

**MORISONIANISM REFUTED: A
REVIEW OF J. MORISON'S
EXPOSITION OF THE NINTH
CHAPTER OF PAUL'S EPISTLE TO
THE ROMANS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649533039

Morisonianism Refuted: A Review of J. Morison's Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans by Alexander Gardner & James Morison

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Cover @ 2017

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ALEXANDER GARDNER & JAMES MORISON

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MORISONIANISM REFUTED:

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OF THE

REV. JAMES MORISON'S

EXPOSITION OF THE NINTH CHAPTER OF PAUL'S
EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"A DEFENCE OF INFANT BAPTISM," &c.

ALEX. GARDNER, PAISLEY.

OGLE & SON, D. BRYCE, AND G. GALLIE, GLASGOW.

OLIVER & BOYD, AND JOHNSTONE & HUNTER, EDINBURGH.

HOLLSTON AND STONEMAN, LONDON.

1852.

101. d. 238.



PREFACE.

THE Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans is a very important portion of the word of God. This is acknowledged by all. It has been characterised as the "chapter of chapters." It has formed the battle-field of many a hard-fought polemico-theological contest. Hence the importance of a sound exegesis of its several parts; and the duty of investigating it in an humble, candid, and prayerful disposition of mind.

The work of the Rev. James Morison,* on this part of Scripture, is dedicated to all "the Professors of Theology, in the Established and Unestablished Churches in Scotland;" and contains an invitation to *them* to "come forth, in all the might of their great abilities, and in all the panoply of their extensive acquirements," to the investigation of the topics discussed in his work. As the writer of the following pages cannot "stand forth" thus panoplied and arrayed, it may seem presumptuous on his part to engage in the discussion; and perhaps it is so. He is far from thinking himself qualified to grapple with this "great argument" in all its breadth, and aspects, and bearings. There are certain respects, however, in which it may be viewed,

* An Exposition of the Ninth Chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. By James Morison. Kilmarnock, 1819.

in some degree level to the capacities of ordinary minds. His work is not intended for "Professors of Theology." It does not aspire to any thing so exalted. Its aim is much less ambitious. It is meant for the class to which the writer himself belongs, and to all who, like the noble-minded Bereans of old, "search the Scriptures daily, to see whether those things are so." It has been composed during the few "leisure hours" in the evening of the day, which business, and the pressure of other engagements, have permitted him to enjoy. In these circumstances, he has not been able to mature his thoughts in the manner he would have wished; and hence some of the defects and blemishes of the present work. Its faults are probably more numerous than he is aware of.

When the writer perused, for the first time, the work of Mr. Morison, he was very much startled at the nature of some of his conclusions, and at the amount of plausible reasoning, learning, and research, displayed in their defence. This determined him to give it a second and a more careful perusal; and then he was still more startled to discover that it contained an amount of sophistry and unfair statement truly astonishing. That such is the case, he has endeavoured to make good; and he leaves it entirely with the reader to say how far, or whether or not, he has succeeded.

A. G.

PAISLEY, APRIL, 1852.

REVIEW
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THIS is an elaborate, and in some respects a learned and able work. The author is undoubtedly entitled to the praise of great industry; though we cannot commend the tone and manner which he frequently assumes. As it is our wish to deal with the book itself, however, and not with its author, we shall pass over, without farther notice, this and some other matters on which we might have animadverted.

The task which the author has undertaken,—namely, to reconcile the ninth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, with the dogmas of Arminianism,—is a hard and difficult one; and it will not excite much surprise though he has failed. This is not the fault of the author; for he has left no stone unturned that was likely to aid him in his enterprise. He seems to have exhausted, thoroughly and com-

pletely, all the available sources of evidence on the Arminian side of the question; and we are glad that he has done so. In examining any set of opinions, we like to know *all* that can be said for or against them. On this ground, we have to thank the author for his labours. We now know the *worst* that can be said against the Calvinistic interpretation of this celebrated chapter, and also the *best* that can be advanced in favour of the Arminian view. The author has certainly brought to bear on the subject, a great mass of learning and research; but, in our apprehension, its effect in many cases, has been to darken and obscure what is otherwise plain and obvious. In reading over the pages of his exposition, we have been frequently beclouded; and we had just to wait till the clouds of learned dust had passed away, when the clear and unmistakable meaning of the apostle began to shine forth in majestic and silvery brightness.

As intimated above, the object of the writer is to harmonise the statements of this important portion of holy writ with the tenets of Arminianism. In the prosecution of this object, he examines with commendable minuteness and particularity, every word and phrase in the chapter. It would be inconsistent with our design, and perhaps tedious, to follow the author through the whole of his exposition: nor is it necessary, as we concur in many of his interpretations. We propose therefore, to confine

our attention chiefly to those points and passages with regard to which we consider the author guilty of wresting the language of inspiration for sectarian purposes. But that we may carry our readers intelligently along with us, it will be necessary that we take a glance at the general bearing and import of the chapter. With this view, let us read over together the first, or introductory section of it,—Verses 1 to 5:—

“I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, that I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart: For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ, for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever, Amen.”

In these verses, the apostle expresses the deepest anxiety for the spiritual welfare of his countrymen, his “kinsmen according to the flesh:” he even avows his willingness, were such a thing right or proper, to be “accursed,” or separated “from Christ for them.”* He thus announced, in a manner peculiarly

* The author, following some ancient expositors, gives a different interpretation of the above passage. He proposes to read it thus:—“I have great grief and increasing agony of heart—(for I myself *used* to wish to be accursed from the Messiah)—for