

## ISHMAELITES

The first class which we noticed was the Pharisee. The members of this class are all sticklers on small points; they see very little good, if any, in a brother, unless he has about him all the marks endorsed by their particular sect. The other class noticed was that which Paul calls the True Jew. Those who belong to this are either justified and entirely sanctified, or they are fully justified and groaning to be made holy. They walk before God in holiness and righteousness. They are intensely particular about the inward grace, the godly walk and conversation. They have their God-given convictions and have the courage to walk according to them. They are more concerned about getting men right in heart with God than they are about getting them branded with the mark of their peculiar sect. They are real children, by faith, of Abraham. They may have, or they may not have all the outward marks, but they do have the inward grace.

But there is a third class which we must also notice. This is that of a very numerous tribe, the **Ishmaelites**.

The Jews were the descendants of Abraham through Isaac. The Ishmaelites were the descendants of Abraham through Ishmael. Both Jews and Ishmaelites, at that day and to this day, observed the rite of circumcision. So if outward circumcision were a saving of ordinance, Ishmaelites were a saving ordinance, Ishmaelites were on as good and solid a basis as the Jews were.

But while there was some similarity between the two races, the dissimilarity was far greater. Isaac was the son of the free woman; Ishmael was the son of Hagar, the bond woman. Isaac was the child of the covenant; Ishmael was outside the covenant; he was to be cast out and never to be joint-heir with Isaac. Isaac was the child of faith; Ishmael was the child of doubt and fear. Isaac was the child of promise; Ishmael was the child of human expedient. Isaac was a son by a supernatural generation; Ishmael was a son according to natural generation. There were many sons to Abraham similar to Ishmael; there was no other like Isaac.

Isaac represents those who are supernaturally born of God, radically born again of the water and of the Spirit, who as soon as born the second time belong to the church of Jesus Christ. They are real Christians and are not of the world; therefore the world hateth them.

Ishmael represents those who, while they have never been born of God, have some branch of the Christian Church. They are Church members, but not members of the true church. They are only nominal or professing Christians and are of the world; therefore the world loveth them.

Isaac represents God's way of keeping the church alive. The family will be perpetuated by supernatural generation. Men will be born from above, born by the special miraculous working of the power of God, born of the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. They will have the mind of Christ; they are like Him in character and grow more like Him as the days go by. They are not of the world, even as He is not of the world, and they just look like that. Changes in fashion and fad make no material difference to them. They are bent on pleasing God, not on following the world. They are dead to the world and alive unto God.

Ishmael represents man's expedient for keeping the church family alive. The church cannot trust God; no longer has faith in his promises; so she takes the offspring of old Mother World, puts them on her own knee, dandles them, nurses, finally adopts them. These she fosters and calls her own; but they are of the world, are themselves worldly and look like it in every feature.

The distinguishing mark of the Jew was not circumcision; for the Ishmaelites were also circumcised. The name "true Jew," however, enjoyed heart religion. The "not-a-Jew" was circumcised, had all the outside marks of religion, but lacked the inward grace. As we said before, the Ishmaelites were also circumcised, were descendants of Abraham, but they have all turned out Mohammedans, circumcising to this day; yet have they but a false religion. So with the spiritual Ishmaelites. They are church members, have been duly baptized, confirmed, possibly, and so on; but they have a false religion. Their religion does not save them from sin; it does not purify their hearts; it does not cleanse away the love of the world.

The Ishmaelites were more numerous than the Jews and always persecuted and fought the Jews. After one particular battle, the Jews, who had been victorious, were going over the battlefield, surveying the carnage. Scripture tells us that they could spot every Ishmaelite where he lay; they knew he was not a Jew; they recognized him as soon as their eyes fell on him. How? God tells us in Judges 8:24: "For they had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites." This was a distinguishing mark. They all wore golden earrings. For what purpose? None whatever. Then of what use were they? None whatever. Why, then, did they wear them? Purely for ornamentation. God tells us plainly that the Ishmaelites wore them, and, by inference, that the Jews did not.

Evidently the Jew had some convictions and walked according to them. The Ishmaelite, child of Abraham, circumcised and all, as he was, was the child of pride. He had no convictions whatsoever and so followed the custom of the big, wide world. "They had golden earrings, because they were Ishmaelites."

Perhaps it was difficult to distinguish, at a glance, a Pharisaical Jew from a wholly sanctified Jew, or "True Jew;" but no one experienced any difficulty in distinguishing a Jew from an Ishmaelite.

All the Ishmaelites did not die and leave their bones to bleach in the sands of Arabia. There are still a good many of them (spiritual Ishmaelites) to be found in and around any church these modern times. They are money-lovers and greedy grabbers; they are slaves to public opinion; they are faithful worshippers at the shrine of fashion; they sacrifice liberally to the god of pleasure. In order to gain prestige and achieve worldly success, they yoke up with cliques, sets and orders, sworn to secrecy, pledging to mutual support and protection. As a rule they are all persecutors of the true children of God.

Reader, are you a sanctified wholly Christian (a true Jew)? or a worldly Ishmaelite? Remember, opportunity was afforded and the privilege was blood-bought for the Pharisee to humble himself, get right with God and thereby become a true Jew; but the poor Ishmaelite was outside the covenant altogether. He had no part or lot in the great salvation. It was a far more difficult task for him to get right with God; for he was very much farther from God than even the "Not-a-Jew" Pharisee.

"Well," says someone, "I do wear this, and you say it is wrong for me to do so; but I am not condemned in doing so. And certainly I am not proud of it. In fact, I am not proud at all."

As our good founder (under God) B. T. Roberts, says in "Holiness Teachings:" "If you are not proud, why look like it?" But after all, my brother, it is not entirely a question of your convictions, nor yet as to whether you are proud of a certain thing; it is a plain question of the revealed will of God.

"Well, if I get light on this, I will take it off."

Brother, is it a thing forbidden by the Word of God? If it is, no further light is needed. If it is not mentioned specifically in the Book, then the Holy Spirit will help you settle it before God on the basis of some general principle revealed in the Book. It can be so settled between you and God, so that He is well pleased with you and you are well satisfied. Settle it that way, and every true lover of the Lord will be content, whether it be settled for you to do as he does, or otherwise. Praise the Lord!—Can. Free Methodist.

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## WHY ARE YOU HERE?

It is said that Bernard of Clairvaux kept in his room a coarse piece of parchment on which were these words: "Bernard, why are you here?"

It was a searching question which faced the great man every time he entered his room. It fixed and clarified his purpose. It enabled him to go at once swiftly to the main thing before him. It stripped off the superfluities and laid bare the essentials.

As a matter of fact, each of us is right here for a very definite end in view. If our lives are ordered of God, as they should be every day and hour, we ought clearly to grasp the purpose he has in putting us where we are. If we can see and seize that purpose, we shall not live in vain. Indeed we need not waste a single day.

How precious life is for all and how important it is that we should know what we are about and then do it with a will!—Exchange.

## THE SPIRIT-FILLED LIFE

The Rev. J. R. Miller, D.D., tells of a perfumer who bought a common earthen jar and filled it with attar of roses. Soon every particle of the substance of the jar was filled with rich perfume, and long afterwards, and even when broken, the fragments retained the fragrance. So it is that a human life becomes filled, saturated with the word of God when one loves it and meditates upon it continually. The thoughts, feelings, affections, dispositions, and the whole character become colored with the spirit of the Word. Such a filling of the heart and memory with the pure Word of God is the best way to prepare for any future of darkness into which the life may pass. It is like hanging up a hundred lamps, while the light of day yet shines, to be ready to pour down their soft beams the moment the daylight fades.

The Spirit-filled life is a life of trust. There is beauty and power, but it is not to be forgotten that there is also such a prevailing trust in God that whether the sun be shining or whether it be obscured in the clouds, one is always filled with rejoicing.—Selected.