AMBASSADOR COLLEGE **Bible** LESSON 24

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE

God Won't Accept You "Just as you are"!

MILLIONS have heard the hue and cry of religion, "REPENT!"

But what does it *mean* to "REPENT"?

Somehow, the piteous bleatings of those urging the public to repent have sounded almost entirely NEGATIVE! Myriads seem to have the concept God desperately NEEDS something from them—that Jesus Christ is hurt, perplexed, wounded, terribly disappointed—all because "SINNERS" DON'T SEEM TO WANT TO *BELIEVE* in Him!

But this is Satan's lie!

GOD needs NOTHING from us—WE DESPERATELY NEED EVERYTHING FROM HIM!

And never, not in the history of man's pilgrimage on this earth, has man so desperately been in need of God and His mercy!

THE LESSON OF ALL HISTORY SHOUTS AT OUR HEEDLESS, RECKLESS, HELL-BENT GENERATION TO *REPENT!* To be completely BROKEN UP in spirit over the vile, filthy, wretched swill we've been wallowing in, the mountainous spectre of CRIME and VIOLENCE, the HIDEOUS DISEASES of mind and body we have brought upon ourselves, the constant THREAT OF *FINAL* DESTRUCTION of all MANKIND!

Peter shouted to those of his day, to "REPENT ye therefore, and be CONVERTED, that your *sins* may be blotted out . . ." (Acts 3:19).

To repent means to CHANGE! To change your *attitude* toward God, toward HIS PERFECT LAWS, which were designed to *bring* us peace, health, happiness and *everything* we so earnestly desire! To change your attitude toward your fellow man, toward YOUR OWN SELF!

Where UNrepentance Leads

Look around you! What do you see?

Do you witness a world BRIM FULL of happiness, productivity, success? Stable, secure homes? Respectful, obedient children? A world of harmony, joy and beauty?

No! You most certainly do not—instead, you see a world filled with JEALOUSY, RACIAL BIGOTRY, RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE, POLITICAL UNREST, divorce, crime, JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, and the threat of NUCLEAR COSMOCIDE!

It's a WORLD that has turned *HEEDLESS* EARS TO God's CALL TO REPENTANCE!

God's word reveals He has "winked at" the ignorance of blundering man in past ages, "but *now* COMMANDETH ALL MEN EVERYWHERE TO REPENT!" (Acts 17:30).

But *man has not obeyed* that command, EXCEPT IN some FEW, SCATTERED INSTANCES.

As a RESULT of remaining UNrepentant, UNchanged from his natural-minded selfishness, his resentment toward God's laws, his JEALOUSY, ANIMOSITY, HATRED, BIGOTRY and INTOLERANCE toward his fellow man, he has FILLED the world and the NOSTRILS OF GOD WITH the STENCH OF HIS DECAYING, ROTTING SOCIETY! He has remained UNmindful of God's command—and so is suffering the AUTOMATIC PENALTY!

WHY SHOULD *YOU* CONTINUE TO SUFFER the anguish, sickness, wretchedness and threat of death that hovers over this reckless, heedless

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LESSON 24
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world? Why should YOU remain UNrepentant—when you have now SEEN, with *your own eyes*, from *your own Bible*, the thrilling, shocking, wonderful truths of Almighty God!

NOW IS THE TIME FOR *YOU*, as an *individual*, to OBEY the command of your Creator—the One who gives you every breath of air you breathe —and REPENT!

SATAN the Devil has remained *UN*REPENTANT through the centuries. DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU. Eternal oblivion would be the result. It is YOUR decision to make, and no-one can make it for you!

A Biblical Example of Repentance

Do you want to see the effect of repentance on one man's life who lived hundreds of years before Christ? This man did obey God and did repent. That man was *DAVID!*

"David!" you exclaim, "Why—what about him and Bathsheba?" The knowledge of this event is well known today.

Yes, DAVID DID do some pretty BAD THINGS. And so do we. But he *DID* SOMETHING ABOUT these! He *REPENTED!* People *overlook* this key. Yet it should cause them *no* surprise when they read in their Bible and in Lesson 5, page 3, of this Correspondence Course that DAVID WILL BE IN GOD'S KINGDOM AND will EVEN RULE over the modern descendants of Israel when Christ soon comes to establish His millennial government here on this earth. That's what the power of repentance can lead to—even though one has done some very bad things!

Some PEOPLE'S NATURES GIVE THEM MORE TROUBLE THAN OTHERS. David was one who had more trouble this way than most. He had pressing drives. He was a man of action. He "GAVE HIMSELF A BAD TIME." On the surface it would seem impossible for such a one to ever please God enough for God to transform him—let alone giving him rule over others.

What did David do?

Look at what David did! He LUSTED AFTER BATHSHEBA, the wife of Uriah, who was one of his soldiers. David lusted to the point that he COMMITTED ADULTERY with her and CAUSED her to HAVE a CHILD by him. Then David, in an attempt to disclaim himself as father of this illegitimate child, caused Bathsheba's husband to become drunk in order to make her husband logically think that it was he, himself, who was its father.

Failing in this, David then took drastic action to conceal what he had done. He HAD Bathsheba's HUSBAND placed in the very front of hottest battle so as to make certain he would be KILLED. And Uriah *was* killed. David had *MURDERED* him. (II Sam. 11). David had SINNED TERRIBLY!

BUT did David *CONFESS* his SINS? He certainly did —"David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord" (II Sam. 12:-13). David's REPENTANT ATTITUDE ENDEARED HIM TO GOD.

AGAIN DAVID SINNED GREATLY when he did not trust God for protection but rather in the strength of numbers of *men*. He HAD his FIGHTING MEN NUMBERED (II Sam. 24:2, 9, 10). But did David *REPENT* and confess his sin? Again, he certainly did. For "David's heart smote him [repentance] after that he had numbered the people. And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly [David confessed his sin] in that I have done: and now, I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant [David threw himself on God's mercy] for I have done foolishly" (Verse 10). Yes, David WAS A MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART. (Acts 13:22).

David was one of the very few people of Old Covenant times to whom God gave the Holy Spirit (Psa. 51:11), for the Holy Spirit was not yet available to all mankind (Acts 2:1-8). David *repented* and overcame by the power of the Holy Spirit even though he at times did stumble and fall! So David is soon, at Christ's coming, to be resurrected and be in God's Kingdom. If *REPENTANCE* can lead to that for David, who had his weaknesses, IT WILL DO THE SAME FOR *YOU!* REPENT!

Act Now!

Don't "KID" yourself! DO NOT MAKE THE FATAL MISTAKE OF COUNTING THIS LESSON JUST "ANOTHER" LESSON OF AN INTERESTING "COURSE!" DO NOT think this to be just another emotional appeal that represents God as a disappointed, sorrowful person with a deep inferiority complex because the world won't believe on Him!

SUCH COULD BE ETERNALLY DISAS-

TROUS! *ACT* ON THIS KNOWLEDGE!!

It's time to WAKE UP! It's time to SEE, *clearly*, exactly where this world is heading, to see where YOU are heading so long as you remain a part of it!

YOU DESPERATELY NEED the very SPIRIT OF GOD! You need to have *your human nature* CHANGED—made conformable to God's nature! You need to have the SELFISHNESS, the human VANITY, the GREED, the LUST, the resentment, hostility and suspicion CRUSHED OUT OF YOU—by the very life of God coming within you! God needs NOTHING from *you*—but you need EVERYTHING from Him!

REPENT! *That's* what God commands! That is the ONLY WAY TO real, lasting, ETERNAL HAPPINESS, and to peace, contentment, success, and real JOY here and now!

REPENT! BE BROKEN UP OVER YOUR SINS, your TRANSGRESSIONS of God's righteous and Holy law—your very being, YOUR NATURE, your "way of looking at things" NEEDS to BE *ALTERED*, CHANGED, BY the HOLY SPIRIT of God!

And the ONLY way you can receive His Spirit is to *repent* (Acts 2:38)!

Now for the Lesson.

LESSON 24

Repent!—Let God's Spirit Change You

Now let's understand *HOW* the HOLY SPIRIT can MAKE OF YOU A "*NEW MAN*."

1. In Romans 7:15-25 we learned in previous lessons about our evil pulls which God has placed within us. But does God also reveal to us the *power* of the Holy Spirit *in action*—reveal it *in action* in *crushing out* our old downpulls when we have repented from our old ways and thereby receive the power of the Holy Spirit to do this? Yes! Read Galatians 5:17-18.

COMMENT: The explanation of these two verses is this: "For the FLESH [housing as it does the CARNAL PULLS with which we are born] *lusteth* [*WARS*] AGAINST the *SPIRIT* [the Holy Spirit], and the SPIRIT [WARS] AGAINST the FLESH: and these are *contrary* one to the other so that we cannot do the things we would [do]. BUT IF YE [you who repent and receive the Holy Spirit] be *LED* OF THE SPIRIT [led of the Holy Spirit, as it crushes out your downward pulls], ye are not under the law"—you are not under the *penalty* of breaking the law of God which, we know is death — eternal death. For the Holy Spirit within you, which is now *dominant, causes you to live in accordance with God's laws.* The OLD DOWNWARD PULLS are *DOMINANT NO LONGER.*

2. What are some of these pulls that are predominant before the Holy Spirit starts crushing them? Gal. 5:19-21. But what becomes predominant *after* the Holy Spirit has gone to work and cleaned us up? Verses 22-25. This is the mind that Christ had. Does God command us to let CHRIST'S MIND be WITHIN US also? Phil. 2:5. Does Ephesians 3:16-17 point out that our minds are strengthened with might by God's Holy Spirit?

COMMENT: Here is the EXPLANATION of this verse. "That He [GOD] would GRANT you [THOSE WHO *REPENT*], according to the riches of His glory, to BE *STRENGTHENED* WITH *MIGHT* BY HIS SPIRIT [Holy Spirit] in the inner man [in our *minds*] that Christ [through the SAME HOLY SPIRIT THAT IS IN CHRIST] may dwell in your heart by faith."

3. The Holy Spirit is available so that we may be cleansed by it, but can God clean us up without our *willing* consent? Rom. 12:1. Note the words "present *ye*." Then are we not to be sorry — repent — and *surrender* ourselves so *He* can clean us by giving us a *new* mind? Note the words "*renewing* of your mind." Verse 2.

4. Does not Ephesians 4:24 also verify the fact that we should do this?

COMMENT: God knows that this is the *only way* that we can "PUT ON THE NEW MAN"—develop spiritually — *CHANGE FROM* the OLD person in character *TO* A *NEW* PERSON IN CHARACTER.

COMMENT: How plain it becomes that we are now only clay models that must be reshaped by *God. You* can only *choose* — long — to *be made* holy *by God. YOU* CAN WHIP UP ALL THE "GOOD THOUGHTS" YOU WANT TO, but you *STILL* REMAIN just as VILE as you CAN BE—and—there is NOTHING *YOU* CAN DO ABOUT IT!—EXCEPT *SURRENDER* TO GOD and TRUST *HIM* to CHANGE YOU. *God* is the Potter. And *we* are the clay. If we, the clay, are too hard—don't become *plastic* by the surrender of our will, there is *nothing God can do* about us either!! We will be *discarded* to eternal death! That's all God can do with those who remain *un*repentant.

COMMENT: In a "nutshell"— and in order — the *WHOLE* TRUTH ABOUT SALVATION is this: To conform to God's conditions for salvation, we must *REPENT*—surrender, have FAITH in Christ, ACCEPT CHRIST as our Saviour, BECOME CHANGED by God's Spirit as God's *gift*, by *grace* —*unmerited* pardon through Christ's blood, and then OVERCOME, ENDURE, and *GROW* in a life of

obedience and living faith—faith put into daily practice, with Christ living His life *in* us. And let's remember not to leave *Christ* and *grace* out of our thoughts!

A Parting of the Ways

When you come to this *PARTING OF THE WAYS* FROM the OLD LIFE—when you come to the place of this *complete change*—this TOTAL UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER to God—this complete consecration, *GIVING OF SELF* to Him, accepting Christ as your personal Saviour—turning *from* your sins, and turning *to* God's way of life as you find it in the Bible, you will want to *PRAY*, you will want to THROW YOURSELF COMPLETELY ON GOD'S MERCY, and ASK HIM through Jesus to FORGIVE all your PAST SINS and transgressions against Him. The important thing is to *DO IT*—and *do it NOW!*—NOT DELAY or put it off until finally you rob yourself of salvation altogether. The longer you put it off, the harder it will be. Something in the lower nature within you will keep tempting you to put it off. That temptation is not of God, you may be sure.

The SINNER IS *CONQUERED* BY GOD. His CARNAL WILL is BROKEN! He REALIZES that he has *SINNED!!* Sin is an action that is contrary to the will of God (I John 3:4). He then *CRIES OUT* TO GOD FOR the LIFTING OF the DEATH PENALTY through the apportionment of Christ's sacrificial blood. He ACCEPTS God's PROMISE of FORGIVENESS *ON FAITH*. The repentant sinner then takes the physical ordinance of *BAPTISM* which SHOWS God *he REALLY MEANS IT*.

Repentance is a matter of TURNING *FROM* the old life with its faults, yet which may have seemed right to you—of TURNING *TO* a new and *true* way of life in Jesus Christ, living by every word of God, in and by God's Holy Spirit. When you *understand* the real meaning and purpose, you will see that IT IS SOMETHING THAT TAKES PLACE DEEP IN YOUR HEART and is not a matter of place or the surroundings, or the presence of other people. You can make A FULL SURRENDER to God before others or you *CAN MAKE IT ALONE* WITH *GOD!* Just the same as with prayer.

GOD WILL SAVE YOU! *YOU* CAN'T SAVE YOURSELF. When you look at your troublesome, naturally evil self, so human and full of faults and weaknesses, so beset by temptations of pride in the flesh, with all its limitations and shortcomings, knowing that to be finally saved you must *GROW* in grace and in God's knowledge—must develop in righteous holy character—must overcome this *self* and temptations and weaknesses—and must ENDURE through TRIAL and TEST and OPPOSITION and all discouragement unto the end,—well, when you look at it that way, it SEEMS utterly *HOPELESS* to expect EVER TO BE SAVED. Do you feel a sense of such futility and helplessness—perhaps to become discouraged and to loose faith?

That's the KEY WORD—*FAITH!* Our plight isn't hopeless after all! Of course, of yourself, it *is* impossible to be saved. But with *God* it is certain—*if* we yield to Him and *trust* Him. We shall be SAVED, *not* by our own power to overcome and develop perfect characters, but THROUGH *FAITH* IN *GOD'S POWER!*

Right here is where 999 out of 1000 become deceived by the fables of this time. And when the blind lead the blind, they both fall into the ditch!

BECAUSE WE *CAN'T* SAVE OURSELVES, —because we *can't* master the evil nature within us—because we *can't* always resist every temptation—we *can't* keep God's Law perfectly and, of ourselves, we would fail to overcome, to grow in spiritual character and endure to the end, THE FALSE TEACHING IS GOING OUT THAT *JESUS DID THESE THINGS* FOR *US*—THAT *WE* DON'T NEED TO DO THEM. A *TERRIBLE* LIE!! Millions today believe that God imputes Jesus' righteousness to us, counting us as righteous because of His righteousness when we are *not!*

There couldn't be a more soul-damning illusion of a devil!

No, Jesus *didn't* live a good life for you, in your stead! YOU are *NOT* EXCUSED FROM KEEPING GOD'S COMMANDMENTS, living a righteous, holy life, overcoming, growing in spiritual character, and enduring in spite of all opposition, persecution, trial and test unto the end. *You* and *I* MUST ACTUALLY *DO* these things in order TO BE SAVED!

HOW? BY God's placing the *POWER* of His HOLY SPIRIT within us to help us! We of ourselves, can't save ourselves—God must save us! No, God does *not excuse* us from keeping His Law and the various teachings that are based upon it.

Instead, God who knows our every weakness, and who Himself is *responsible* for this human nature in every one of us, sent His Son into the world to proclaim His message to us that we must yield to *God's government* over our lives—that we must *REPENT* and turn from our filth of the flesh and pride of mind and heart. GOD *WON'T* LET YOU FALL IF YOU ENDURE TO THE END IN THE CONDITIONS which HE has SET FOR SALVATION!

GOD WON'T ACCEPT YOU "Just As You ARE"

The favorite invitation or "altar-call hymn" sung

by the popular denominations in revival or evangelistic services is "*Just as I Am.*" No, YOU CAN'T COME TO GOD "JUST AS YOU ARE." You must REPENT! NEITHER can you ENTER GOD'S KINGDOM "JUST AS YOU ARE." You must be changed by God's Holy Spirit! God will not receive anyone "just as they are." They are TOO EVIL and VILE. YOU CAN'T SIT down AT GOD'S IMMACULATE, HOLY, TABLE WITH your wrinkled, soiled clothes and DIRTY HANDS, which symbolically represent the human sinner's condition.

It is amazing to see the misunderstanding of so many people, especially about repenting and becoming a Christian.

Here is what one person said: "I'll tell you *why* my husband and I have not been converted. As I understand it, we have to go forward in a meeting before a lot of people, kneel at the altar, and have a *feeling* of deep emotion, pray before a lot of people, and shed a lot of tears. And I just don't know how to WORK UP that FEELING, and I'm afraid I wouldn't be able to shed tears or pray aloud before others." That IS *NOT* REPENTANCE!

Truly we are victims of pagan teachings, doctrines, rituals, and customs, which have wormed their way into a so-called Christianity and adopted Christian-sounding names! Let's contend earnestly for the *faith once delivered*—as faithfully recorded in the Bible—not as practiced in various sects or denominations of *men!*

WHERE DID *JESUS* GIVE SUCH INSTRUCTIONS? Where did *He* set such an example as *they* follow? Where did *He* have His disciples "get converted" by such a formula? Where do you find it in the New Covenant part—the "New Testament" part—of your Bible? Where is the teaching for it? Where did the Apostle Paul practice it or have others do it? *YOU FIND NO SUCH EXAMPLES ANYWHERE IN YOUR BIBLE!!*

IT IS *NOT* A MATTER OF *FEELING!* It is *not* a matter of stirring up one's *emotions*. IT IS A MATTER OF *HEART*—deep down in your *heart* do YOU REALIZE that you have THOUGHT, SPOKEN, AND LIVED CONTRARY TO GOD'S LAW and Bible teaching?—that you are a sinner? DEEP DOWN in your heart DO YOU *WANT* TO REPENT OF IT, FORSAKE IT, TURN TO GOD, AND TO *HIS WAY of life?* If so, it is a matter of *repentance* and of *believing!* Do you *BELIEVE* JESUS is the Christ, the SON OF GOD? Do you ACCEPT Him AS YOUR personal SAVIOR? Do you *BELIEVE* God's Word which says that upon true heart-felt REPENTANCE and faith He *is* your personal Saviour—that He paid the penalty of your sins for you—that you *are* thus released from them—that you are through Him reconciled to God—that God will, according to His promise, give you His Holy Spirit to guide and to lead you, strengthen you, save you? GOD PROMISES IT in the Bible! DO YOU *BELIEVE* IT?

Live JOYFULLY

If you are sick and tired of the empty, fruitless, materialistic life you have been living—*if* in your heart you *do* WANT to turn *from* it *to* a *full* and *JOYFUL* LIFE filled with God's Holy Spirit, THEN WHY DELAY? Why delay ANOTHER MINUTE, EVEN? Wherever you are now, GO where you can do it—INTO the PRIVACY OF your OWN ROOM if you are at home—*YES, RIGHT NOW!*—GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES and MAKE your FULL SURRENDER TO GOD, GIVE YOURSELF WITHOUT ANY RESERVATION TO HIM—ASKING Him to FORGIVE your sins, no matter how sinful you may have been. He will forgive them all. ACCEPT CHRIST as your living Saviour. This is just the start of the real Christian life. DON'T LOOK FOR A CERTAIN "FEELING." It is NOT A MATTER OF FEELING, BUT of *REPENTANCE* AND OF *BELIEVING*. GOD LAID DOWN THE TERMS. CONFORM to them *NOW!*

AND TO REPEAT FOR EMPHASIS, *DON'T* PUT IT OFF. Don't say, "I don't know how," but do it now! *ACT* 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 you and *God* alone—*give yourself to Him*, ask Him to *forgive* all your past sins—CONFESS them to Him (not to any human being)—and then just say—yes, say it: "I here and now accept *Jesus CHRIST* as my PERSONAL SAVIOUR." EVERYTHING MAY BE *HARD*, UNTIL you *SAY THAT*. But the minute you say those words, the unseen power that caused you to hesitate, and put it off, and has made it so difficult—the power of the Devil—will let loose. AND YOU WILL 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 Jesus Christ. One of OUR TRAVELLING BAPTIZING TEAMS can do that.

Then GOD *promises* to PUT His SPIRIT WITHIN 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 BY 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, HE will NOW SEEM CLOSE, and *REAL! Keep it up*! You will EXPERIENCE an INNER JOY you DIDN'T DREAM could exist—you will find HE *is* truly *real*—and an *ACTUAL* HELP in every time of need!

You won't be perfect all at once. You will STILL have your self to WRESTLE with. Trials, tests, afflictions, persecutions will come—BUT NOW you will find AN EVER-PRESENT *HELP* AND DELIVERANCE—a constant Source of inspiration, and courage, and power—an inner peace and faith—and you'll live a full and *ABUNDANT LIFE* for the first time, with the assurance of *LIFE ETERNAL*. Don't become discouraged and give up, though, when you make 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 DO IT NOW. *Go and do it now!*

If you *do* take this step of giving yourself to Christ and thus become His, then, of course, you MUST BE BAPTIZED—*buried* with Christ by baptism. When you become ready for this—remember—*write to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, Post Office Box* 111, *Pasadena, California*—or to our London or Australian offices—and ask for information regarding having one of **our travelling baptizing teams** baptize you. This service, like the sending of the true gospel, is *free*.

Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong's Experience of Repentance

The CARNAL, human NATURE within man DOES NOT WANT TO REPENT AND SURRENDER itself to God! There are many ways by which God brings man to repentance. HERE ARE THE THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS MR. HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG EXPERIENCED IN COMING TO REPENTANCE—taken from his own Autobiography.

"After the flash depression of 1920 had plunged all my major advertising clients into receiverships, sweeping away the publisher's representative BUSINESS in Chicago, I hung grimly on for two years. It was futile.

"What I totally FAILED, then, to realize was that God was beginning to deal with me, to strike me down, to take away the 'idols' of business ambitions, and set me in His work for a very special mission. Jonah tried to escape on a ship from a mission of God. Isaiah protested he was unworthy. Jeremiah argued he was too young. Paul had to be knocked down. But it required *several* knock-downs to deflate me and wean me from a love of this world.

"It was bewildering—utterly frustrating! It seemed as if some mysterious, invisible hand was just disintegrating every business I ever started!

"That was exactly what *was* happening! The hand of GOD was TAKING AWAY every activity on which my heart had been set—the business success before which shrine I had worshipped. This zeal to become important in the business world had become an IDOL. God was destroying the idol. He was knocking me down—again and again! He was puncturing the ego, and DEFLATING the VANITY.

"I had been BEATEN DOWN. God had brought that about—though I didn't realize it then. This MADE SURRENDER LESS DIFFICULT. Repeated business reverses, failure after failure had destroyed my self-confidence. I was BROKEN IN SPIRIT. The *SELF* in me DIDN'T WANT TO DIE. It wanted to try to get up from ignominious defeat and try once again to tread the broad and popular *way* of vanity and of this world. But now I knew *that* way was wrong! I KNEW its ULTIMATE PENALTY was death—ETERNAL DEATH. But I [my OLD CARNAL SELF] DIDN'T WANT TO DIE *NOW!*

"It was truly a battle for life [my *carnal* life]—a life and death STRUGGLE. IN THE END, I [my *CARNAL* SELF] LOST that BATTLE as I [my carnal self] had been losing all worldly battles in recent years.

"I TOLD GOD I was ONLY a burned-out HUNK OF JUNK. IN FINAL DESPERATION I THREW MYSELF ON HIS MERCY. IF HE COULD USE MY LIFE, I WOULD *GIVE* IT TO *HIM*—not in physical suicide, but AS A *LIVING* SACRIFICE, TO BE USED AS *HE* WILLED. IT was WORTH NOTHING TO ME ANY LONGER.

"JESUS Christ HAD BOUGHT and paid for MY LIFE by His death. It REALLY *BELONGED* TO HIM, and I told Him He could have it!

"From then on, this defeated no-good life of mine was *God's*. I didn't see how it could be worth any-

thing to Him. But it was His to use as His instrument, if He thought HE COULD USE IT.

"It was humiliating to have to admit my wife had been right and that I had been wrong, in the most serious argument that ever came between us.

"IT WAS SHOCKING, disillusioning, TO LEARN, AFTER INTENSIVE STUDY OF THE BIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME, THAT WHAT I had been TAUGHT from a child IN SUNDAY SCHOOL, was in so many basic points, the very OPPOSITE FROM what the BIBLE plainly states! She said she had found these in the Bible!

"I argued. I commanded her to stop this ridiculous nonsense. I had said she was *crazy!* Finally I entered into an intensive study of the Bible for the first time in my life. I was determined to *prove* she was wrong, for her new belief and practice was contrary to the orthodox teaching of the large-denominational churches that call themselves Christian. MY STUDY started early mornings, LASTING OFTEN UNTIL 1:00 OR 2:00 A.M.

"But TO my UTTER DISAPPOINTMENT AND ASTONISHMENT, I FOUND that the popular CHURCH TEACHINGS and practices were *not* based on the Bible. They had ORIGINATED, as research and history had revealed, IN PAGANISM.

"The opening of my eyes to the *truth* brought me to the CROSS ROADS of my life. To accept it meant to throw in my lot with a class of humble and unpretentious people I had always looked upon as inferior. It meant being cut off from the high and the mighty and the wealthy of this world, to which I had aspired. It meant the final crushing of *vanity*. IT MEANT A TOTAL *CHANGE OF LIFE!* It meant REAL *REPENTANCE*, FOR NOW I SAW that I HAD BEEN BREAKING GOD'S LAW. I had BEEN REBELLING AGAINST GOD. It MEANT TURNING AROUND and GOING THE *WAY OF GOD*—the *WAY* OF the *BIBLE*—LIVING ACCORDING TO EVERY WORD in the BIBLE, INSTEAD OF according to the WAYS of SOCIETY OR the DESIRES OF the FLESH AND of VANITY.

"It was a MATTER OF WHICH *WAY* I would TRAVEL for the REMAINDER OF my LIFE. I had certainly reached a *CROSSROADS!* In final desperation, I THREW MYSELF ON HIS MERCY. If He could use MY LIFE I WOULD GIVE it TO HIM.

"THIS UTTER SURRENDER to God—this *REPENTANCE*—this *GIVING UP* OF the WORLD, of FRIENDS and ASSOCIATES, and EVERYTHING—was the MOST BITTER PILL I EVER SWALLOWED. Yes, it was the *only* medicine in all of my life that ever BROUGHT me HEALING!

"For I actually began to realize that I was finding *JOY* beyond words to describe in this total defeat. I had actually found *JOY* IN the STUDY OF THE BIBLE—in the discovery of NEW TRUTH heretofore hidden from my consciousness. And then surrendering to *God* in complete repentance, I found UNSPEAKABLE *JOY* IN ACCEPTING *JESUS Christ* as my personal Saviour and my present High Priest.

"Somehow I began to realize a *NEW* FELLOWSHIP AND FRIENDSHIP had come into my life. I began to be conscious of the fellowship WITH CHRIST, and with God the FATHER.

"When I read and studied the BIBLE, God was TALKING to *me* and how I LOVED TO LISTEN! I began to pray, and I *KNEW* that IN PRAYER I was TALKING TO GOD. I was not yet very well acquainted with God. But one gets to be better acquainted with another by constant contact and continuous conversation."

AND THIS IS THE EXPERIENCE MR. ARMSTRONG WENT THROUGH, AND THE FINAL GREAT JOY HE HAS FOUND, AS A RESULT OF REPENTANCE.

Proof of Repentance

After you have come to God in surrender, and been baptized, HOW can you *KNOW* you have *TRULY* REPENTED? What will tell you with absolute *certainty* whether or not you have *really* repented? This is a very good thing to know. Here is how you can tell.

1. Will you set your DESIRES ON GODLY THINGS, and NOT become deeply involved in things pertaining to this material EVIL WORLD? Col. 3:1-2.

2. Will you find that six months, a year, or two years after you are baptized you are *STILL* YIELDING yourself to God's will?

COMMENT: If you truly repented, you will have the Holy Spirit. The spiritual mind is the *surrendered, yielded* mind. It is the mind that has given up all wanting its own way. It is a mind that has been thoroughly *CONQUERED* in its REBELLION against God. It is the mind that henceforth is *WILLING* to *OBEY* God no matter what the cost. Jesus *surrendered totally* to the rule of God and let the Holy Spirit direct His life completely. Even when facing an agonizing death on the cross, Jesus prayed: "Not my will but *thine* be done" (Luke 22:42). *You*, like He, will also be that way continually until the time you are transformed.

3. If you have truly repented will you find God's COMMANDMENTS less and LESS DIFFICULT —grievous—to keep? I John 5:3.

COMMENT: Gradually you will begin to SENSE the LIFTING POWER of the HOLY SPIRIT within you. You will BE PLEASANTLY SUR-

PRISED AT your ABILITY TO WITHSTAND DOWNWARD PULLS which mastered you in the past. You will find that more and more your life is becoming patterned after the way Christ lived. I Pet. 2:21-22. And YOU will FIND that your WHOLE VIEWPOINT OF LIFE is CHANGING, much TO your OWN AMAZEMENT AND *JOY!*"

COMMENT: Baptism is not repentance. Repentance does not consist in going down once into a watery grave.

Repentance is *more*. For in *actual living* you will *CONTINUALLY* BE COMING TO GOD *after* that time IN *REPENTANCE* for sins you commit along the way, asking God for an apportionment of Christ's blood to cancel them out. New knowledge, together with these repentances, will produce a *change* in your whole viewpoint of life!

4. If you truly repented before baptism, will you be LIVING BY EVERY WORD OF the BIBLE although you may not like to? Matt. 4:4; John 3:19, 20.

COMMENT: The light that has come into the world is God's inspired Bible. But the carnal mind is "enmity to God" and does not, by *nature*, like the Bible. And it is only when driven to it by bitter experiences that it will repent and accept its teachings. So, if you have *truly repented*, you will be *continuing* to follow the Bible, although that part of your nature which is not yet crushed out by the Holy Spirit may rebel.

5. But after you have continued steadfast in this new way of life several years what change will you find has occurred within your mind?

COMMENT: You will find that your mind is filled to OVERFLOWING WITH *REAL* LOVE for God and all fellowmen—even your enemies—and has sympathy, patience, and kindness for others in their ideas and beliefs, their faults and mistakes, which speaks softly, gently, kindly; which seeks only to help and to serve. You will find your mind has *died to self*.

6. Will you be surprised to learn that you HAVE MUCH NEW KNOWLEDGE which you know by past experience that YOU, of yourself—of your own effort—COULD NOT HAVE ACQUIRED? John 16:13.

7. Will you BE *AMAZED* to notice that YOU ARE ABLE TO "*GROW UP*" IN THESE NEW TRUTHS which lead to a priceless, SCINTILLATING destiny while those in the world around you plod on in a life that leads to nowhere? Matt. 11:25.

COMMENT: *You* are the plastic clay. You are not *set* in your ways. The very fact you are this far along in this Course shows that God *can* mold and fashion you. You are a "babe" and the thing that distinguishes a babe is that it has the *ability* to grow up in these *truths* AND APPLY THEM. "Babes" are not able to have become *set* in their *wrong* ways until they will not change.

8. Will you have the feeling of actually being nourished by God's Word out of the Bible? I Pet. 2:2. And won't you begin to HAVE the FEELING that CONTINUOUS DAILY BIBLE KNOWLEDGE INTAKE is as NECESSARY to your well being as the actual bread you eat? Matt. 4:4.

9. Will you HAVE the FEELING that you are *GROWING UP* "UNTO THE STATURE OF Him [CHRIST] in all things"? Eph. 4:15.

10. Will you begin to realize that you HAVE a RESPECT FOR GOD that you never had before? Isa. 66:2.

11. What will you begin to find happens when you ask GOD for something?—RECEIVE PRAYER ANSWERS? I John 3:22.

12. And what will become your attitude toward this "Present Evil World"? – You WON'T LOVE THE WORLD? Rev. 18:4; I John 2:15-17.

COMMENT: This does not mean that we are to absolve all contact with the "outside world." We can still *love* others and yet not *fellowship* them. Love and fellowship are *not* the same! We were born into this world. We cannot remove ourselves physically out of it, but we need not be of it—involved in its *evils*.

If you *remain* a true Christian, *you will not be able* to *blindly* follow the CUSTOMS AND PRACTICES OF THIS SOCIETY. Instead, YOU will begin ASKING, "But what is *God's* will, and what does *God* say about it?" And you will begin to search the *Bible* – the revealed *will* of God, to see just EXACTLY WHAT HE *DOES* SAY ABOUT EACH OF THE WORLD'S PRACTICES. You will begin to *know* the will of God. You will begin to *question* the ways of the crowd. And you will clearly discern where the false ministers are wrong.

Summary

YES, IF YOU FIND you are *broken up*, and your *OWN HUMAN WILL* has been *TOTALLY SHATTERED*, and you are disgusted with yourself —filled with *ABHORRENCE* at your own actions, *YOUR* WAY OF LIFE—your own self which is the vanity within you—*then you SHOULD BE BAPTIZED!!* BAPTISM SHOULD BE DONE JUST AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER YOU REPENT.

Write Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong, and one of our baptizing teams can visit you. *This service, like the sending of the true gospel, is free.*