

Holiness is a fitness for heaven. It is heaven in the soul, and in consequence, a perfect fitness of the soul for heaven as the final abode of the saints. "Without holiness no man can see (or enjoy) the Lord" (Heb. 12:14).

Holiness is progressive. From the moment of that blessed consciousness that we have been born of the Spirit on to the Canaan of perfect love, it is progressive. Our progress may be impeded by the enemies in the heart and the world on the outside,

"Fightings within
And fears without;"

but progress is sure while victory is ours. "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world, and this is the victory that overcometh the world even our faith." Yes, progress continues after the work of entire sanctification and in a much greater degree than before. The hindrances to growth have been removed; if they remain they are helps. We may grow and go in leaps and bounds. The whole land is ours. Praise the Lord! "But grow in grace, and in knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." How they grow! They simply grow. It is natural! They eat well, good strong meat, and work well, lots of exercise. They grow out of their spiritual clothes. The suit that did them last year will not do the same this. They keep a Holy Ghost pastor digging to keep ahead and keep the lead. They are progressive, and still there is more to come. Did Paul not have something like this in mind when he prayed for the Ephesians thus: That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now until him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen! We should grow till we get to glory; the more expansion here the more of heaven there, and it is the honest conviction of good reliable theologians that we shall not cease growing even in heaven! Amen!

Note.—Next run "Holiness"—How Obtained and Retained."

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The Church should always have a more distinct opinion than the world. There should be no difficulty whatever in distinguishing between the man who has been a long time intimate with Christ, and any man who is simply with Christ, and any man who is simply looking upon His history from an outside standpoint.—Joseph Parker.

There are three types of consciences—the sore, the callous and the tender. The sore conscience causes us to act like a man with a felon on his finger. Every time anything or anybody comes his way, he is dodging and feeling the hurt even if not touched. The one with a callous conscience hopes the other person is putting on the coat—when the owner of that type of conscience should recognize that the coat exactly fits him.

Young People's Column

THE CHURCH IS TO BLAME

Bob was not in a very good mood to enjoy a caller, especially when the caller was a pastor. I noticed the unwelcome look and his reticence to enter into conversation.

I had called at the home after learning that neither he nor his wife were members of any church. The wife had been a member in her younger days, but had moved "without letter," twenty years ago. Occasionally she attended church, and the two children were fairly regular at Sunday School.

Bob was an industrious fellow and I coveted him for the kingdom and the church. But now as I sat in his home I could feel a tension.

After several unpleasant pauses in my attempt to keep up a conversation, I somewhat pityingly asked, "Don't you feel very good today? There's such a lot of flu around, it—"

"Flu?" he blurted, "no flu for me; I'm mad, just plain mad."

That "stumped" me for a second. I was making a pastoral call, but I could readily sense that this was not time to say, "Let us pray."

Instead, I made an attempt to say something soothing, and deplored there were so many maddening things in this trying world. What I said did not sooth him, and he continued, "Yes, sir! I blame the church."

"But why do you blame the church?" I asked feebly.

He spat fiercely into the stove before answering. "I blame the church! Just about three years ago I bought this little house and lot. Recently I decided to buy the vacant lot next to mine, for two reasons. First, I wanted to have room to keep a few chickens, and second, I needed more room for a garden. I had a chance to buy it when I bought the house. I went to the owner, and to my surprise he asked two hundred dollars more than the price he had previously quoted. I asked, 'Why the big rise?' He up and told me that since then the Immanuel Church had been built in the neighborhood, at a cost of \$40,000. Good substantial citizens were buying lots and building, and real estate had made a jump. I thought he was just 'kidding' me. But, no sir! He really meant it. I tried to get the price down. I seemed to want the lot more than ever, but I had to pay two hundred dollars more of my hard-earned savings and—" (I could see he was getting madder than ever) "the church is to blame!"

Somehow I caught the contagion of his mood, and rising to my feet, clenching my fist, and speaking emphatically, I said, "Bob Blythe, I agree with you, the church is to blame. I know of a number of things that have happened since that church was built here, and the church is to blame.

"Ben Krenski, who was making big money out of bootlegging, was fool enough to quit because his little girl one day when her little arms were about his neck, told him something that she had heard in the Sunday-school at the Church. He had to get another job that did not bring in near so much money. He had so much time to kill that he began to fix up his little house. He gave it a coat of paint. That made the neighbors' houses look so shabby they had to do some painting, and spend lots of hours and some money; and the church is to blame. To make things worse Ben Krenski took a liking to the preacher

and the church folk. He is not the same fellow. The church is to blame!

"There was Ike Adams, kept a grocery store; he did a big booming business every Sunday. Somebody got him into that church one Sunday; I don't know how they did it. But one result was that Ike quit the Sunday business and pulled down the curtains so that you could not see even a can of beans. Now he has to make as much in six days as he used to do in seven, and the poor boob is kept so busy that when he goes to church, which he does every Sunday, he can scarcely keep awake. The church is to blame!

"Say, brother, when I think of all these things the church is to blame for, I get all 'het up.' Young Joe Jones had a fine job in the dime store. It was a steady job at \$15 a week. The store was kept cool in summer and warm in winter, and for two years after he graduated from high school he held on to the job. But one day somebody took him into that church to hear a college president. He told his folks after that he had received a vision, whatever that was. At any rate, he turned down the dime store job and went to college, and the last I heard of him he was washing dishes to earn his meals, and trying hard to be a college president like the one he listened to. Just think of the hard row he will have to hoe before he gets there. The church is to blame.

"There was Buff Gorman. Buff had a glorious time with the gang. True, he got into trouble occasionally, and drew some short spells in the pen. But what glorious times he had; crap games with lots of excitement, considerable hooch and midnight parties. Then they got him among the church folk. Things happened, and Buff now sings in the choir, with a stiff collar on. All the glorious times with the old gang are gone forever, and the church is to blame, and it will be more to blame yet, for they say he has set his mind on being a preacher, and talks of having had a 'call to the ministry.' There was—"

"Say, are you stringing me?" Bob asked.

"Stringing you. What do you mean?" I both asked and answered. "I agree with you the church is to blame. There was Sam Brown's flapper daughter; didn't seem to have any brains at all, but she surely was lively and full of fun. The church crowd got hold of her. She, too, said that she had caught a 'vision.' She must have caught something, for she had no more sense than to quit her old school companions, go down to Chicago and take a special course of training for foreign mission work. She expects to leave all the comforts of home before long and go to India as a missionary. The church is to blame. Jim Smith's boy—"

"Say, preacher, now I know you are stringing me," Bob interrupted. The anger had gone from his face. There was a broad grin stretching from ear to ear; he held out his hand; I grasped it.

"What time does the service begin next Sunday morning?" he asked.

I gave him the required information. Sunday morning arrived. Bob was there; his wife sat by his side. As I sat behind the pulpit our eyes met, we both smiled, and I almost expected him to say, "Are you going to string me again, preacher?"

I did move my lips, and if he interpreted the movement he would surely know that I was saying, "You're here, Bob; and the church is to blame!"—Joseph J. Share, in North-western Christian Advocate.