

CONCERNING THE GOSPEL AND THE HINDRANCES TO BELIEVE IT.

BY AN OLD AUTHOR.

1. THE word GOSPEL properly signifies good news, or glad tidings, and may be used to denote good news of any kind; but *the* gospel, eminently so called, is a message, sent or brought to us from heaven, of good things.* The substance of it is to declare to the fallen, condemned sinners of the human race, that Jesus is the Christ, † who came into the world to save the chief of sinners; ‡ that God hath given us eternal life, and that this life is in his Son; § that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. || All these things taken together in their blessed and extensive import as centring in one point, are the *gospel*. ¶ And these things are told us openly and freely, that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life through his name, or in what is declared concerning him as the Saviour. This gospel was preached to Adam in the first promise; to Abraham, in its being told him that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; to Israel typically, in that whole system of sacrifices; prophetically in the Psalms, and in all the Prophets; and it is now exhibited to us, historically and doctrinally, in the New Testament, in the relation it gives us of the birth, life, death, resurrection, and glorification of our Lord Jesus, and the account it gives us of the true and glorious design of all these things.** Were we to sum up the whole, we shall find it to be as to its general subject, a declaration of free and full salvation

* "The apostolic doctrine of Christ crucified is, in the most emphatical sense, to every one who understands it, good news or glad tidings."—BOOTH.

† John xx. 31.

‡ 1 Tim. i. 15.

§ "The matter to be believed unto salvation is this, that God the Father, moved by nothing but his free love to mankind lost, hath made a deed of gift and grant of his Son Jesus Christ to mankind, that whosoever of all mankind shall receive the gift shall not perish but have everlasting life."—EZEKIEL CULVERWELL.

|| 1 John v. 11. ¶ 2 Cor. v. 19.

** Acts x. 37—43; xiii. 27—30.

in Jesus Christ, addressed to lost, helpless, and condemned sinners.* The redemption obtained by Jesus Christ is presented to our view as *quite necessary* for our salvation, as *quite suitable* to our condition, as *quite free*, for our encouragement, and as *quite full* or complete for our supply. †

2. This representation is so great and glorious and contains such joyful particulars, that one would imagine it could not fail of affording at once the most enlivening light, the most satisfying hope, the most solid joy and spiritual strength and life to our souls. ‡ Such is certainly its nature, such is plainly its tendency, and such is its real influence and effect, wherever its meaning, its evidence, and its importance are understood and received. § This we are certain never will be, without the Divine teaching or influence of the Spirit of truth and grace. ||

However, hereby the most interesting message, and the most gladdening tidings, are brought us. This message, some neglect, others misunderstand; some despise,

* "Preach the gospel to every creature, that is, go tell every man without exception, whatsoever his sins be, whatsoever his rebellions be,—go and tell him these glad tidings, that if he will come in I will accept him, his sins shall be forgiven him and he shall be saved."—MARROW OF MODERN DIVINITY, Ch., 2.

† Matth. xix. 10; Rom. iii. 19—24.

‡ "No gospel hearer can say that there is no provision made for this case. For the gospel method of salvation resembles a well drawn picture, which seems to look every person in the room, on either hand of it, in the face. In like manner, gospel truth has something in it suitable to every one's case that reads or hears it, and that as particularly as if it spoke to every gospel hearer by name."—REV. W. ANTON'S SERMONS, P. 276.

§ Rom. v. 1, 2.

|| 1 Cor. xii. 3. Were I to allow myself to alter any expressions in the original, I should certainly have omitted the word "influence," which is here used in reference to the spirit. It is not Scriptural, and it is apt to leave upon the mind an impress on unfavourable to the doctrine of the personality and direct agency of the Holy Spirit. All the Scriptural terms have special reference to the indwelling and inworking of the Holy Spirit himself, not merely to the effects of something which is called his influence. See John xiv. 16, 17; Rom. viii. 9, 11; 2 Cor. vi. 19.