

# THE GOSPEL OF GOD.



WHEN our first parents transgressed and fell, God appeared in the paradise of Eden, and after hearing and convicting each, traced the evil to its source and pronounced judgment on the great enemy. To effect that sentence, wondrous to say, He proclaimed the coming Deliverer, who should suffer for sins but crush the power of Satan. And what grace, that He who should accomplish this divine work was to be the woman's seed, Emmanuel, the virgin's Son, as the prophet would fill in the sketch, long after Moses, and long before the Incarnation and Redemption! Scripture speaks of glad tidings in Abraham's case (Gen. xii. xxii., Gal. iii. 8) and in that of Israel (Heb. iv. 2); yet these and all else were but typical and preparatory. "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Christ is all; and the efficacy of all He won comes to the sinner by faith. "And therefore is it of faith, that it might be according to grace." So still more plainly is it written, when the glad tidings came fully out, "by grace ye have been saved through faith, and that, not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

This is what God proclaims. Man thinks otherwise, and prefers his "view" to God's word. The Romanist nullifies the truth by his supplement of works and rites and ceremonies, by priests and prayers and masses, by penance and purgatory, by spurious mediators angelic and human.

It is dishonour to God and His Son, to the atoning work on the cross, to the Holy Spirit and to the written word. But the grace and truth of God in Christ remains intact for faith.

Calvinism clogs and obscures the gospel by teaching that Christ suffered to reconcile His Father to us, and by its decree of reprobation. For God so loved the world that He gave His own Son, not only that the believer might have eternal life, but that his sins should be effaced by His sacrifice. And Rom. ix. 22, 23 is conclusive, that while *He* before prepared vessels of mercy for glory, He endured with much long suffering vessels of wrath fitted for destruction. They were fitted by their own sins and unbelief, not by God, who is not the author of evil and is righteous in judgment.

The Arminian scheme necessarily fails by making man guilty and sinful, to go as partner with God in his own salvation. But if it be true, as scripture plainly declares, that man *is* dead in trespasses and sins, not the Gentile only but the favoured Jew too, that question is decided. Arminianism is farther from the truth than Calvinism.

What does "Zion's Watchtower" consider to be "the true gospel"? Blind to God and the Saviour, to sin and its judgment, to the infinite work on the cross, and the wickedness of neglecting, despising, and rejecting "so great salvation," it looks only at the awful issue for the great majority of men perishing and punished for ever. Scripture, which proclaims the gospel, in no way hides but warns of the tremendous doom that awaits those who refuse it. No fanciful or specious reasoning, no profane denunciation, can alter what God says. And it is Christ, and the N. T., that are so clear and solemn in letting men know that God's judgment is eternal. Nor is any blasphemer worse than such as gives them the lie. It is Jesus, not Moses, who speaks

of "the unquenchable fire," of the future Gehenna, where (unlike the earlier and temporal one) "their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched" (Mark ix. 48) in the absolute sense.

How then runs their new gospel? It is that in the millennial age all come forth from the grave to be tested again! by the gospel, and to be either accepted to eternal life, or destroyed *i.e.*, extinguished, as unworthy of life, in the Second Death!!

Now our Lord has pronounced already as to this in John v. 21-29, as well as in Rev. xx. "Verily, verily, I say to you, The hour cometh, *and now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that heard shall live." This hour is still going on, and life for the spiritually dead depends on hearing Christ's voice in the gospel. "For as the Father hath life in himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself." Christ is the life-giver for those that believe, the one Mediator between God and man. This however is not all, if we believe our Lord: "And he gave him authority to execute judgment also, because he is Son of man. Marvel not at this; for an hour *cometh*, in which all that are in the tombs (the literally dead) shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto a resurrection of life; and they that have done ill, unto a resurrection of judgment." In this future hour (the millennial age, as it is loosely called) shall be those two resurrections of wholly different character; even before the millennium begins, "of life," for the "just," who believed and bore good fruit, to reign with Christ; the other for the "unjust," who did not believe and are raised for judgment. This judgment is the second death, the lake of fire, where the Beast and the False Prophet were long before Satan, and shall be tormented day and night for all ages. The after

extinction is a fraud. The word says tormented for ever, and in the most explicit terms.

Such then is this fabulous hope, one of Satan's many false gospels. There is no more ground for this millennial resurrection of mankind than for a preaching in Hades, to give a fresh test and a further opportunity, to those who had died in their sins. Not a word of scripture, O. or N. T., gives the least colour to it. Men audaciously dictate it to God, as what He ought to do. But, as we have just read, the Lord, the Judge of quick and dead, has authoritatively precluded it. The Revelation is in entire accord with the Gospel, that (before the thousand years begin) the blessed and holy dead are raised up to reign with Christ. When this is over and the little space that follows, another resurrection follows of the dead, who are judged and cast into the lake of fire. Not a hint appears there, any more than in the Gospel, for the dream of raising the masses of unbelieving mankind for that probation, which belongs to this life. Raising them again for it contradicts all scripture and can emanate only from the father of lies. It would be more upright for these dreamers on behalf of the unbelieving and wicked to write a Bible out of their own reveries, instead of wresting the scriptures to the destruction both of their own souls and of such as heed them. Alas! this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light; for their works were evil.

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