptized?

Then God PROMISES to put His spirit in you — to give you, and radiate from you, a LOVE you never had, a new FAITH, PATIENCE, UNDERSTANDING. Through His Spirit you will be given power for self-mastery. Power to *understand* the Bible.

You accept Christ, and receive God's Holy Spirit by FAITH. *Believe* you are now His — KNOW it — and then *keep up the contact* now established! You do this through constant daily Bible study and prayer. God talks to you through His Word. You talk to Him in prayer. It is a two-way conversation. Through it you BECOME ACQUAINTED — get to KNOW God, and where once He seemed far away and unreal,

Ambassador College Photo

EAST BERLIN WALL — an "iron curtain" of stone, steel and barbed wire that is virtually impregnable. God says that our sins are a greater barrier, preventing *contact* with Him!

He will now seem close, and real! KEEP IT UP! You'll experience an inner joy you didn't dream could exist — you'll have a HELP that is *real* in every time of need.

You won't be perfect all at once. You'll still have your SELF to wrestle with. Trials, tests, afflictions, persecutions will come — but now you'll have an ever-present HELP and deliverance — a constant Source of inspiration, and courage, and power — an inner peace and faith — and you'll live the full and ABUNDANT life for the first time, with assurance of LIFE ETERNAL.

Don't become discouraged and give up, though, when you have made a slip. You'll be starting out as a spiritual BABE in Christ. Babies stumble and fall down many times before they learn to walk. Don't let that discourage you — get up and try all the harder. And, as you continue the CHRISTIAN LIFE, the Bible and God's way will become a new, and the supreme, INTEREST of your life!

The main thing is, don't let ANYTHING cause you to hesitate or delay. Just "take the bull by the horns." GO AND DO IT *NOW!*