

THE SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK. (PART 2)

IT has also been said, already, that these lessons "are too tedious—ask a question, and then answer the question by perhaps one or two words in a verse, and over and over so, before you get through a single verse. Why, to get the lessons the way that the lesson pamphlet requires, we should have to go over it fifty times a day!" Well, suppose you should. Is it a dreadful thing, a toilsome, burdensome thing, to drink in eternal life "fifty times a day"? "Oh, well, it does not seem like that to me." No, of course not! That is why it is so tedious. There is nothing tedious, there is nothing toilsome, there is nothing monotonous at all, in drinking in eternal life by the word of God, even in the book of Galatians, "fifty times a day." And in the book of Galatians you *have* the eternal life which comes by the word of God in a way that an angel could not better. And in receiving this eternal life, there is nothing monotonous, there is nothing wearisome, in any sense whatever. It is simply joy, joy, joy—"joy unspeakable and full of glory." [Voice: "Good!"]

Then, if to me it is a task, if it is a weariness, if it becomes so monotonous as to grow dull; and I can not stand it to go over that thing fifty times a day, to get the Sabbath-school lesson, so that other persons who do not know it may have it,—then it is not eternal life at all to me: I have not yet found the fountain; I am not drinking at the fountain. I am away off on the dry mountains: I am away in the desert, where that lost sheep is.

However, *that* is not particularly against me, if I will only listen to the call of the Shepherd, and become a *found* sheep. It is nothing against a man that he is a lost sheep; for the Lord has sent Jesus to seek and to save us. But it becomes a terrible thing for a man to *stay* lost, when Jesus has come to save, and when that man is actually in a position where he is required to read over and over every day the lesson of salvation.

I call your attention to these things, not for the things themselves, but for illustration. These statements that the lessons are "very dry" and "so tedious," when the lessons are simply the very words of Scripture itself—this illustrates exactly the evil which the book of Galatians is given to correct. It illustrates exactly the condition of things that is considered and refuted, and annihilated by the book of Galatians. The book of Galatians was written to meet just such a condition of things as that—a condition of things in which a people professing to be Christians were not Christians—a condition of things in which a people professing to be in the way of God knew not the way of God. It was a condition in which all was only formalism: their profession was a form; what they did was a form; all their service to God was a form; it was formalism and ceremonialism altogether. That is how it is that there came "some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."

What is the gospel of Christ?—It is God's free salvation to every soul in the wide world. It is the power of God to lift a man up from deadness in trespasses and sins, and make him a partaker of that salvation, to hold him in the way of that salvation, and to

work out the righteousness of God through him. This is what the people in Galatia had received in receiving the gospel, concerning which it is said that if even an angel should preach any other, he would be under the curse. But here were those who had gone down to Galatia, and had confused—yes, had even "bewitched"—the people, and would have perverted the pure gospel that the Galatians had first heard and received by the Holy Spirit.

These troublers of the Galatian Christians were "Pharisees which believed." Remember they were "*Pharisees which believed.*" They had come from among the Pharisees into the church of Christ. They professed to believe in Jesus, professed to have received the gospel, professed to be Christians. But they were Pharisees before; and they were still Pharisees, after they professed to be Christians. They were formalists before, when they were only Pharisees; and now, when they became "Pharisees which *believed,*" they were still only formalists: even their belief was only a form. And these were opposed to the gospel. Indeed, it was such a "dry thing" that they could not be content until they had followed Paul everywhere that he went, turning the people away from this gospel that he preached, which was "so dry." And in perverting the gospel of Christ, they were presenting "another gospel," another way of salvation. Therefore the Word says: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel."

"Another gospel"! What is the gospel?—It is "the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth," "for therein is the righteousness of God revealed." What I wish to impress upon you just now is not particularly that the gospel is "the power of God," but WHY it is the power of God. Why is the gospel the power of God unto salvation?—The reason is given in Rom. 1:16, 17. In the sixteenth verse the statement is made that the gospel "is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." The *reason* is given in the seventeenth verse; and *that reason* is that "therein is the righteousness of God revealed."

That is to say, the *power of the gospel* lies in the *righteousness of God* revealed in the gospel. The power that comes by the gospel to the sinner,—that power that changes his life; that puts in him the new way, and holds him in that way,—that power comes to him *in the righteousness of God*. And the gospel is the power of God *because* the righteousness of God revealed therein imparts the power. So the power of God in the gospel lies in the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel; and that righteousness is revealed only to faith, and "from faith to faith."

Well, here come those "Pharisees which believed," preaching "another gospel." These who professed the true gospel become confused, and turn aside unto this "other gospel." Another what?—"Another gospel," another way of salvation; another power unto salvation. *And this other power unto salvation* must derive from *some sort of righteousness* whatever power it may have. But what other power can there be to work salvation, than the power of God?—None but *my own*. So far as my salvation is concerned, there is nobody but God and me. And in this God is dealing with me, and I must deal with God, just as if there was nobody in the universe but God and me. And

the true gospel is the *power of God* unto salvation. Another gospel would be another power unto salvation; and that could be only *my own* power—the power of self.

Further: since the true gospel derives its power from the righteousness of God therein revealed, "another gospel" must derive whatever power it may have, from *some sort of righteousness*. It can not derive its power from the righteousness of God, because it is "another gospel." Being "another gospel," it must derive its power from another righteousness. And as in this there is no other *power* than *my own*, so in this there is no other *righteousness* than *my own*. Therefore the only righteousness that could possibly be revealed in this "other gospel" would be *self-righteousness*. But self-righteousness is sin. Whosoever has self-righteousness is under the curse. Consequently "another gospel" is indeed "not another," because it is no gospel at all. It is no gospel at all, because it is no power at all: it is wholly impotency, and is simply the way of perdition.

Such was the question among the Galatians—a question as to whether the true gospel is the one in which the righteousness of God is revealed, or one in which self-righteousness is revealed. That is the question that called forth the book of Galatians. The book of Galatians was written especially to show the utter fallacy, the utter destructiveness to all who might receive it, of anything claiming to be the gospel that does not reveal the righteousness of God which is by faith.

(To be continued.)

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