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## Acceptable to God.

(Convention Address)

“Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.” (Eph. 5:16.)

FROM the dawn of Biblical history man has been a worshipping creature. The Creator has constructed man with the organ of veneration and spirituality situated high in the forehead. In all ages and generations men generally have been conscious of obligations to a higher power—the Creator—to whom they felt responsible for their words or actions, whether in civilized or heathen lands. As a result they have invented certain organizations, rites or ceremonies, or objects of worship to appease a higher power or Being to, whom they felt they owed their loyalty and devotion.

During the course of the Apostle Paul’s missionary tours he arrived in Athens, a city full of idols, and addressing the learned men there, he said—“Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious.” (R.S.V. See Acts 17:22-31.) He reminded them that they owed worship and obedience to a higher Being and their own poets had said, “We are his offspring,” and if that is so, “we ought not to think that the deity is like gold or silver, or stone.” These idols were unable to bestow any blessings, or give life, but the Deity whom Paul announced was able and would bestow enduring blessings to those who responded then, and in obedience to life-giving commands to all others in due time—in a day of judgment to come.

All this desire to worship and crave the favor and blessing of a Supreme Creator and Lawgiver stems from the first man Adam. After the fall of the first pair into condemnation through disobedience, two sons were born unto them, Cain and Abel, and in the course of events this desire seems to have been strongest in Abel. Both thought of offering a sacrifice to the Creator, and the recorded results are well known. Abel’s sacrificial offering was more acceptable to God than Cain’s. Cain’s offering of the fruits of the field was by no means wrong, but Abel’s sacrifice of an animal—the shedding of blood—was more acceptable and pleasing to God, though in later times, under the Law Covenant, some kinds of the fruits of the field were offered, and indeed were commanded by God to be offered.

Why was Abel’s sacrifice the more acceptable when both brothers desired to offer that which would have the Lord’s approval? Abel’s offering showed, perhaps not so clearly to Abel as Christians see it now, that the first requirement is that an offering must be made to establish atonement between the sinner and the Creator, through the shedding of blood—a life sacrificed. Those who study the Bible from this standpoint can be assured of understanding the Scriptures. Isa. 1:18 reads—“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord; though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” Here the transgressor is invited by the Creator to reason upon the subject of atonement and reconciliation, whereby those under condemnation may learn how they can be cleansed and become acceptable to God again.

The atonement through the sacrificial death of another is absolutely the solid and only basis of approach to God, for by this one sacrificial act of His only Begotten Son giving Himself a ransom price for all, the righteousness of God by faith is now available. “Without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins.” (See Heb. 9:22-26.) All became sinners in Adam’s original transgression — “By one man sin entered the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” (Rom. 5:12.) Nevertheless, the Lord has said, “Let us reason together.” He has arranged a way to justly cancel condemnation, and cleanse the guilty.

No one could be acceptable to God while His law declared all mankind were sinners, for none were righteous; but God foreshadowed how He would remove this condemnation by instituting a Law Covenant with Israel. An important feature of that Law Covenant required the shedding of blood. Typical atonement was made through the sacrifice of bulls and goats; their blood made atonement and typically cancelled sin for twelve months. This was repeated year by

year until the anti-typical sacrifice was offered by Jesus, “the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.”

When the typical sacrifices had served their purpose they were done away ; they were no longer acceptable, as stated in Heb. 10:1-4— “For the law . . . can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? . . . For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.” “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his (God’s) sight ; for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God (justification), by faith of Jesus Christ unto all them that believe (Jew and Gentile) . . . is manifested,” etc. (Rom. 3:20-22.)

The following verses, 25 and 26, state that God has done this in a just way, not by excusing the transgressor, but Himself supplying the ransom price for all in Adam, through offering up His Son as a perfect man—a life for a life. Thus the justice of this arrangement honors God’s own broken law. We have Jesus’ words also—”For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life (soul) a ransom for many.” (Mark 10:45.)

At the due time Jesus responded, — “Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will.” (Heb. 10:7.)

Jesus began this ministry by a public water immersion — baptism — to fulfil all righteousness, and we read —

“And lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him; and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:16, 17.) There the Heavenly Father accepted Him as an acceptable sacrifice for sins, and Jesus proved what was acceptable to His Father. In the words of Paul, this acceptable sacrifice given for us, was “an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” (Eph. 5:2.) Having finished the work given Him to do, His Heavenly Father showed His approval in a very marked way by raising Him from the dead.

Continuing His mission at Nazareth, Jesus based a sermon on the 61st chapter of Isaiah. Among other things, He said He came, “to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.” (Luke 4:19. R.S.V. — “Year of the Lord’s favor.”) Jesus began a new phase of God’s plan ; the acceptable year (or period) had come. This acceptable time of Jehovah’s favor was also mentioned by Isaiah in chapter 49:8— “In an acceptable time have I heard thee.” (R.S.V.—”In a time of favor have I answered you.” Jehovah is addressing the Messiah—His servant.) “In a day of salvation have I helped you.” These words have their first fulfilment in Jesus. What is this acceptable time, or season of favor? Is it that all men everywhere are offered salvation from the time of Jesus’ first advent? Some Christians draw this conclusion, and also say that there is no further probation after Jesus’ return. When do these words apply and to whom? The Apostle Paul quotes these words of Isa. 49:8 in 2 Cor. 6:2. They apply first to our Lord, and since Jesus’ first advent to the end of the Gospel Age to the followers of Jesus only—those whose consecration, begetting and sacrificial mission is acceptable to the Father. Then, this acceptable or favorable time will close at Christ’s second advent ; hence, Paul ex- horts,—”that ye receive not this grace (favor) of God in vain.”

It is a mistake to say that these words in 2 Cor. 6 prove that no further probation will be granted to anyone after the Lord’s second coming. The context in Isa. 49:6-13 definitely proves the contrary, for it describes the Messiah’s (Head and Body) office and work during His presence and glorious reign on the earth. The context shows the first application of this chapter is to Israel’s restoration under the glorified Messiah, and then to all Gentile nations — verse 6. There are four major operations here. Firstly, the Messiah (Head and Body) will be given to the people (Israel) as a mediator of a New Covenant. Secondly, “to raise up (margin) the land,”—the land of Israel—which has lain desolate for centuries, and she will again receive it as her heritage. We are already witnessing this. Thirdly, verse 9,—”Prisoners **go** forth.” We have already witnessed many thousands of Israel going forth from among the nations back to their land. Some countries still hold them as prisoners as in Russia, but Isa. 43:6,—”I will say to the north, Give up,” — will surely be fulfilled; they will surely “go forth.” Fourthly—”To them that are in darkness, show yourselves.” Not only those appointed to death, but those also in the land of darkness and the shadow of death (Job 10:21, 22), shall come to the light by a resurrection.

Although the Messiah will begin His work with Israel first, nevertheless, in verse 6 Jehovah says—”It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to restore the preserved of Israel; I will give you (additionally) as a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” (R.S.V.). Yes, greater things shall be done by the Lord’s anointed servant, even for all mankind. The Messiah is destined for greater things even than raising up Israel —given as a covenant to Israel, and as a light to Gentiles.

Verses 10-13 of this 49th chapter of Isaiah describe the times of restitution. “Highways shall be exalted,” which means that every obstacle shall be removed and every facility granted for conversion and salvation unto the ends of the earth. It is an error to say that all probation will cease at the second return of Christ. Indeed, the world’s salvation only then

begins.

As previously noted, Isa. 49:8 reads—"In a day of salvation have I answered thee; in an acceptable time (or season of favor) have I helped thee." The Church's salvation is a special time of favor. It is called a "great salvation" (Heb. 2:3); and "a high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:14.) This was announced by Jesus and the Apostles to Israel. "Fear not, little flock; it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." This message did not go to the Gentiles during those 3; years of our Lord's ministry; they knew nothing of a day of acceptable salvation and were without hope and without God, as the Scriptures declare in Eph. 2:12.

The point of time when this special salvation was extended to the Gentiles began about 3- years after Pentecost, and the account of this is given in the 10th chapter of Acts. The first believing Gentile was Cornelius, a pious man. From that time forward his alms and prayers became acceptable to God, and the history of this is given in Acts 15:8-11, where the Apostle Peter states that the Gospel had gone to the Gentiles. The Lord showed His acceptance of Gentiles by a miraculous demonstration of 'the holy spirit (Acts 10:44-47), even as He did to Jewish believers, putting no difference between Jews and Gentiles purifying their hearts by faith.

Again in Rom. 15:16, 17 the Apostle Paul says he was greatly honored in having the favor bestowed upon him to preach this acceptable season- of grace (favor) of the high calling to the Gentiles through the power of the holy spirit. "That I should be the minister (public servant) of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified through the holy spirit." The Apostle says here that he holds this appointment under (the supervision of) Christ Jesus. "Therefore I hold this appointment under Christ Jesus for affairs relating to God." (F. Fenton.)

There is a reference here to the priestly office and service of the Jewish Tabernacle rites and offerings. The Apostle Paul represents himself as figuratively doing a similar priestly service or duty in connection with the gospel, so that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable to God, their sacrifice being an offering which the holy spirit sanctified. The words, "ministering the gospel of God," are better translated in the R.S.V., also Weymouth's—"In the priestly service of the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable." The offerings of the Gentiles do not refer to their material possessions. No, but themselves—offering their bodies and all their powers in the service of God—in full consecration, a living sacrifice, represented by the Lord's goat in the tabernacle offerings. This is the chief work in this acceptable day of our salvation—during this Gospel Age—when those who would voluntarily offer themselves in sacrifice—are acceptable to God through the merit of Jesus Christ, being sanctified by the holy spirit. Thus only can Christians fulfil the complete will of God in this their day of salvation. There is no other hope or calling during this age.

Now, have we proved or tested these things, as our text urges?—"Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord." Have we, each one, proved that the Christian way is the chief calling of this age? Have we desired to enter in and fulfil our consecration, and experience the full measure of Jehovah's "time of favor" and peace through a knowledge of Jesus Christ? Are we fully sanctified—set apart—through the influence of God's holy spirit? Have we yielded ourselves, all that we have and are, to God? If so then you have some evidence, have you not? You have a witness in yourselves;

God has accepted you; He hears your prayers; you know, too, of His guidance during your coming in and going out.

He takes pleasure in doing this for His spirit-begotten sons and daughters; He supervises your experiences—makes them work for good.

God's precious promises are yours for the taking; you know these promises and your good hope cleanses the flesh, corrects the natural disposition and perfects holiness and reverence for God, (2 Cor. 7:1), this being also a witness of the spirit. If so, you are proving what is acceptable unto the Lord, and this shall not be in vain. The advice given in Psa. 119:9 is for the young and also the ageing,—'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his ways? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.'

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## Daily Service.

THE Lord's business is His people's vocation. "Vocation" is the term that describes the special business of any person, while the word "avocation" describes an occasional business. The Apostle Paul's vocation was that of a minister of the truth while his avocation or occasional employment, when necessary to provide things honest and decent in the sight of God and men, was tent-making. Similarly all of the Lord's people should consider that their vocation or calling is of God, and relates to the special or spiritual ministry in which He privileges us to engage as fellow-servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. In order to provide the necessities of life it is necessary that we should also have some earthly employment ; but this we should always regard, not as our vocation, not as our chief business in life, but merely as our avocation or temporary engagement incidentally necessary to our chief or principal business.

The question should now properly be in the minds of all who realise themselves as consecrated to the Lord, members of the Royal Priesthood; To what extent am I fulfilling my present priestly office, and performing daily as I have opportunity my appointed work of sacrifice?

Too many, under the false teachings of Babylon, both in word and custom have come to consider that worldly gain, honour, ease and general self-preservation constitute the reasonable service of the Lord's people. Sacrificers are looked upon as deluded fanatics, especially in proportion as the sacrificing is done for the truth's sake, in the interest of spiritual things. We are, however, not to be taught of the world, nor by a cold worldly-wise churchianity; but we are to hearken to the voice of the good Shepherd, to hear His word, to learn of Him, if we would be prepared by Him, in the school of Christ, for the glorious things promised us as His joint-heirs in the future,—**"If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him."**

We can see how the Apostle, even though finding it necessary at times to engage in the business of tent-making, might be considered as a priest, whose time, energy and talents were all sacrificed to the Lord, and given freely in serving His people, in doing good unto all men as he had opportunity, especially unto the household of faith ; but how can others who have not the opportunity, not the talents, nor the open door for such special service as his, be sacrificing priests, when as a matter of necessity nearly all of their time must be given to their various employments, which Providence seems to have opened before them as their avocations? When it is necessary to spend nearly all of eight to twelve hours a day in the service of our avocations, how can such consider or serve the interests of their vocation, the priesthood?

The Lord has very graciously made arrangements for this very condition. He assures us in His Word that it is not the amount *we* shall accomplish in His cause, but the spirit, the desire and the effort which is manifested, that in His estimation would indicate the degree of self-sacrifice. He graciously declares that if our hearts be given to Him, whatsoever we may have need to do, may be done as unto the Lord, and will be accepted by Him. From this standpoint we can see that the work which the Apostle Paul did in his avocation passed to his credit as a part of his vocation, just as much as the other part of his time which he spent in more congenial methods of proclaiming the Gospel. Similarly, we can see that those working at their different occupations, if at heart fully consecrated, would be seeking to do their work as unto the Lord. If they are careful to use all other opportunities for proclaiming the truth, for serving the brethren, for doing good unto all men, the improvement of the few opportunities coming to them and their willingness to sacrifice personal taste and conveniences for the service of the truth and for the brethren, would be counted by the Lord as a full sacrifice, because such a disposition in respect of little things would imply an equal faithfulness in the presence of larger opportunities.

God is most intimately related to His people. They are His temple. He dwells in them. Therefore they are bound to keep themselves unspotted from the world. Their being God's temple, His presence in them, and His regarding them as His people, depends upon their separation from the world.

Charles. Hodge.

Holiness is the architectural plan upon which God buildeth up His living temple.

Spurgeon.

# Patient Endurance.

THERE are two words in the Greek, which are translated by our English word “patience,” in the New Testament. “Makrothuma” is one, which, in a general way, corresponds to the common thought of patience as we use it in the affairs of our life. It means long suffering, and is so used in the New Testament in Rom. 2:4 ; 2 Pet. 3:15.

The other word we are to consider, and which has also been translated “patience” in the New Testament is “Hupnomonee.” This word has a much deeper and fuller significance than has our English word patience. It signifies rather, constancy, the thought being an endurance of evil in a cheerful, willing, patient manner, and thus represents an element of character and not merely a temporary condition or restraint of feeling or action. It signifies such a condition of heart and character as manifests itself in an endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment, without rebellion of will, with full submission to the divine wisdom and love, which, while permitting present evils, has promised to overthrow them in due time.

Let us look to God’s Word to examine this element of Christian character. In Rev. 3:10 it reads, “Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth.” In Luke 8:15, in the parable of the sower, we read, “That (sown) on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience” (with cheerful endurance, constancy). There we have the thought that to be of the fruit-bearing class it is necessary to do more than receive the word of His testimony, even though we receive it with joy, for those who do not continue in His word are represented in the parable by the stony ground which at first gave promise of much fruit, but when the sun of persecution arose, and the hard winds, bitter experiences, came, the grain withered because of lack of depth of soil. Our Lord explains that the stony, shallow soil represents a class of hearers who rejoice greatly in the truth but do not endure, cannot withstand opposition, but wither under it and become discouraged.

This parable goes to show that patient endurance, or constancy, is the final test following after the seed has been received and has sprouted, and love and hope and joy and faith have caused it to spring forth and give fruitage. Patient endurance, then, is necessary in order that the grain may be developed and **thoroughly ripened and made** fit for the garner.

Our Lord Jesus made no mistake when He used the growing wheat to symbolise or picture the pathway of the Christian. During the growing stage wheat often needs checking, to sweeten and harden the plant and grain, and if the natural elements, such as hard winds and heavy frost, are absent, the husbandman resorts to rolling or feeding down to check the rank growth, to develop and bring the fruit, “the golden grain,” to maturity — that for which the husbandman has long waited.

The other instance in which our Lord used the word is recorded in Luke 21:19. He had just been telling His followers what they must expect as the result of being His disciples during the present time, when sin abounds with Satan “the prince of this world.” They must expect tribulation, opposition from various quarters, but He assures them that they would nevertheless be fully and completely under divine care and protection, even though the persecutions would be permitted to reach them. Then follow the words, “In your patience (patient endurance, cheerful constancy) possess ye your souls.”

The Apostle Paul in Heb. 12:1 exhorts, “Let us run with patience (cheerful constancy, patient endurance) the race set before us,” in the Gospel. The race must be run with constancy if we would reach the mark, and after reaching the mark, the position can only be maintained by the grace of constancy, patient endurance, that having done all we may stand.

Why is it necessary that the Christian should possess this quality of character? The answer is : It is one of the conditions which God has attached to the call to joint-heirship in the kingdom. The wisdom of this is manifest when we consider the work to which we are called—the work of blessing all the families of the earth. The importance of patient endurance in the Christian character is also borne out by the Apostle Paul’s use of the word, for on more than one occasion he places this characteristic above and beyond love (the mark for which we are to run). In Titus 2:2, enumerating the characteristics of the advanced Christian, the Apostle uses the following order, “vigilant, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity (love), in patience (patient, cheerful endurance).” Though we have all the other qualities, the final test of patient, cheerful endurance must be passed before we could be accepted of the Lord as members of the very elect.

Again, in 2 Tim. 3:10, respecting himself, the Apostle again puts this quality of character in place beyond love. “Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, patient endurance.” If love is the

fulfilling of the Law and the mark of the prize of our “high calling,” how can this quality of patient endurance rank higher than love? The answer would be that patient endurance does not merely come in at the close of the race, but is required all along the way. The spirit of cheerful endurance should be growing, and to maintain that spirit of love and devotion and growth in grace and knowledge means we must place our all entirely in the keeping of our Lord.

The Scriptures tell us that God’s ways are not our ways, “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.” Thus the trials and experiences we meet along the way are not joyous but grievous. They were grievous to our Lord, in His Gethsemane experiences. The truth has a refining effect for the followers of Jesus and they are therefore more sensitive to pain and ignominy than the worldly, who delight in witnessing contests of physical torture and endurance, and are quite willing to idolise and honour those who achieve success by showing a Stoic-like indifference to pain. Therefore the Apostle has pointed out that we need the whole armour of God that we may grow in faith and love and patient endurance, strengthened by the lessons of experience which He has allowed incidental to the passing away of the old order of things and the introduction of the new. The Apostle Peter has written to encourage and help us, “Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which are to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, that when His glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”-1 Pet. 4:12, 13.

## Keeping Our Hearts.

(Contributed Article).

“Keep thy heart with all diligence ; for out of it are the issues of life. (Prov. 4:23.)

THE heart is probably the most important organ in the, human body, and the most industrious. By rhythmical contractions it drives the blood to all parts of the body, and if it ceases to work, death follows.. In view of this important function of the heart, the Bible very properly uses it as a symbol of our motives, affections, intentions and desires, and it is used in the Bible about eight hundred times.

The first time it is used in Genesis 6:5, which reads—“God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart were only evil continually.” The last time it is used in the Bible is in Rev. 18:7. This reads—“She saith in her heart I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.” The reference here is to Babylon, the “harlot woman,” and she is depicted as being destroyed, but even while being destroyed she continues to boast in her “heart.” To be pleasing to the Lord we have an urgent need for the fulfilment of the Psalmist’s words—“Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.” (Psa. 51:10.)

As God’s children we have been taught through the Scriptures concerning the only way by which we can have our hearts made right with our Heavenly Father. It is through His beloved Son who gave Himself a ransom for all. (1 Tim. 2:6.) “He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.” (1 John 2:2.) We have therefore, accepted Jesus as our personal Saviour, and also the invitation -"My son, give me thine heart." (Prov. 23:26.)

Having consecrated ourselves, Paul tells us,—“God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” (2 Cor. 4:6.) We have received of His spirit, for God having anointed us has stamped us with His seal, giving us the holy spirit as a pledge in our hearts. (2 Cor. 1:21, 22.) Thus, it is our privilege, as Heb. 10:22 says, “to draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled (clean) from an evil conscience.” Then, if we seek divine assistance in times of stress and discouragement, being humble and submissive to the refining influences of God, we will receive that help and blessing of which we are assured—“The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart ; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.” (Psa. 34:18.)

A heart is contrite when it has a quiet, deep sorrow because of thoughts, words and deeds not in harmony with righteousness. To these, whose spirit is humble, who realise they are imperfect, who desire to be in accord with the Lord, and dwell in holiness, He, is ever near to renew and give them\* strength. “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and V)” revive the heart of the contrite Ones.” (Isa. 57:15.)

The Lord is looking at our hearts, at the motives that prompt what we say and do, also concerning what we are not doing. “The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts.” (1 Chron. 28:9.) “Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.” (1 Sam. 16:7.) We see, therefore, the importance of having our hearts, our motives, right before God in all matters. If we do something that is perfectly right

in itself, something that would receive the commendation and approval of all around us, and yet there is a wrong spirit behind it, then it would not receive God's approval. Because it is difficult to discern our motives clearly, we should go carefully and prayerfully to the Word of God which is provided for instruction and correction, as it teaches us to discern our intentions, the thoughts of the heart.

Heb. 4:12 states—"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The Lord has made it clear that we cannot judge correctly the motives of others. We cannot read their hearts; but we are to judge ourselves. We are to examine our motives in the light of the Scriptures and not merely guess at the matter. Paul says—"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down imaginations (reasonings)." (2 Cor. 10:4, 5.) Our human imaginations, ideas and reasonings which are so very unreliable are to be demolished. We should also rid our hearts of anger, envy, malice, hatred and selfishness which are the works of the flesh and the devil.

These things are the legacies of the flesh which we have to fight continually, and are roots in our motives which the Apostle Paul warns us about in Heb. 12:14, 15. He says, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Let us, then, dig out these roots completely from our hearts, especially in our dealings with our brethren, as 1 John 4:20 says,—"If a man says, I love God, and hateth, his brother, he is a liar ; for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" Let us, then, love one another without dissimulation (hypocrisy), and forgive, as *we* hope to be forgiven for Christ's sake.

How beautiful are the words of Jesus—"Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God," (Matt. 5:8), and His invitation,— "Come unto me . . . , and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart." (Matt. 11:28, 29.) We want our hearts to **be like His**. Jesus said—"If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." (John 14:23.)

In the Psalms we read,—"Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Let my heart be sound in thy statutes; that I be not ashamed. Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of my heart. I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes alway, even unto the end." (Psa. 119:11, 80, 111, 112.) If we let Christ and His spirit dwell in our hearts, and let the word of Christ dwell in us richly, also sanctify the Lord God in our hearts, letting God's peace rule in our hearts, then the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep our hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

While for us this "peace of God" is essential, so is the quality of love. Paul wrote,—"May the Lord cause you to be full and to overflow with love to each other, and to all, even as we also to you, so as to establish your hearts blameless in holiness before God, even our Father." (1 Thes. 3:12. Diag.)

How true it is that out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. (Mat. 12:34.) Our heart, then, should be full of God's Word, and His love, His peace and the holy spirit, full even to overflowing.

Thou must be true thyself  
If thou the truth would'st teach,

Thy soul must overflow, if thou  
Another soul would'st reach;

It needs the overflow of heart  
To give the lips full speech.

Think truly, and thy thoughts  
Shall the world's famine feed,

Speak truly, and each word of thine  
Shall be a faithful seed;

Live truly, and thy life shall be  
A great and noble creed.

## .Question Box'

QUESTION.—What is the antitypical *significance* of the priests wearing bonnets? (Exod. 28:40.)

ANSWER. In the services of the typical tabernacle it will be found that the high priest who typified Christ, the High Priest of our profession, alone went with uncovered head when in priestly attire ; and that all of the under priests who typified the Church, “the Royal Priesthood,” wore head coverings called “bonnets.” The teaching of this type is in full accord with the words of the Apostle (1 Cor. 11:4-6), for in the gatherings of the Ecclesia of the” New Creation, the Lord, the antitypical High Priest, is represented by the brethren, while the Church or Royal Priesthood is represented by the sisters, who, the Apostle declares, should likewise wear a head covering as indicating the same lesson—the subserviency of the Church to the Lord.

QUESTION. — What is the explanation of Mark 4:12: “That seeing they may see and not perceive and hearing that they may hear and not understand lest at any time they should be converted and their sins be forgiven”?

ANSWER. — To those who know only the usual church teachings, i.e., that this life is a trial time for all mankind, that when death comes the eternal condition is sealed for each and all, either for eternal life or otherwise, This passage would surely be beyond understanding. How out of accord with the gentleness and kindness of Christ to think that He would deliberately speak in parables so that sinners could not understand the way of salvation—so that they would not be converted. What is the Gospel for if not to convert the world ! Ah, that is just where the mistake has been. We had failed to understand the great Divine plan of the ages in the past; but now that we can see that God’s plan covers various ages during which certain features of His purpose are accomplished, the preceding verse (11) explains the matter. The Lord’s intention was to select only a particular class during the present age; the rest of humanity would be dealt with later, during the Millennial Age.

The gospel message was therefore delivered in parables and dark sayings which only those of suitable disposition and aided by the holy spirit could comprehend; “Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but unto them that are without all these things are done in parables.”

Thus by the gradual unfolding of Divine truths, God’s purposes are accomplished. “No man cometh unto the Son except the Father draw him”; “No man can come unto Me, except it were given him of My Father”; “My sheep hear my voice”; and to the Scribes and Pharisees Jesus said, “Ye believe not because ye are not of my sheep.”

It is only those whom God has granted “ears to hear” and “eyes to see” that can at present enjoy the Gospel; but when “God’s elect” — the Church class—is complete, then “the residue of men will seek the Lord.” (Acts 15:14-17.) Then it is that Christ “will draw all men unto Him,” when the “light shall lighten every man that cometh into the world,” for God has promised that the pure language will be turned to the people and all will call upon the name of the Lord. (Zeph. 3:9.) The way shall be made so plain that “the way-faring man though a fool shall not err therein.” (Isa. 35:8-10.)

The difficulty has been that men generally do not see the purpose of revealed truth. The Word is God’s instrument in working out His purposes and selecting certain classes in preparation for the setting up of the Kingdom of Christ. The Bible unfolds its secrets in due time, and when necessary, in the progressive steps of the great Divine plan of blessing the poor groaning creation.