

## THE NOT-ASHAMED GOSPEL OF CHRIST

(The six articles of this item are from “The Bible Students Monthly” 1914. Vol. VI, #10)

*“For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.”* Romans 1:16

Everybody knows that the word Gospel signifies Good Tidings, as in the angel’s Message at the birth of Jesus—“Behold, I bring you Good Tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people!” Who is responsible for the fact that this Message of Joy to all people has been turned completely around to mean bad tidings of great misery to all people—except to an elect handful? The fact is that no person deliberately plotted this turning of God’s word upside down. It is the work of the Devil, who gradually foisted it upon the Church as well as upon the heathen world, with the view to turning people away from God and the Bible.

St. Peter and St. Paul both predicted the falling away of the Church and the success of the doctrines of demons. “The God of this world [Satan] hath blinded the minds” of all unbelievers. If it were not for these delusions of Satan, the whole world might speedily be brought to know, to admire, to love, the true God. The Apostle continues, telling us why Satan blinds men—“lest the light of the knowledge of the glory of God ... should shine into their hearts.” Wherever the true knowledge of God shines into the human heart it presents the Almighty in such glorious character as to demand the reverence of His creatures. Hence Satan’s endeavor to blind men’s minds through false doctrines which misrepresent the Almighty’s character and Plan.

But while we Scripturally hold that Satan had chief responsibility in the matter, it is not for us to say that the clerics of the Dark Ages did not more or less connive at the error, trusting that it would make the people subservient to the clergy, through whom they might hope to escape future tortures. But leaving the past and its responsibilities, we may surely say that great and grave responsibility rests upon the preachers of today for their perpetuation of this great deception—this fraud upon the people, slander upon the Almighty and opposition to the Truth. Of the degree of this wickedness only God is capable of judging correctly; but it is wicked to keep the people in darkness on the subject, and it is slanderous blasphemy against the Divine character.

There is no question that nearly all ministers privately confess that they do not believe these slanders, while publicly they continue to speak words which give the opposite thought. The time when such horrible assassination of the Divine reputation can prosper is surely short. Messiah’s glorious Reign will make an end of all such lies; as it is written, “I will lay justice to the line, and righteousness to the plummet; and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies.”

## **The Not-Ashamed Gospel**

All God's work is perfect. (Deuteronomy 32:4) Man originally was perfect, in the Creator's likeness. Disobedience brought upon man not a penalty of eternal torment, but a death penalty—"Dying, thou shalt die." "The wages of sin is death." For six thousand years the world has been undergoing this sentence. Cut off by sin from fellowship with God, man has degraded himself. Satan has contributed to this reign of Sin and Death by deceiving mankind, fostering errors, misrepresenting God, etc.

God has the situation fully in hand. He purposed to permit both angels and men to see one great illustration of the effect of sin, leading on to disease and death, mental, moral and physical. Meantime the Creator has gracious purposes for man. His experiences with sin and death will not be fruitless. He will have opportunity of learning valuable lessons, profitable for eternity. The first trial as to his worthiness of eternal life or of everlasting death was through one man; and his disobedience settled the matter for the race—the death sentence was the penalty.

As a basis for man's recovery, the Son of God died for man's sin—not to get mankind out of eternal torment nor to keep them from going to eternal torment or to Purgatory, but to save them from extinction, "that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish." (John 3:16) Their recovery from sin and death is Scripturally styled the resurrection of the dead. Thus the Church of true believers are represented as "risen with Christ" to "walk in newness of life," and are promised an actual resurrection—the First, the Chief Resurrection.

Next comes the world's resurrection. The Truth will be made known to them Instead of being confused and hampered with superstition, lies, doctrines of devils, the true light of the knowledge of the glory of God will shine upon them. Gradually the willing and obedient of the world will rise—mentally, morally, physically—to perfection; whereas the Church, which is to get the spirit nature, will be perfected by an instantaneous resurrection.

This is the Gospel which St. Paul preached—that the dead sleep in Hades, Sheol, the Bible Hell, the tomb, awaiting the establishment of Messiah's Kingdom which will bring glorious blessings. St. Paul declared that if there be no resurrection of the dead, all faith is vain, all preaching is vain, all hope of forgiveness of sins is vain. We might as well eat and drink, and consider that when we die we perish. But, he declares, there is to be such a resurrection; and the fact that Jesus died and rose again is God's guarantee to all believers that all who sleep in Jesus shall be brought from the dead by and through Him and His power.

"There's a wideness in God's mercy  
Like the wideness of the sea."