

TROUBLE IN THE HOME

"But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now" (Gal. 4:29.)

Twenty years before the birth of Isaac, Abraham received a definite promise from God that his descendants should one day inherit the land of Canaan, and that through him all the nations of the earth would be blessed. Years passed by and the promise was not fulfilled. Occasionally God renewed the promise. Upon one such occasion Abraham suggested Eliezer as a possible channel through which this promise of blessing could be fulfilled, but the Lord said, "This shall not be thine heir."

Sarai took it upon herself to suggest a way through. Ten years had passed since the promise had been given, and it is hard to wait. Perhaps she felt something must be done, but it is dangerous to do things out of the will of God. Here in this mining district there are places fenced off, with a sign above, "Dangerous sinking grounds." As you look over these areas you see great holes and crevices where the ground has sunk down. So it is with those who take it upon themselves to help God fulfill His promises. They get into serious trouble. Reasoning outside of the Word of God will lead to "dangerous sinking ground." Once a person gets into such a hole, if life is spared, it is difficult to get out. This is what took place when Sarai said, "We will make a way through."

I suppose they were relieved to find something they could do. Abraham followed Sarai's suggestion, but the fruit of this act brought Ishmael, the son of the flesh, into the home. Trouble began. Testing followed. Another thirteen years passed by before God saw fit to fulfill His promise to them. It may be that the birth of Ishmael was such a disappointment to Sarai that she got to digging after God until she was able to triumph in faith, for we read, "Through faith also Sarai herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful that promised."

Home trouble developed after the birth of Isaac, for here was this thirteen-year-old boy full of hatred, who determined upon a path of persecution and war upon this son and heir. Parental opinion differed somewhat in the course to be followed. Here is where many difficulties arise in the home which is not properly tempered by love—difficulties that very often lead to separation and divorce. What a lamentable state follows this situation! It is said that most of the criminal cases in civilized lands can be traced to homes torn asunder by divorce. Children brought up under conditions of this kind often start early in crime. Christianity is the balance wheel in the home and brings about mutual agreement and unity.

Sarai determined that the only right course was to cast out the bondwoman and her son. This was grievous to Abraham, because of his son. The decision was not made until God spoke to Abram, and said, "Hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called."

Eve brought a lot of trouble into her home and into the world by her decision, and many are doing the same today, but in this case the woman was right and Abraham was big enough and wise enough to acknowledge it; and he put things

right by dealing with the mainspring of the trouble.

The trouble here pictured in the home, is the trouble experienced by every child of God who has not had the mainspring of carnality destroyed. Ishmael is the type of the "old man" or "body of sin". Isaac is the type of the "new birth" which results when Christ comes into the heart. The conflict begins in the heart of man after he is converted. Carnality and spirituality are in a pitched battle, and there is but one remedy—"Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir" with the son of the free woman. Cleansing by crucifixion may be grievous, but it is the right course of deliverance. Sanctification will dispose of the troubler and bring deliverance and make us one with the Lord Jesus Christ and with one another. Then we can present a united front against the world, the flesh and the devil.—I. E. Dayhoff, in *Good Tidings*.

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"HOLINESS"

By Rev. J. L. Potter.

Text—"Sanctify yourselves, therefore, and be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God" (Lev. 20:7). "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:15, 16).

"If my preaching were reduced to one theme, I would prefer the theme of holiness, and would thereby have access to all the word of God. He who sneers at holiness sneers at God, for God is holy. The man who fails to see holiness as an essential doctrine is in darkness; he can not see the kingdom of God; he is spiritually blind; for without holiness no man shall see the Lord. The gospel minister who has lost the holiness out of his message has severed his fellowship with God as Saul of old; "For the prophesy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Any church which is not a holy church is without God, for God is holy. Any church which permanently excludes holiness from its pulpit will be excluded from the Kingdom.

We shall consider the following:

1. Holiness defined.
2. Holiness essential to moral purity.
3. Holiness essential to happiness.
4. Holiness as a second work of grace.

"Holiness of God is the purity and rectitude of His nature. It is an essential attribute of God; He could not be God without it: it is infinite and unbounded; it can not be increased or diminished. God is originally holy; He is so of and in Himself, and the author and promoter of all holiness among His creatures.

"Holiness: freedom from sin, or the conformity of the heart to God. It does not consist in knowledge, talent, nor outward ceremonies of religion, but hath its seat in the heart, and is the effect of a principle of grace implanted by the Holy Spirit. It is the essence of happiness and the basis of true dignity. It will manifest itself by the propriety of our conversation, regularity of our temper, and uniformity of our lives. It is a principle progressive in its operation, and absolutely essential to the enjoyment of God here and hereafter."—*Theological Dictionary*.

Holiness begins with regeneration. As Mr. Ralston has said, "Regeneration and entire sanctification differ only in degree; they are the same in nature." Primarily holiness is a new birth. "Except a man be born again, he can not

see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). It is, "Turning from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God" (Acts 26:18), or "In Christ, he is a new creature" (1 Cor. 5:17); "A babe in Christ" (1 Cor. 3:1). We do not grow into holiness after we are justified, but are born a new creature by the Holy Spirit; if holiness is the purity and rectitude of God's nature, then that which is born of God is of the same nature, differing only in degree. "That which is born of the Spirit. *** Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." After the new birth we grow by the sincere milk of the Word.

Without holiness there can be no purity of heart, and without purity of heart there can be no growth in grace, because man that is born of woman is earthly, mortal, and totally depraved; he is very far gone from original righteousness and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually; he can no more change his sinful nature than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings" (Jer. 17:8, 10). God's promise to Israel in Ezekiel 36:26, 27, is applicable to all Christians: "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:8-9). Justification is the instantaneous act of God changing our nature from a state of guilt to a state of pardon; sanctification is the instantaneous act of God changing our nature from a state of corruption to a state of purity.

Happiness does not consist in the pleasures of sense, as eating, drinking, amusements, or wealth; every creature, whether bird, fish, or animal, is happier when permitted to follow the course of nature for which it was created; the spirit of man was created for the specific purpose of worshiping God, and can not be spiritually happy if deprived of its true object of worship. Wealth will not suffice for divine worship; rich jewels of pearls and diamonds only inflate the spirit with pride. A true definition for happiness is found in Psalms 32:1, 2: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity ***"

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Cor. 7:1). In 1 John 1:7 we read "Cleansing from all sin"; in 1 John 4:17, "Perfect love"; in Eph. 3:19, "The fulness of God." Relative to the above expression, "Perfecting holiness in the fear of God," Adam Clarke comments, "Getting the whole mind of Christ brought into the soul." In the strictest sense our holiness is not perfected until we attain to the church triumphant, when we will be perfect in body, mind, and spirit. However, Christian perfection is clearly taught in the Scriptures; and that men are sanctified after they are justified, or pardoned, is evidenced by three witnesses, viz.,

1. That there is a principle of sin remaining in