

ISAAC M. JOHNSON

Isaac M. Johnson, age 28, born in South Carolina, 5 years in Boston, occupation, care-taker in an office building. Education 8th grade, married in 1916, children, none; Church, Concord Baptist. Attends faithfully Friday evenings, and Sunday morning and evening, total time 8 hours per week. His duties as church clerk involve at least two hours additional each week. Contributions \$1.50 per week out of an average wage of \$22 per week. His wife also gives \$1.50. He belongs to V.F.W. and K. of P. The latter he does not attend regularly, the former he does and is extremely proud of his sergeant's standing.

Isaac Johnson impresses one as being an intelligent, reliable ambitious young negro. He is perhaps not prepossessing in appearance being somewhat scrawny with large mouth and protruding gums and teeth that are not over-white and a voice that is not very strong; but his expression is pleasant and his manner friendly. What he lacks in appearance is made up for by his wife who is a distinctly pretty young mulatto woman.

They live in a frame building on Williams Street. From the outside this building is most unattractive. It is unpainted and in poor repair, but inside it is comfortable and home-like, much more so than is generally possible in a flat. In the parlor there is a player piano, a victrola, some leather-seated chairs and numerous pictures. The parlor opens into a well-lighted and well-kept kitchen. They also rejoice in a little garden out back.

Why did they come north? They came in 1917 when so many colored people were leaving the south. First they went to New Jersey and after the war they came to Boston because he had a cousin there. They like it lots better here than in the south. They get more money and they are treated better. ----- At this point a voice from the other room objects vigorously. We likes it here, but of course we loves the place we was born in. We miss the old water-bucket, the cook-pots and the garden. ----- As for wages, here he makes \$20 a week for eight hours work. But he also does extra work; that brings it up some. The wife, she work too, going out to do house-work by the day. That is possible because they have no children. ----- The voice from the other room here interposes to remark that her sister has enough children to do for both of them.

What is the Church trying to do? It is trying to bring the world to Christ. That is, it is trying to save people and make the world better. Religion makes you happy. It makes you love everybody.

He first joined the church in May 1911 at the age of 15. There was a revival going on at the time and it was just about to close. He had been attending for two weeks and thinking very seriously for five days, so seriously in fact that he could hardly sleep at night. He would get up very early in the morning in order to pray and while he was working his heart would be saying prayers over and over. There was no consciousness of sin, but he was deeply troubled and greatly concerned to get the sort of experience that a very dear cousin of his had talked to him about. Finally, on Sunday morning about 11 o'clock, there came the experience which marked the change from nature to grace. He had a vision of seeing angels, and

at the same time he heard the words, "Peace on earth, good will to men." It seemed as if the angels were singing them. This experience made him feel as if he could fly, he was so light and so happy.

But he was not fully convinced and he asked God for proof that he was really changed from nature to grace. He asked to be waked up at one o'clock in the morning. At one o'clock he found himself standing on his feet. In fact at almost the very moment he got on his feet he heard the clock strike one.

As a boy he had received Christian training. He was the oldest of a family of four boys and he always said his prayers at night and in the morning and he attended the Baptist Church and Sunday School.

As to his tastes, he never cared much for stories or novels. He liked the Bible best, also speech-books and poetry. He is especially fond of Longfellow. Last winter he went to the movies to see the "Ten Commandments." Aside from this he has never been to the movies but once. He has never taken part in athletics.

In disposition he is always good natured. He is moreover always happy and he seldom gets the blues. "If I feels like I get sad, I start praying. I gets happy right away then." When he was fifteen or sixteen he was perhaps a little bashful but he is not bashful now.