

Want to be "practical"? Then believe the gospel!

"Does this blessedness then come upon the circumcised only, or upon the uncircumcised also? For we say that faith was accounted to Abraham for righteousness" (Romans 4:9).

The Spirit was ministered and miracles were wrought, not by works of law, but by "hearing with faith," that is, by the obedience of faith, for faith comes by hearing the word of God (Rom. 10:17). Thus Paul's labor, and the first experience of the Galatians, were exactly in line with the experience of Abraham, whose faith was accounted for righteousness.

Let it be remembered that the "false brethren" who preached "a different gospel" (Gal. 2:4, 1:6), even the false gospel of righteousness by works, claimed Abraham for their father. It would be their

boast that they were "children" of Abraham, and they would appeal to their circumcision as proof of the fact. But the very thing upon which they relied as proving them to be children of Abraham was proof that they were not; for "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Rom. 4:3). Abraham had the righteousness of faith before he was circumcised (Rom. 4:11). "Know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham" (Gal. 3:7). Abraham was not justified by works, but his faith wrought righteousness (Rom 4:2,3).

The same trouble still exists. People take the sign for the substance, the end for the means. They see that righteousness reveals itself in good works. Therefore they assume that the good works bring the righteousness. Righteousness gained by faith, good works wrought without working, seem to them impractical and fanciful. They call themselves "practical" people and believe that the only way to have a thing done is to do it. But the truth is that all such are highly impractical.

One "without strength" cannot do anything, not even so much as to raise himself up to take the medicine that is offered him. Any counsel for him to try to do it would be impractical. Only in the Lord is there righteousness and strength (Isa. 45:24). Abraham is the father of all who believe for righteousness, and of those only. The only "practical" thing is to believe, even as he did. [1]

Note:

1. The Glad Tidings, pp. 53. 54.