

**AMBASSADOR
COLLEGE**

BIBLE

CORRESPONDENCE COURSE



“Infant Baptism” — Is it *Biblical*?

LESSON 26

What our STUDENTS SAY

Agrees With Her

"Dear Mr. Armstrong: What a revelation your Bible Correspondence Course is! I have just begun my twenty-sixth lesson, and permit me to say you have really started something. That something is a knowledge of the Bible I never had before!

"In all the years I was a church member, there was no such instruction. Just believe with simple faith, one is told. So that made us plenty simple, and well-uninformed. Now, as Mr. Garner Ted puts it, I'm getting to the 'trunk of the tree.' I'm finding the truth at last, and it agrees with me."

— Mrs. H. A., Alhambra, California

Shocked!

"I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the Correspondence Course. I am almost ready for the fourth test and I know more of the Bible and its teachings as a result of the Bible Course, than I have known in my full lifetime — and that is over seventy years. And a lot of the truths come as a surprise, even a shock! Thank you so much for the wonderful work you are doing — and what you have done for me."

— D. C., Illinois

• *God's truth is shocking because this world's ministers don't really teach it!*

"Teen Appeal"

"I just wanted to tell you that the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course had 'teen appeal.' I am 16, but I have found this Course to be an interesting source of blessing and pleasure. Thank you for offering this Course free of charge. But I realize it does cost something to print and to mail the lessons. So I have enclosed a small gift."

— Doris J., Detroit, Michigan

• *Hundreds of other teen-agers agree with you, Doris.*

Underestimated

"First of all I would like to say that I am taking your Correspondence Course, and I find it fascinating. But I think you have underestimated your Course. It, in itself, is so very interesting that I could study it for the rest of my

(Please continue on page 16)

AMBASSADOR COLLEGE BIBLE CORRESPONDENCE COURSE LESSON 26

Published at Pasadena, California; Watford, England; and North Sydney, Australia, by Ambassador College. French and German editions published at Pasadena, California. Spanish edition published at Big Sandy, Texas.

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About Our Cover . . .

On the island of Malta an infant is immersed in a bronze bowl. Infant's god-father performs the act simultaneously. Thousands of other little infants are similarly "baptized" in the churches of this world every week.

Did Jesus and His apostles practice "infant baptism"? Does the Bible even *allude* to it? This lesson reveals the truth regarding infants and the *proper time* to be baptized. It lays bare the conflicting doctrines of "baptism" taught in today's Christian-professing world!

Wide World Photo

AVOID A COUNTERFEIT BAPTISM!

DID YOU KNOW that most churches today do *not* baptize their members the way Jesus commanded?

The churches of this world are in utter confusion regarding baptism. They are actually employing *counterfeit forms* of "baptism" in place of the ONE TRUE BAPTISM commanded in the Bible!

It's time you understood the TRUTH about these counterfeit "baptisms" and *beware* of them!

"Baptism" in the World

Many conflicting doctrines about baptism are being taught and practiced today by professing Christianity.

There are many denominations which practice *infant baptism*. They sincerely believe an infant is eternally doomed should it die unbaptized.

Then there are those who will baptize you

"into the church" — their religious sect, or denomination — instead of "into Christ."

Other sects believe one must receive an *additional* "baptism of the spirit" after he has *already* received the "spirit." It is claimed that the only evidence proving one has received this special "baptism" is that of speaking in "tongues"—the so-called "power to witness for Christ." *But is this what your Bible says?*

Another religious movement insists that you must receive the "baptism by fire" in order to be "saved." Do you want it?

One church even teaches its members to be *baptized on behalf* of their dead friends and relatives who died unconverted!

Are these ideas and practices *really* scriptural? Or are they merely the *inventions* — the doctrines and commandments — of *men*? Let's learn the *truth* from the Bible!

But first, let's be sure that we go about this study *correctly*.



Wide World Photo

"INFANT BAPTISM" EN MASSE — Vicar looks at nineteen babies he "baptized" in a mass service.

Before You Begin

This lesson is intended to direct you to *your Bible*. Here is the method of study:

Remember—you are to open your Bible to every passage. Never say to yourself, “Oh, I think I know what the verse is referring to”—and then pass over the scripture. You need to “*keep your nose in the Bible*,” so to speak. You must read *and* reread and think out each passage referred to in this lesson. *Meditate* on the new knowledge you will learn during your leisure time, especially within the following twenty-four hours, and in your time of prayer — *so you won't forget it!* Make God's Word a part of you! Don't forget that this is a *Bible study* course — not just a study of the lessons we send you.

Here is the method of making effective notes: Write down neatly on your paper the title of the lesson and underscore it. Next write down

the lesson number. Then as you come to each question section, write down its heading. Then, underneath, number each question as you come to it. *For each* question write down the answer from your Bible, together with any pertinent ideas that come to your mind.

Be *sure* to WRITE OUT the scripture which answers each question, if you have not done so with previous lessons. Writing down every word of each Bible passage, and any comments you wish to make as you go along, will aid you greatly in *reviewing* and remembering later on.

This lesson, like all others, is extremely important to you. Have you *prayed* to God for understanding? If not, go now to a private place, kneel down, and ask Him for spiritual *understanding* and wisdom. Ask God to *help* you grasp and *apply* the knowledge this lesson will reveal to you in the Bible!

And now for the lesson itself.

LESSON 26

Origin of Infant Baptism

Where did the “command” that infants be baptized originate? Is it a commandment from God? Or is it a “commandment” of *men*? Let us examine *history* and understand!

The common practice of infant baptism gradually evolved from the false pagan concept that all are born with the inherent sin (“original sin”) of Adam, and unless baptized, the individual is eternally lost because of Adam's sin.

Infant baptism seeks to make God appear as unfair because it implies that sin, and the resulting eternal death penalty, is due to *one man and woman*—Adam and Eve—and has been passed on to all their descendants. This is another one of Satan's *lies!*

Through Adam “sin entered into the world” because Adam was the *first man* to sin. But the death penalty has come on everyone because “all have sinned” (Rom. 5:12).

In his *History of the Christian Church*, the church historian Neander accounts for the early introduction of infant baptism as follows:

“. . . from the want of duly distinguishing between what is outward and what is inward in baptism—the baptism by water, and the baptism by the Spirit — the opinion [of the Roman Church] became more fully established, that without external baptism no one could be delivered from that inherent guilt [“original sin”], or could be saved from the everlasting punishment that threatened him, or raised to eternal

life; and when the notion of *magical influence*, a *charm* connected with the *sacraments*, continually gained ground, the theory was finally evolved of the unconditional necessity of *infant baptism*. About the middle of the third century this theory was generally admitted in the North African Church . . . but while in theory the necessity of infant baptism was admitted, still in practice it was very far from being generally prevailing.” (Vol. 1, pp. 313-14—Torrey's Translation.)

Many of the “fathers” of the early Roman Church, who believed in various pagan traditions and beliefs, *promoted this pagan theory of infant baptism!* Among them were Origen, Chrysostom, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage in North Africa, and Augustine, who was its chief defender and promoter. Christ and the apostles never baptized infants. It is a pagan idea spawned by carnal men!

Rheinwald, in *The Christian Review*, says: “Though its [infant baptism] necessity was asserted in Africa and Egypt in the beginning of the 3rd century, it was, even to the end of the 4th century, by no means universally observed—least of all in the Eastern Church. Notwithstanding the recommendation of it by the fathers, it had never become a general ecclesiastical institution until the age of Augustine” (Vol. 3, p. 193).

It was not until the *6th century* that infant baptism became a universal practice.

“The administration of baptism to infants was



PIP Photos

At left, Augustine, Bishop of Hippo, was one of the many “fathers” of the early Roman Church who promoted the pagan doctrine of infant baptism. Right, Emperor Justinian the Great of the Eastern Roman Empire, made infant baptism compulsory in the sixth century.

subsequently rendered compulsory by an edict of Emperor Justinian, who reigned over the Eastern Roman Empire from A.D. 527 to A.D. 565. He enacted ‘that such pagans as were yet unbaptized, should present themselves, with their wives and children, and all that appertained to them, in the church; and *there they should cause their LITTLE ONES immediately to be baptized.*’ (Cote’s *Archaeology of Baptism*, p. 120.)

The evidence of recorded history alone proves that infant baptism is merely a doctrine of men which was inspired by pagan Egyptian beliefs and practices!

WHY Infant Baptism Is NOT Commanded

It is actually a mockery of God’s Word to submit newly born infants to water baptism. Infants cannot even begin to think for themselves, let alone *repent* or *believe*!

God reveals in His divine Word that before one may be baptized, he must fully repent of having broken God’s laws. He must thoroughly *abhor*, be sorry for, his past sinful life! Then he must *believe* the true *gospel* of the *Kingdom of God* and believe on Jesus Christ as his personal Saviour. Even older children have not

reached the maturity and stability of judgment where they have the self-discipline to fully repent, and believe. The average mind does not mature until about age 25 — though there are exceptions. Only a very few mature and become sober and serious in outlook by age 16.

An immature mind may experience an emotional feeling of *temporary* remorse. This may often be falsely construed as repentance, when it is only momentary, and soon forgotten. It is much like “puppy love.” How many youngsters, 13 to 18, have a number of temporary emotional experiences of feeling sure they are “in love” and cannot be talked out of it. They usually grow out of it, but in rare cases, of course, they may really “know their minds”—though this is the rare *exception*, and *not* the rule. So it is with repentance and belief.

The immature child baptized around age 12 to 15 may be ever so serious about it at the time. But when the child reaches the age between 16 and 20, he or she comes under “teenage” influences which are quite different today than one or two generations ago. The young adult must meet many temptations characteristic of energetic, dynamic, reckless, excitement-craving youth in the blossoming flower of sex appeal. Experience shows that perhaps not one in a hundred can be truly “converted” prior to this age and still remain converted and constantly



Religious News Service Photo

These children, about to be baptized in Tennessee, are not ready for baptism. Repentance and baptism require a *mature* mind!

growing spiritually closer and closer to Christ and His kingdom through these trying years.

Some present the argument that the infants and older children of Cornelius' household were baptized by Peter (Acts 10). This is merely an *assumption*. The Scriptures nowhere indicate whether or not Cornelius' "household" included any children under adult age. Those baptized in Cornelius' house must have been *mature enough to understand* the conditions of salvation and able to truly repent and believe! Children, *if* any were present, would *not* have been baptized. The same explanation applies to the baptism of the Philippian jailor's "household" (Acts 16:31-33).

Jesus' EXAMPLE for Infants

Jesus set us the example of what we should do regarding infants and little children. Notice what He did!

1. Did Jesus baptize infants and young children—or did He, instead, pronounce *blessings* upon them? Mat. 19:13 and Mark 10:13-16.

COMMENT: Jesus did not baptize children! And His early Apostolic Church did not perform such baptisms either! Nowhere in the Bible is there an example or command for this practice.

JESUS BLESSED LITTLE CHILDREN BY LAYING HIS HANDS ON THEM AND PRAYING FOR THEM. He undoubtedly prayed to His Father in Heaven for divine protection and guidance of their young lives, and that the parents who brought these children to Him would be given wisdom to properly train them in the ways of God.

This is Christ's own example for the ministers of His true Church. Today, God's ministers *do* invoke this same blessing upon infants.

Now let's understand what God does expect from Christian parents and their children.

2. Does God command parents to teach their children obedience to His laws? Deut. 6:6-7 and Eph. 6:4.

3. Are children also commanded to obey and honor their parents? Prov. 1:8, Ex. 20:12 and Eph. 6:1-3. Should they obey in everything? Col. 3:20.

4. As a child, did Jesus also set the example of perfect obedience to His parents for all children to imitate? Luke 2:51.

COMMENT: Jesus obeyed His earthly parents in all things, as well as His Heavenly Father! He was "subject" or obedient to their wishes.

5. Should children who disobey—sin against—their parents, be chastised and corrected? Prov. 19:18 and 22:15. Is this chastisement to be administered in love? Prov. 3:12 and Heb. 12:5-7.

COMMENT: Contrary to the diabolical teachings of modern child psychologists, God commands physical punishment for disobedient children. (This truth is made plain in our free booklet on "Child Rearing." Write for it.) God punishes His spiritual sons in real Godly love and consideration for their welfare—to teach them lessons. Likewise, parents are not to punish their children in hate, but in the love of God—explaining that they are being punished because they have done wrong! This point is so important it cannot be overstressed. Punishment must be in *LOVE*—but with authority! This is the only way to instill obedience in a child.

6. If children are properly taught the ways of God and are punished in love, will they depart from Him and His laws when they are older—when *mature* in mind? Prov. 22:6. Do we find a good example of such an individual? II Tim. 3:15.

COMMENT: Even though Timothy's parents had only the Old Testament scriptures, they properly trained him during his childhood. He did not depart from God when he grew older, but continued with such fervency in the ways of God, that he became converted and was later ordained as a minister in God's Church!

Timothy's example shows that children, properly trained and instructed in the ways of God, can come to real repentance and belief in Christ, when they become mature in mind. They will then, through personal conviction and by free choice, seek the ways of Christ and baptism in real sincerity from the heart!

When to Be Baptized

How soon should we be baptized once we have truly repented of our sins? One or two denomi-

nations insist that baptism should be put off until the candidate has "proved he *has* the Holy Spirit and *is* living a righteous, spiritual life" — or has come to a "certain *spiritual* knowledge."

This definitely is *not* what God commands! Notice the teaching of the Apostle Paul:

Paul says God's "law is *spiritual*," and that the carnal—unconverted—natural mind is not subject to God's law (Rom. 7:14 and 8:7). This plainly says it is impossible to truly understand and follow the spiritual application of God's law until one has repented and received the Holy Spirit of God. Yet these sects demand that one must be doing both of these things which *God* says are impossible, before they will baptize him! It's amazing how far man can *twist* the clear teachings of the Bible!

Another denomination will not baptize an individual until he comes to "see" and accept "God's law" as interpreted by this denomination's doctrines. Then he is placed on six months' probation to "see if he is really worthy of baptism."

This is utter nonsense!

The command of God is (1) preach the gospel. This leads to the conviction of those called by God, of the sins they have committed—which, in turn, leads to repentance and faith in Christ; (2) baptism; and (3) then they shall receive the *Holy Spirit, which renews their minds and teaches them by helping them to understand spiritual truth* which was IMPOSSIBLE for their carnal minds to comprehend *before!*

So, here we have two different sects—the first demanding of those desiring baptism that they *already* be keeping the *Spiritual Law* of God, before they will baptize them so they can receive the Spirit. And the second demanding that those desiring to be baptized *already understand* the *Spiritual Law* of God before they can receive the Spirit.

What spiritual blindness!

Then just what *does* God demand *before* baptism? A COMPLETELY SURRENDERED AND REPENTANT ATTITUDE! *That's all He wants!!*

Everyone knows he himself has sinned, and lived contrary to God's will, though he may not have spiritual understanding of God's will. God will grant *repentance* to a carnal mind before the actual conversion of that mind by the Holy Spirit. One does not need a college education in Bible *knowledge* in order to know how to repent and be baptized into Christ. Jesus instructed His apostles to preach the Gospel, *baptize* repentant believers, and *then teach* them the *commandments* (Mat. 28:19-20).

Notice now the crystal-clear teaching of the New Testament:

1. On the day of Pentecost, did the repentant believers have to put off their baptisms for some reason, or were they all baptized that *same* day? Acts 2:41.

2. Did Philip baptize the believing Ethiopian eunuch at once? Acts 8:35-38.

3. Was the Apostle Paul—formerly known as Saul—baptized only a short while after Christ convicted him of his sins? Acts 9:8-9, 18.

4. When did Paul baptize the Philippian jailor and those of his *repentant* household? Acts 16:25, 30-33.

COMMENT: Notice that they were baptized the same hour after midnight! They did not even wait until daylight! Baptism should never be delayed without reason. It might be neglected until too late! In every case recounted in the New Testament, repentant believers were baptized almost immediately.

But what about those who are not able to be baptized for reasons completely beyond their control?

The simple Bible answer is that water baptism is not the thing that saves us from the death penalty, makes us righteous, or imparts eternal life. While God commands it “for the remission of sins,” yet it is merely SYMBOLIC of that which remits our sins—the *death* of Christ. While it also pictures His resurrection, by which we ourselves are finally saved, it is merely the *symbol*, not the reality. Therefore, God makes allowances for cases of individuals *absolutely not able to be baptized*. You need not worry about anyone *utterly unable* to be baptized.

But God does command water baptism for the one who is able. If one defies the command and refuses, or neglects, or even puts off obedience to this command until too late, it certainly would be an act of disobedience which would impose the penalty of sin, and could cause the loss of salvation!

Thousands of our radio listeners have been baptized by our personal representatives in their areas. Many are waiting until we can send men to them, or until they can come to us. When necessity prevents your immediate baptism or when circumstances are completely beyond your control, God will understand and make allowances. But to avoid all unnecessary delay, contact Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in care of the address on page 2 which is nearest to you *just as soon as you make your decision*.

The “NO Works” Baptism

Baptism in most worldly churches today—whether done by immersion or not—is looked

upon as merely a ritual or initiation into a church organization, instead of a burial of the old sinful life and the beginning of a new way of life.

The majority of people have grown up in, been baptized into, and attended some church or another. They hate to think, let alone admit, that they have never really been converted. Human nature impels them to stubbornly maintain their *own* righteousness.

Most baptized church-going “Christians” of this world never really knew what to repent of. At the time of their “baptism” they intended to “do better” or to “make their peace with God.” But their “ministers” never revealed God’s definition of sin to them—what they must repent of! Consequently, their baptisms have been nothing more than mechanical rituals or initiations into church organizations—mere dunkings! For since they have never been taught God’s definition of sin, they have failed completely to realize what rotten and sinful lives they have led.

These individuals HAVEN’T REALLY REPENTED. They have never been broken up about the wretched state of their lives. And they have not detested and utterly abhorred their own vanity and selfishness.

Such people don’t immediately begin to study and understand the Bible after baptism. They just continue to go along with the customs, the ways, and the TRADITIONS OF THIS WORLD. Their lives are not *actually* changed. They don’t come to know God personally. And they continue in most of their sins!

Their carnal, natural mind will not take correction from the commandments of God “Because the carnal mind IS ENMITY AGAINST GOD” (Rom. 8:7). This is *why* this “No Works” baptism persists.

Baptism is a vital step on the road to real conversion, and it must be done properly—at the right time and in the right way—after true repentance!

The sad truth is that most “professing Christians” have not been baptized properly and have never received the Holy Spirit! They haven’t even begun to get ready to start on the road to real conversion! (Acts 2:38; Rom. 8:9; I Cor. 12:13.)

Perhaps you are wondering about your previous baptism. Ask yourself why you were baptized in the first place. Were you baptized simply because many of the members of your family were baptized and you felt “looked-down-upon,” or had that “left-out feeling”? Did you stand in the water and go through the ordinance of baptism simply to “join” the group with whom you had



Religious News Service Photo

Revival meetings often lead many to be baptized "into" the sponsoring church. But how many are taught the Bible definition of sin — what they must repent of — before baptism?

been fellowshipping? Were you baptized because you temporarily thought it was "right."

If you were baptized for any of these reasons — your baptism was probably not valid *because your motives were not right!* You need to counsel with a true minister of God about the matter as soon as possible.

"Tongues" NOT Proof of Baptism and Holy Spirit!

Is speaking in "tongues" a *proof* of having been properly baptized and of then having received the priceless gift of God's Holy Spirit? Many claim it is.

There is a modern religious movement which *erroneously* believes that Peter, James, John, and the other apostles were all converted and had received the Holy Spirit either when first called by Jesus, or while He was yet alive. Then, having *already* received the Holy Spirit *before* Christ's ascension, His disciples, so they *erroneously* believe, had to "tarry," and "pray

down Pentecost," until, finally on Pentecost, they "got their *baptism*"—a *special* dispensation of spirit power—and consequently spoke in *unknown* tongues.

Based on this assumption, they say that one first "joins" their church by "repenting of his sins" and being baptized by immersion, after which he immediately receives the "Holy Spirit." (*But what constitutes real sin and real repentance they do not know. This ignorance voids any possibility of their receiving the Holy Spirit of God!*)

And they go on to teach erroneously, that some time afterward, one so baptized, if he "seeks" it diligently enough in a "tarry meeting," may receive "*the Baptism*"—a special endowment of "Spirit power"—*an entirely separate and later special act or blessing from God.*

The teaching is that when one receives this latter "baptism," he always "speaks in unknown tongues"—that is, "unknown" languages. Often thrills and sensations are felt surging in overpowering waves through the body. From that time all timidity and bashfulness in "witnessing

for Christ" is gone. The tongue is loosened. The recipient now boldly and loudly testifies in open meeting. Often in a jazzy manner and with a fluency and flippancy of speech never before possible!

What is this strange phenomenon of speech? Is it from God? Is it used according to *His* purpose? Or—is this unknown speech from *another* source—from the Devil? Let us understand what God *warns* you about this matter!

1. Does the Bible really teach anything about speaking in "unknown" tongues as these "tongues-seekers" *assume*? I Cor. 14:2.

COMMENT: A vital key to our understanding is that the word "unknown" has wrongly been added by the translators of the King James Version. You'll notice that this word appears six times in I Corinthians 14 and that it always is in *italics* when used in connection with "tongues." Whenever the translators inserted additional words which *they thought* would make the intended meaning of the Scriptures clearer, they *italicized* them so the reader would know that they were *not a part* of the literal word-for-word translation. Most of the time these additional italicized words do help in making the meaning clearer, but in this case, the use of "unknown" is absolutely misleading!

2. Is the ability to speak in "tongues"—one or more known foreign languages—a special gift God might bestow upon some Christians, especially ministers, through the power of His Holy Spirit? I Cor. 12:1, 10-11.

COMMENT: Remember that in the New Testament, the *original* inspired Greek word that was translated into the English language as "tongues," is *glossa*. This word means "languages"—known tongues!! If a "language" were *unknown* it would *not* be language, only a *noise*!

3. On the day of Pentecost, 31 A.D., did God bestow this special gift of languages upon the disciples at the same instant they received the Holy Spirit? Acts 2:4. Was this gift given so all the people could understand them? Verses 5-8. Wasn't *this* then God's specific purpose for giving the disciples the gift of tongues? Verse 11.

COMMENT: Remember, the apostles did not receive the Holy Spirit until the day of Pentecost—*after* Christ's ascension to heaven—*not* before. They were given the gift of other languages, not as evidence of the Spirit, but to enable them to be understood by Jews of the *diaspora*—the dispersion.

On that day of Pentecost, 31 A.D., there were Jews from many *foreign* countries gathered in Jerusalem. Therefore, it was necessary for God to bestow the gift of *various* languages upon His disciples in order that they could make known

to these people the Gospel—the good news of Christ's death, resurrection, and future return to rule this earth!! Notice carefully that there was a *specific purpose* for this gift of languages. And *nowhere* do we find even the remotest indication of *unknown* — unintelligible — "languages" being spoken by the disciples!

4. Did God later bestow the gift of speaking in foreign languages upon certain other Spirit-filled individuals in His true Church? I Cor. 14:12, 26. Why?

COMMENT: The Church at Corinth was a Gentile Church composed of many individuals from different *foreign* countries. God, therefore, gave certain ones in His Church there the gift of speaking the languages of these people so they could *understand* God's Word more clearly and be *edified*—be strengthened and built up more perfectly in the grace and knowledge of God.

Notice especially that God gives spiritual gifts *ONLY* when they can serve a *SPECIFIC NEED* in the Church!

5. Did Paul encourage the Corinthians to desire the spiritual gift of "prophesying"—preaching by means of being inspired by God—rather than having the gift of tongues? I Cor. 14:1-5.

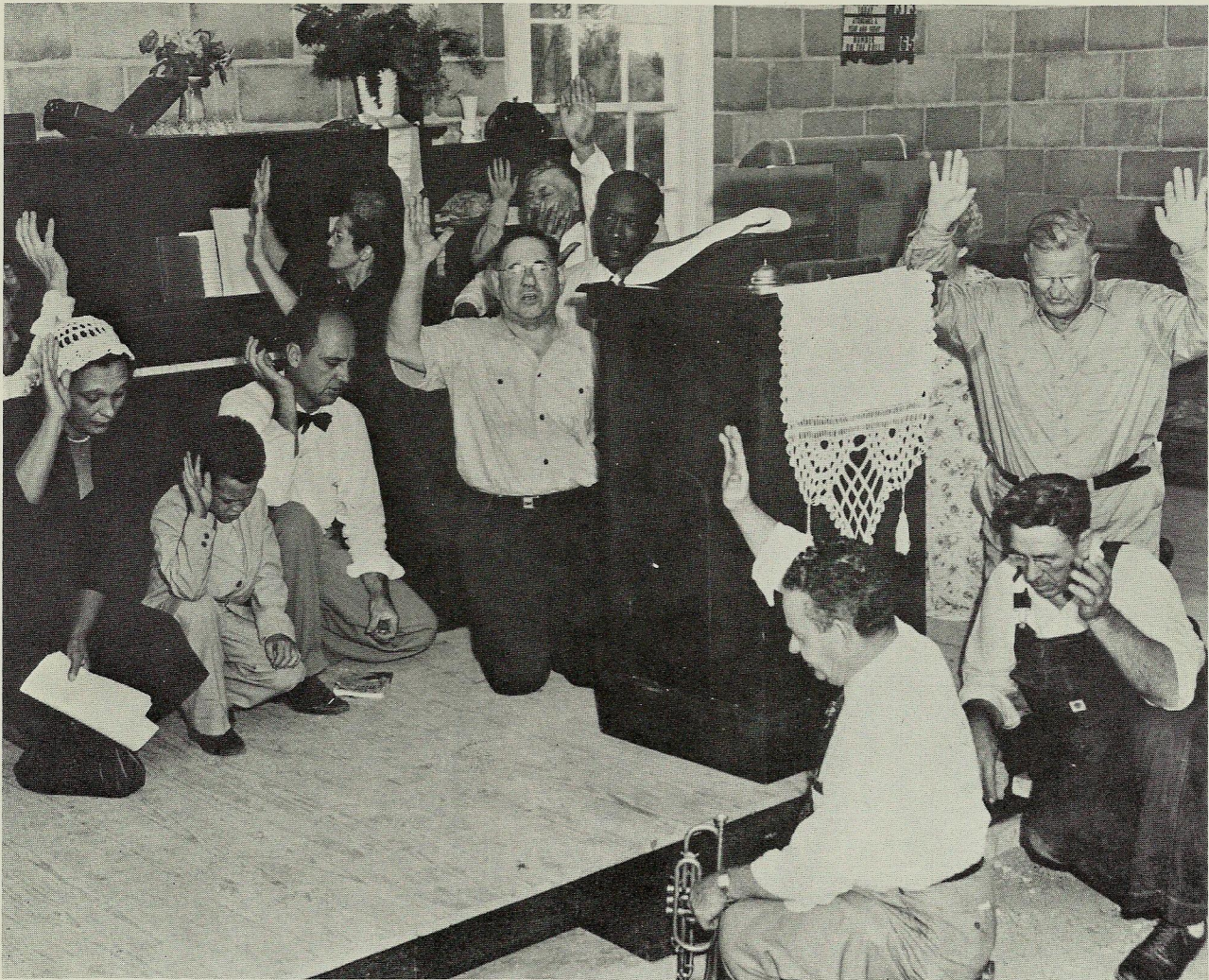
COMMENT: "Prophesying," in this instance, refers to *inspired preaching*. Paul said that inspired preaching is a far greater gift than speaking in *tongues*—various foreign languages! But if one did receive the gift of speaking in a foreign language, and spoke to a certain nationality in the Church, he was to interpret or have an *interpreter* convey the *meaning of his words* to the rest of the congregation that would not have been able to understand him (I Cor. 14:5, 13, 27). Or else he was to *keep silence*! (Verse 28.)

6. Is the gift of languages the *last* one of a list of gifts mentioned by Paul? I Cor. 12:10, 28. Doesn't this indicate it is the *least* gift of the Holy Spirit?

Tongues and Tarry Meetings

1. Are those who receive God's true spiritual gifts, such as tongues, capable of controlling these gifts in an intelligent and sane manner? I Cor. 14:32-33. (The word "spirits" here is used in the sense of *spiritual gifts*.)

COMMENT: This certainly is *not* the case at a "tarry meeting" in the churches of this "tongues movement"! Each "tongues-seeker" in such meetings repeats senseless phrases as "Glory! Glory!" *over and over again*. Constantly they are urged to "say it a little *faster*." Variations of this phrase are "Hallelujah!" or "Praise you



Religious News Service Photo

"Speaking with tongues" has been practiced by certain church groups for decades. Now other church denominations are beginning to practice the utterance of *unintelligible* sounds whose source practitioners say is God.

Jesus!" The seeker is told to keep it up *faster and faster* and not to become discouraged.

Sometimes they are told to lift their arms above their heads and *hold* them there. When they become so tired they are unable to hold them up any longer, others will come and support their arms. All pray aloud at once, begging God to give them the "blessing." Hour after hour they continue to beg, plead, and agonize.

Occasionally, perhaps after many of these "tarry meetings," one or more at a meeting will begin to "speak in tongues," which is usually nothing but ridiculous babbling — unintelligible gibberish! The individual falls backward and rolls upon the floor, ranting and raving and foaming at the mouth like a maniac. Nothing but utter confusion presides! God says He is "not the author of confusion" (I Cor. 14:33). If not, who is? Satan and his demons! And it is *their* tongues that many "tongues-seekers" speak in!

2. What conclusively proves that one has truly received the baptism of God's Holy Spirit? Mat. 7:20, Gal. 5:22-23 and I John 3:24.

COMMENT: The lives we live are the evidence of whether or not we have received the baptism of God's Holy Spirit. Only the *Holy Spirit* can produce the "fruits of the Spirit."

3. Are "tongues" therefore the evidence of one's having received the baptism of the Holy Spirit? I Cor. 13:1. "*Charity*" means love.

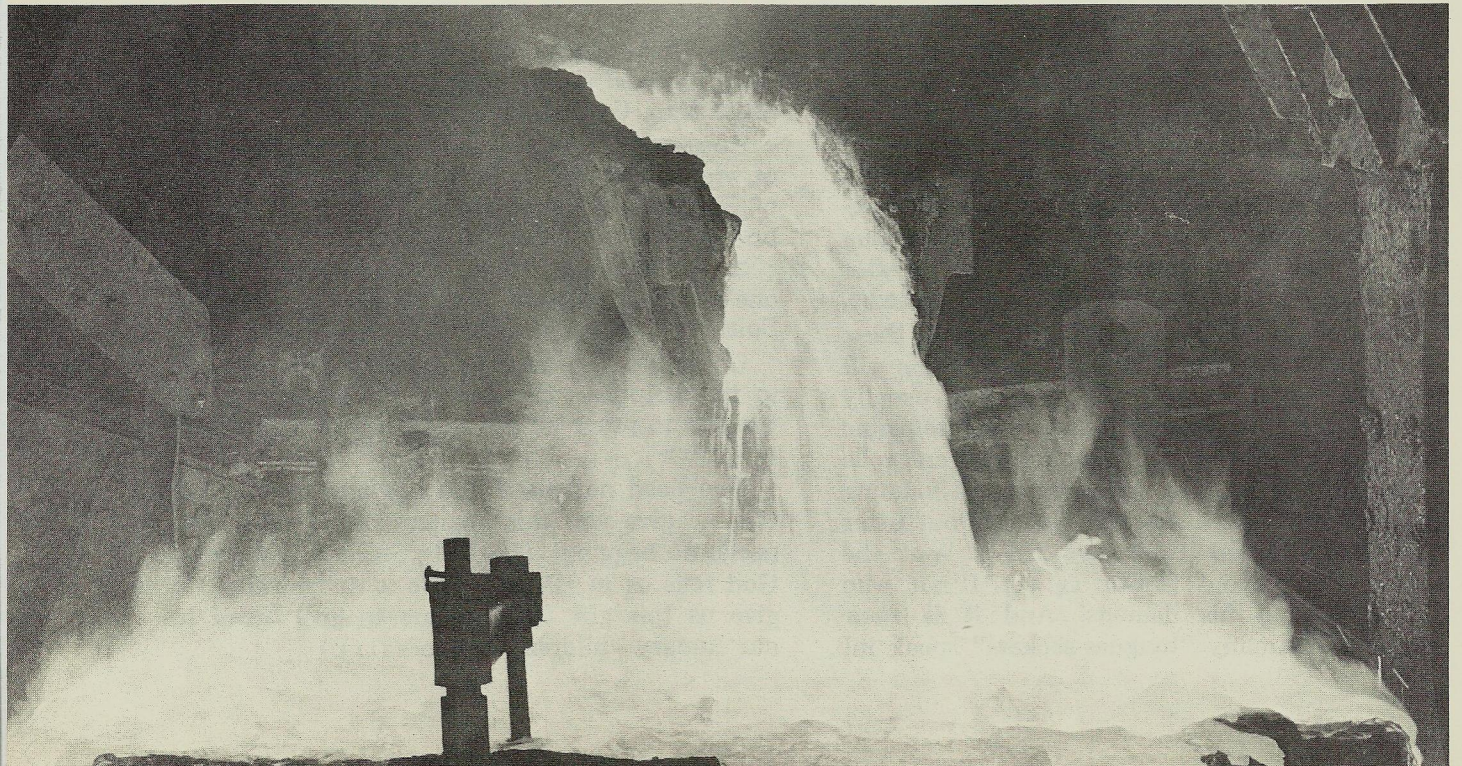
COMMENT: There is no statement or example in the scriptures that shows one must speak in tongues to prove he has received the Holy Spirit of God.

You need not plead and beg and agonize for God to give you this greatest of all gifts. God needs no begging! The Holy Spirit is free—and God tells us in His Word He is more willing to give us this gift than we are to give bread to our hungry children! (Luke 11:13.)

"Baptism With FIRE"!

Wide World Photo — below, Ewing Galloway

Tinder-dry brush explodes into fury of flame during raging brush fire. Below, white-hot molten metal pours from open hearth furnace into ladle. Both vividly portray the "baptism with fire" which will utterly destroy the incorrigible wicked when earth's crust becomes an all-consuming *molten* mass!



The "Baptism With FIRE"

John the Baptist, speaking of Christ, said: "He . . . shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with *fire*" (Mat. 3:11).

People just don't understand what they're asking for when they seek "the baptism with fire"! Let's understand what John meant!

1. Just what did John the Baptist prophesy concerning "baptism with fire"? Mat. 3:11.

2. To whom was John speaking? Mat. 3:5-6. Are we to assume from this that all Jerusalem and all Judea, and all this region was righteous, or at least repentant and seeking salvation?

COMMENT: Not at all! The whole population came in great crowds to see John—mostly out of *curiosity*!

3. Did John baptize *all* of this group who came to him? Mat. 3:7-8. What is to be the ultimate fate of the "tree"—one who has not truly repented and shown forth the "fruits"—proof in the life he leads—of true repentance? Verse 10 and last word of verse 11.

COMMENT: John was speaking to the *unrepentant* hypocritical Pharisees and Sadducees whom he *refused* to baptize, as well as those who did repent and whom he *baptized*. So notice carefully that *some* of those there to whom John spoke—the repentant—were to be *baptized* with the *Holy Spirit* later. But that the others there—the unrepentant—were awaiting the wrath to come, which shall burn them with—baptize them into—a fiery death! (Verse 11, last word.) This fire is the ultimate fate of the wicked, who shall be cast into the lake of fire—this earth's surface burning up—which is the second and final death (Rev. 21:8).

4. Did John also compare the evil to chaff? How did he say Christ would separate them from the good, so they could be burned? Mat. 3:12.

COMMENT: At the final judgment, Christ's fan is to be in His hand. With it He will purge His floor. Of what? Of chaff which He will *fan away*—remove. Christ will have gathered His wheat into the garner—the Kingdom of God. Then He will later remove—destroy—the chaff by *fire*. That is the fate of the chaff—unquenchable fire!

5. Did Jesus also compare the evil to tares—weeds which are a menace to the good? What are Jesus' own words concerning His gathering of His wheat—the good—and the burning of the tares—the evil? Mat. 13:30. Also scan quickly the rest of this parable, beginning with verse 24. Did Jesus elaborate on what the symbols of this parable represent? Mat. 13:36-42.

COMMENT: "His [God's] floor" in Matthew



Bob Taylor Photo

Grain harvest pictures the "wheat" of Jesus' parable which is to be gathered into God's Kingdom.

3:12 is the same as "His field" of Matthew 13:24—both are this earth. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his *field*." But while he slept, the enemy, the devil, came and sowed tares—sinners. Now He lets both the wheat and the tares (the chaff)—saints and sinners—grow together in His field—His floor (this earth)—until the harvest. Then He will send the angels to **BAPTIZE THE TARES**—the unrepentant chaff—**WITH FIRE** that burns them up; but the wheat—the saved—are gathered into His garner which represents His Kingdom.

That settles it!

John the Baptist was speaking to both those ultimately to receive salvation and to the unrepentant sinners.

When he said, "Christ shall baptize 'you,'" the "you" included *both* groups. The repentant are those He would baptize with His Spirit—the others with all-consuming fire at the time of the final judgment! You don't want the "baptism with fire," do you?

Baptism for the DEAD

Another false "baptismal" doctrine is that of "Baptism for the Dead." Its history, like that of infant baptism, clearly descends from paganism. It is widely practiced and taught by one large denomination. Its members have themselves "baptized" for dead relatives and friends who died unbaptized. This custom is based on their misrepresentation of I Corinthians 15:29.

First notice how this custom crept into the professing Christian world.

History shows that the heretic Marcion, about 150 A.D., introduced an idea of his own—the practice of baptizing the living for the dead. Chrysostom describes the procedure as follows:

"When a catechumen [one just starting to learn so-called "Christianity"] dies, they conceal a living person under the bed of the departed. Then they stand before the dead, and ask the dead person whether or not he is willing to be baptized. Instead of the dead, who is unable to answer, the person under the bed replies in the affirmative. Whereupon they baptize him instead of the deceased, and thus make quite a farce of the whole matter. Such power has Satan over the minds of foolish men. And if you complain of this transaction, they appeal to the words of the Apostle Paul, who speaks of being 'Baptized for the dead'" (Hom. xl in I Cor. by Chrysostom).

Now let's learn the truth about I Cor. 15:29.

1. Can the dead possibly be aware of someone being baptized on their behalf? Eccles. 9:5, 10.

COMMENT: In this particular sect those who are baptized *for* the dead actually believe they're being baptized for (on the behalf of) the flitting "immortal souls" of their dead unconverted friends or relatives! Such baptism is supposed to automatically *save* those "souls" and send them straight to Heaven!

How foolish this doctrine of men really is! We have already proved by scripture that the doctrines of the "immortal soul" and that of men going to heaven are of Satanically inspired, pagan origin. With this knowledge alone, the man-made doctrine of vicarious baptism crumbles!

Baptism obviously is for the *living*, *not* the *dead*! Only the *living* can *repent*, and repentance is a *prior condition* to baptism. The dead are dead — they "know not anything"!

2. Would Christians have any *hope* of a future resurrection if Christ had not been resurrected? I Cor. 15:16-19, 32. But don't verses 3-8, 20 prove Christ was resurrected and that *we* therefore can have *HOPE* of being *resurrected* too?

COMMENT: The subject of the entire 15th

chapter of I Corinthians is the CHRISTIAN'S *HOPE* OF THE RESURRECTION.

3. Exactly what does Paul say about "baptism for the dead"? I Cor. 15:29.

COMMENT: This verse is not correctly translated from the original inspired Greek. Paul is *not* talking about being baptized "in the place of" the dead, or "in behalf of" the dead, or "for" the dead. The inspired Greek word translated "for" is *huper*. *Huper* is a vague word—having several meanings: "above, over, instead of, for the realization of, for the *hope of*"—too many meanings to accurately choose from. Therefore, the context of the entire chapter must determine the actual meaning of the word as Paul intended!

As one proof of the resurrection, Paul cites in verse 29 the example of those who were baptized, symbolizing their *hope* in the *resurrection*. He is actually asking the question, "why be baptized *if* the dead rise not?" Therefore, since Paul is speaking of the *hope* of the resurrection, in the context of chapter 15, the Greek word "Huper" should be translated "for the hope of." The verse then should properly read: "Else what shall they do which are baptized *for the hope of the dead*, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then baptized for the hope of the dead?"

What is the hope of the dead? The resurrection! In verse 29, Paul is writing about baptism which illustrates the *hope* of the *resurrection*! Baptism—arising out of a watery "grave"—is a symbol of the hope of the *dead*, the hope of a *future resurrection* which they had when they were alive. To surrender one's life to Christ now, to crucify the self now, to be baptized—all this is foolish unless there is hope thereby of a resurrection!

This verse has absolutely nothing to do with the false doctrine of baptism in place of or "for" the unbaptized dead! The Holy Spirit-inspired New Testament Church did *not* practice this custom! And the Apostle Paul *did not* teach it!

AUTHORITY to Administer Baptism

Who is authorized to administer baptism? Must it be a minister?

1. Are those who are sent forth by Christ—by His Church—the ones He commands and gives authority to do baptizing? Mat. 28:18-19. Did Christ authorize His disciples to baptize for Him? John 4:1-2.

COMMENT: Jesus commissioned His disciples to baptize *for* Him—by His authority.

2. Did Jesus commission the Apostle Paul to baptize repentant believers, or to preach the gospel? I Cor. 1:13-17.



H. Armstrong Roberts Photo

Thousands of Christians have died in HOPE of being resurrected at Jesus' return. And thousands of others are being baptized today for this same "hope of the dead."

COMMENT: Paul baptized very few! He had others do it for Christ. He was the called minister by whom Christ carried the gospel to the Gentiles—through whom Christ, as head of the Church, ruled the churches which had been raised up by the preaching of Paul and the *young men* he had taught and sent out under his direction. Paul did not consider it important or essential that he, personally, baptize all those being converted under the ministry God carried on through his supervision. "Christ sent me not to baptize," Paul said.

The principle to remember is that it is really *Christ* who baptizes you! The man who puts you under the water is merely performing this physical act *for* Christ, in His stead — *by His authority*.

Consider that it is *Christ* who is baptizing you by a HUMAN INSTRUMENT who has been COMMISSIONED BY HIS CHURCH! And even if His human instrument turns out to be imperfect, remember all humans are imperfect, and that the baptism was *done for*, and *in the name of* the only One who ever was perfect. And since it was in reality done by Christ, it should never be done again.

What YOU Should DO

Thousands have come to realize they are receiving the truth and message of God through this Work and the *Ambassador College Bible Correspondence Course*. They are beginning to realize that the RADIO CHURCH OF GOD IS GOD'S TRUE CHURCH on earth—the *only* Church that is preaching Christ's *true* Gospel. And they realize the importance of personal contact with the ministers of Jesus Christ. These ministers are doing His work of preaching the message of the Kingdom as a *last witness* to this earth.

If you have truly repented of your sins and realize the vital necessity of this personal contact and guidance of the true servants of Jesus Christ regarding being baptized, and other matters—not just having seen the "argument" of the doctrine of baptism proven to you—then send your name and address immediately to Mr. Herbert W. Armstrong in care of the address on page 2 which is nearest to you.

You need to fully realize the vital importance of coming to a real conversion now! *Don't put it off any longer!* For "the night cometh, when no man can work"!

What our STUDENTS SAY

(Continued from page 2)

life and never tire of it. But as you say, it is merely a study guide to the Bible. So often I only get one question done per day. The reason is that I spend so much time studying some other interesting item that your Course has brought to my attention, that I find it hard to pull myself away."

— Tom P., Phoenix, Arizona

"If only every living soul could have the privilege of taking your Bible Correspondence Course, what a different world this would be! I thank God that I have this privilege, and want you to know that it has made a very different world for me. The illustrated lessons are even more enlightening and interesting; and I hope, with time and patience, I can prove worthy of this knowledge."

— M. E. Z., Encino, California

• *In the WORLD TOMORROW everyone will be taking this Course!*

Was Bored

"I am a housewife and for a time I became bored doing the same thing over and over again every day, with nothing exciting to do. Then I began reading *The PLAIN TRUTH* and became enrolled in the Correspondence Course. And now, I have never in all my life had anything like it.

"There is nothing like it. It really is plain, simple, and easy to understand. And most inspiring. I enjoy it to the fullest. And since I've been studying the Bible, there is love, happiness, and contentment in our home. Thank you for helping me to find the truth in this time of trouble."

— Mrs. M. S., Ridgeway, Virginia

Preparing

"I must thank you first for the literature. With careful reading and studying I am understanding why we are here — not just merely to eat and live. I learn we are to be preparing ourselves to help Christ rule His Kingdom. I have been blind to this for years. I cannot find words to thank you for the knowledge I have received through the Ambassador College Bible Course."

— Mary C., Kansas City, Missouri

"I'm sending these few lines to let you know how I'm getting along with my Bible Course. I'm on my eighth lesson now, and I'm looking forward to my second test . . . I'm getting more and more knowledge every day from my studies. I don't think there is any piece of literature in this world which means more to me than my Bible lessons. I'm making full use of the Word of God, which is the Holy Bible. I know there is a reward for me, and for everyone who follows His commandments."

— Clyde S., Castries, St. Lucia,
West Indies

• *Keep up the good work, Clyde. Jesus said we have to CONTINUE OVERCOMING to the end (Rev. 2:26).*

Questions Answered

"We are on our ninth lesson of the Bible Correspondence Course, and find it more interesting every time. There were a lot of questions we felt we could ask. But as we continue studying, we have a lot of them answered without writing you. Everything makes sense now as we understand God's Plan and world conditions. We are very thankful that the secret things of God are being made so clear to us."

— Mr. & Mrs. W. H., Garland,
Manitoba, Canada

"*The PLAIN TRUTH*, your radio program and the Correspondence Course are priceless. I am very pleased with the illustrated lessons. They are comparable to the expensive textbooks my children study at school, but the contents far surpass the most elaborate books ever published.

"My little eight-year-old daughter received her first lesson today. I know we are going to enjoy doing our lessons together. I am working on Lesson 33, but will study along with her on her lessons and will relish every minute of it. Thank you for sending these lessons. I hope she can keep up with them, and that they will prove to be the blessing to her that they have been to me."

— Mrs. H. W., Taylor, Wisconsin

• *A good example for all parents.*

Compares Courses

"You might be interested to know that your Course has been printed nicer and clearer than another correspondence course (not a Bible course) I am taking. That course cost me over \$500.00, and their overall service is not as good as that which you provide *free* of charge."

— Konrad D., Canada

• *We're striving to do even better, with God's help.*