

Advent Review and Sabbath Herald.

(In the section entitled: The Sermon¹).

THE SABBATH-SCHOOL WORK. (PART I)

I HAVE been appointed to speak to-day on the Sabbath-school work, especially as it is at the present time—its present work in the studies now before the school. The Sabbath-school work is, plainly enough, school work—school work for Sabbath. It is a school that is held on the Sabbath, in which instruction is given, as in a school, by teachers.

So far, then, a part of the subject that was presented here the last time that I spoke, is present instruction for to-day,—as to what is teaching; as to what is the work of a school, and of teachers in school. I may refer to that for a few minutes, to recall the thought of what is true teaching. To teach is to show; to show how; to lead the way, in the doing of things. So teaching is not theorizing at all: it is substantial, concrete—the actual, practical "showing how" to do things.

In the Sabbath-school, of course, the teaching is showing the way to God; is teaching the truth; is showing the way of truth to people who do not know it. You remember the definition I read, of teaching, that other day, from the French,—*"To show the shortest way out of the wood to those who have lost their way."* I then quoted several expressions of Scripture, showing that all mankind have gone out of the way, and have lost their way in the darkness, the mist, and the maze of the wood of iniquity, and transgression, and sin.

When mankind had thus gone out of the way of God, they were indeed like lost sheep: they could not find the way back. It is the peculiarity of a lost *sheep* that he does not know which way to turn. Other animals may get lost, and find their way out and home; but a sheep, lost, is utterly confused: he is lost for good: he does not have the first idea of how to get home. Therefore, the Scripture puts it: "All we like sheep have gone astray." Isa. 53:6. "I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek thy servant." Ps. 119:176.

When mankind had all, thus, like sheep, gone astray, and were utterly unable to find the way out of the woods and home, God, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, sent to us a Teacher to teach us the way to God: and he is a true teacher, one who shows the way. Consequently, when he was sent to be, indeed, the Great Shepherd of his sheep in the world, to lead us back home, he did not attempt to do that in any other way than by coming here, and putting himself just where we are; and then finding the way out—being led out by God unto the home of all, to his place at the right hand of God. And having so done, he now says to all mankind, Come now, "learn of me;" this is the way: "I

¹ Sermon delivered Sabbath, July 28, 1900, in the Tabernacle, Battle Creek, Mich., and stenographically reported.

am the Way;" come, "take my yoke upon you, and *learn of me*," and you shall know the way.

So he started from just where we are; and he found "the shortest way" to the throne of God, and to the sure place at the right hand of God forevermore. And there he is ever since, our Teacher, the Great Shepherd of the sheep, who gathereth the lambs and carrieth them in his bosom, and leads us all, all the way. He asks no one to take a step that he himself has not first taken. He knows perfectly the way, having gone over it; and he does not ask us even to go over the way alone, which he has gone over before us; but, having gone before us all the way to the throne of God, he comes to us again, and goes over the way WITH US, hand in hand, taking us with him to the throne of God at the right hand of God, where we, with him, shall sit down amid the pleasures that he has prepared for us forevermore.

That is the lesson that is sent to us, to be *taught*, to be *studied*, and to be *learned*, in this school for the Sabbath day, the Sabbath-school. And since he has gone away from the world in person, bodily, as he was when he was here first, he has left others in his stead to call men to God; to be in the world as he was, and as he is in the world; to be *teachers*.

But we must all be sure that we learn the lesson, or else we can not teach it. He can not teach who has not first learned. You and I can not teach; we can not show the way to God; we can not show the people how to find the way, nor how to walk in the way when they have found it; until we ourselves have learned the lesson of how to find the way to God, and how to walk in the way after having found it. We can not teach these until we have learned them; and we can not learn them except from him who is "the Way," and who is the original Teacher of the way.

And, having learned these things, then it is the sole work of the school for the Sabbath to teach these things. There is nothing else to be taught. And anything that has not that lesson in it, anything that has not in it the elements of showing how—of showing the people the way out of darkness into light, and then the way of light after they have got into light—anything that is not that, has no place in the school for the Sabbath, has no place in the Sabbath-school.

Now the work of the Sabbath-school, at this present time, is exactly that; and that in a certain sense, more definitely than it ever was before in our Sabbath-school work. I mean the study of the book of Galatians.² This is not to say that any of the former Sabbath-school lessons did not teach the way of salvation, nor that those who have been teaching those lessons have not been teaching the way and giving instruction concerning how to get into the way of salvation. But this *is* to say that, in the studies now before the Sabbath-school, the way of salvation is, *in a certain sense*, more definitely made known, and especially how to walk, being in the way, than it ever was in the Sabbath-school lessons before. This, simply because it is the study of Galatians.

² A [link](#) is given at the end of this document to the actual Sabbath-School Quarterly on Galatians that Elder Jones is speaking about.

That you may see this, I cite a verse in the first chapter, over which you have gone. You remember this expression: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or *an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel* unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." And then, to make it certain that that is a deliberately formed and thought-out statement, he repeats it: "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach *any other gospel* unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Verses 6-9.

That is not, in itself, the *putting* of a curse upon any one who would do that; but anybody who *does that* shows by it that he is *already* under the curse. Nothing but the gospel saves from the curse. He who has not the gospel can not be saved from the curse; and hence he has the curse. There are only two things in the world—the gospel and the curse.

Now, notice that the gospel—that is, the way of God—the way of God's salvation—is so set forth in the book of Galatians that, though "an angel from heaven" were to come down to-day and preach the gospel in the Sabbath-schools, he could not preach to you a single thing that is not there: he could not do it any better than it is done there.

Then, when there is given to us a letter from God,—a treatise given by the Lord, in which he has presented the gospel so certainly, so clearly, so positively, that an angel from heaven could not better it if he tried,—when to swerve from it, to teach differently from it, would only be to put one's self under the curse,—then has not the Lord, in that thing, given to us the gospel in a way, and in a sense, that is not found in any other way or in any other book?

The Sabbath-schools are now studying that epistle which God has so given—his own gospel, given in such a way—that, though so long ago given, if, to-day, an angel from heaven were to try to preach the gospel, and were to differ from what is there given, he would not preach the gospel at all, but would only bring himself under the curse, with all the people who should go that way with him. Then, that being so, when God has so brought it around that all the Sabbath-schools are studying that gospel there given, is it not true that the work of teaching these lessons in the Sabbath-schools is in that sense such as we never had before? It is exactly the work of Christ, which he did in the world when he came. It is showing mankind the way unto God,—the shortest way out of the wood in which we are lost,—and the way of righteousness, after we have got into it.

Then, in order to teach that lesson, what is essential, first of all?—To learn the lesson. In order to show people that way, every one who is to teach must first of all know that way, as it is shown in the book of Galatians.

Yet it is true that already—though only the first chapter has been covered—there have been found those who think that it is "dry," "very dry."

What is it that is so dry? Is it the gospel given in such sincerity, in such fullness and perfection, that an angel from heaven could not preach it any differently? Is *that* "very

dry"? If that should prove to me "very dry," would that fact not prove that I do not have that gospel? More than that, would it not prove that I do not have any confidence in it? When the gospel, which is the gospel of salvation of God, given by the Lord himself, is given to me for my salvation; and it falls to me to teach lessons in which that gospel is to be set forth, and I find the lessons, and the whole arrangement, "very dry,"—then what can the Lord possibly do for me? The gospel is the only means he has of saving anybody. I profess to be in the way of salvation: I profess to have received the gospel. I am called upon to teach the way of the gospel which I profess, and in which I profess to walk; and that part of God's great lesson book is given to me in which he himself puts that gospel before me, and in a way that an angel could not give it any differently and still preach the gospel. I have it so, and yet to me it is "very dry;" it does not seem that I can get anything out of it: it is "too tedious." That is a sad showing for me: not for the gospel, nor for the Sabbath-school lessons, nor for the book of Galatians; but for ME.

In that case, the thing for me to do—the first of all things, and the only thing, for me to do—is to get into the place where the gospel of God's salvation will be to me salvation indeed. And when that is so, it is written—written for everlasting, for it is everlastingly true—that "with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation." Isa. 12:1-3. [Voice: Amen.] He who has the salvation of God; he who knows the gospel of God, and what is this salvation—instead of its ever by any possibility being to him "dry," much less "very, dry," it is simply the wells of salvation eternally flowing; and he is ever drinking to the full.

(To be continued.)

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