

LIVING ACCEPTABLY BEFORE GOD

Editorial—In The Immanuel Missionary.

To live acceptable before God is no small matter. When we come to appear before men of note we see to it that we are at our best. Esther had a serious matter to present to the king. We are not told exactly how long she was in the preparation to meet the king, but it was months and months. To live acceptably before God means to be at our best at all times. This ought to give us the deepest concern and cause us deep searching of our hearts before God. Clark said to live acceptable before God is to live before Him as they do in heaven.

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A haphazard life cannot be acceptable before God because God is not a haphazard God but a God of law and order. Therefore we need the constant help of the Spirit to qualify. We can enquire and understand from the Scriptures what it takes to live acceptably before God.

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There is a doctrine and belief as old as the Christian era that gives a professing Christian license to live a loose life before God and man. It is supposed to be the correct interpretation in the doctrine of "imputed righteousness." There is an imputed righteousness indeed in which we are to reckon ourselves through Jesus Christ. But this imputed righteousness is not given on the mere confession that we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, followed by water baptism. The attitude that these advocates hold is that since we believe, are baptized, and join the church, we are accepted in the Beloved and can henceforth live as we please. God looks at us through Jesus Christ our righteousness. Though we may have much defilement and gross sin and corruption, God winks at it, or doesn't see it, because of the covering of Christ over our sins. While God is looking at us through Jesus Christ He is overlooking that which is hideous in man.

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These believers overlook this fact—that righteousness is never imputed without there first be a strong belief in God such as Abraham had when righteousness was imputed unto him. Acceptance with God is conditional. We can never be accepted before God until we have forsaken all sin. We cannot be accepted of God until we come to the Acceptor. We can never come to the Acceptor only by the way of repentance toward God and faith toward Jesus Christ. All this brings one to the new birth, the new creature, in which all things are passed away and behold all things are become new. Imputed righteousness will be followed by IMPARTED righteousness when conditions are met.

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God revealed to Cain (the first child of Adam and Eve) that neither he nor anyone else would be acceptable before God. He said, "If thou do well shalt not thou be accepted." The doing well here is the same as the words Peter spoke to the house of Cornelius "... he that worketh righteousness is accepted with Him." God also said to Cain, "If thou doest not well sin lieth at the door." We know that Cain was not accepted of God.

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There is much in the Word of God that reveals to us what acceptable living involves. Note those oft repeated words of David, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord my strength and my Redeemer." David was

always bent on being acceptable before God, but he knew that his words and his meditation had much to do with that acceptance. He realized that no matter in what else he did, if his words and his meditations were not right in the sight of God, he would not win the favor of God. It is our daily prayer that our words and meditations be pleasing to God or are we shaping words to please men and thinking thoughts that please the flesh? If we watch and pray our words will be right words and our thoughts will be pure thoughts. If not, we can count that day lost, and a day out of favor with God.

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The Word says, "He that serveth Christ in these is accepted of God and approved of man." The THESE—are righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Just previous to this the Word said that the kingdom of God was not meat and drink. Then just eating and drinking is not accepted of God no matter if it is in the name of religion. It has gotten to be that a religious group cannot come together without having something to eat and drink. Isaiah declared that the joy such know is the joy of harvest or the joy of dividing of the spoil. The acceptable life before God is that of righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. It is not a cross or tedious task to live acceptable after this manner.

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A real prayer life is acceptable before God. The Word says, "First of all . . . prayer, etc. . . . for this is good and acceptable in the sight of God." When God sees His servant engaged in fervent prayer it is good and acceptable with Him. There is nothing outside of being right with God that will win His smile and favor like praying, supplicating, interceding, and the giving of thanks. Daniel was a man of prayer. He found favor with God and God sent a special messenger to tell him that he was a man greatly beloved. When we have gone the rounds and prayed as it were around the world, what consolation and satisfaction comes to our hearts. It is because we are living acceptably before God.

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Peter said, "When ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. When we do well then suffer at the hands of the one that is causing the suffering, do we take it patiently? We some times hear people say, "I couldn't take it!" They meant the pressure got so heavy that they had a blow out or explosion. It is not the doing well that is accepted to God. It is the suffering in patience that is accepted. Some will give way under the strain of suffering and then seek to justify themselves. This is not pleasing to God. It shows that patience is not having her perfect way and work. We are living in the day when so many things try the souls of men. We need great grace, especially the grace of patience.

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Again the Word says ". . . that the offering up of the Gentiles might be accepted being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Holiness of heart and life then is the life in which we are fully acceptable before God. It is in the first chapter of Ephesians that that precious word is found—"Being accepted in the Beloved." The whole chapter is given over to holiness in this life and the life to come. Holiness is the wheel revolving around the axle of "accepted in the Beloved." If we live in the fulfillment of the first chapter of Ephesians, and the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, we will surely be living lives that are acceptable before God and the

angels. But without which no man shall see the Lord.

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The text reveals the grand aim and goal of life. "WE LABOR . . . that we may be accepted in Him." Are we laboring to that end? Or are we laboring for the bread that perisheth? Are we all out for God and bending every atom of our being to the one end that we may be accepted with Him whether present or absent? "Let us Labor for the Master from the dawn to setting sun. Let us talk of all His wondrous love and care. THEN when all of life is over and our work on earth is done and the roll is called up yonder, I'll be there." Because we have lived a life that is acceptable before God.—Sel.

ON HELL

Is there no limit?—"Hell Incorporated," is being constructed at Las Vegas, Nevada, it is reported. It will be an amusement center in operation day and night, every day in the week, and will contain every kind of amusement and vice that exists. A \$5,000 neon sign advertises the place. It is in the form of a devil with an arrow for a pitchfork which constantly moves, pointing the way to "Hell." Along the roadside between Los Angeles and Las Vegas are large roadside signs which say, "You're on the Road to Hell"; "This is the Way to Hell." The blasphemy and sinful daring of our age seems to know no limit.—Selected.

What the BIBLE Says about HELL . . .

The Bible is a tantalizing book in one respect—it gives such faint glimpses of some themes about which we are tremendously concerned. Nowhere in it do we find more than a tantalizing glimpse of heaven; nor does it give a clear and satisfying description of hell.

But Luke takes time to present to us a startling account which Jesus told about one man who went to hell; and in that, we find the following hints as to what hell is:

- 1 The man came to believe in hell as a place;
- 2 He found it to be a place of conscious existence;
- 3 He retained and exercised his memory there;
- 4 He found there some kind of burning fire;
- 5 He found the water supply distressingly deficient!
- 6 He became intensely interested for others—that they might not go there;
- 7 He learned that repentance is necessary, and that the proper place to repent is here, in this life—now!

—Sel.

WEATHER VANE

The cross on the church is my weather vane, It lifts my life up on the highest plane. For guidance I look to this cross of love, And it keeps my eyes reaching up above. The cross on the church is my weather vane, In every direction it points my gain. Warning storms come, and the wind blows wild, But God in His way always makes them mild. The cross on the church is my weather vane. Each bright rainbow shines through the mist of rain. With God, the great weather man, at its source, By faith I will follow the Sign of the Cross. —Ruth M. Eddy