

and others dispute it; while many understand it so defectively, that it conveys no more pleasure or satisfaction to their minds, than if they had never heard it, or did not at all understand it; so that many persons sit under the sound of it who are very little, if at all, enlivened, encouraged, or attracted thereby. This proceeds from some remaining difficulties or objections which still possess their minds and obstruct the joy, satisfaction, hope, and love, that would otherwise arise in their minds upon the belief of it.\* For it is evident, that when this was preached of old, they who heard and understood it were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. †

3. Let us therefore search a little into this matter, and attend to the objections, and difficulties which rise in the mind, whereby it comes to pass that many receive no comfort and advantage to their souls by the declaration of it; so that it proves in reality no gospel to them. For we must necessarily take it for granted, that it is in himself a message of great joy, otherwise it would not have received the name it bears. †

It is evident, then, that to many these glad tidings do not convey any pleasure, because they do not appear suited to their wants and desire. It is to them a thing

\* "Hence it comes to pass that, in many who are saved in the issue, there a long sorrowful trouble of mind that they live under, and all the world shall not persuade them what the true cause of it is. They are full of sorrow and complainings; no other language to be heard to God or man, but many sorrowful complaints; their corruptions are strong, their souls dead and dark, their consciences disquieted. And what is the true reason of all this? They are yet averse from giving glory to the sovereign grace of God in saving them by Christ. Many sorrowful hours many of the elect of God have gone through in the strength of this corruption, and they have never seen it till a long while after. It is a shame and reproach to professors, and a dishonour to our Lord Jesus Christ, that so many in whom the root of the matter is, have their hearts sinking within them when relief is so plainly provided for them. *The true reason is because they are averse, and not willing, nor inclined to be indebted solely to grace, and to have all their supplies singly from it.*"—*Trav's Select Works*. P. 33.

† Acts ii. 46; viii. 8, 39; xiii. 48; xvi. 54. "It never thunders, never lightens,—there is no earth quake in the gospel; it is the *gospel of peace.*"—*J. H. Evans*.

‡ "Yet come the enlargement when it will it must, I admit, come after all through the channel of a simple evidence given to the sayings of God, accounted as true and faithful sayings. And never does light and peace so fill my heart as when like a little child, I take up the lesson, that God hath laid on His own Son the iniquities of us all."—*Dr. Chalmers*. See *Life*, Vol. II P. 211.

quite foreign from their thoughts and wishes; and so they despise and neglect it.\* One says in his heart, "if you could bring me tidings of some worldly honours to be freely conferred, or of some large sums of money to be freely given, this would rejoice my heart; or if you tell me where and how I might enjoy such and such sensual pleasures, this would be very acceptable." † The language spoken by the hearts of others is to this effect—"If you could assure me of any way that I could live and indulge my self in sin, with hopes of impunity, without fear of death or hell, this would be very good news to me." But it is evident, in both these cases, that the sentiments of the heart are directly contrary to the truth of God; for the former account the world their chief portion, and the latter esteem sin as their greatest good. They do not perceive, they do not really believe, the suitableness and importance of the salvation in Jesus Christ to their souls, and therefore it does not wear the aspect of good news in their view. †

To others the proclamation of salvation only in Christ is not good news, because they do not see it to be quite necessary for them. They do not think their case to be really so bad as a full and free salvation intimates. § They do not apprehend themselves quite lost, undone, and helpless, but think they can, they must, and ought to do something towards their own recovery to the favour of God. As the free Gospel opposes all such self-sufficient desires and endeavours, it is therefore rather disgusting and offensive. Such as these do not know either themselves, or the law, or the true God. ||

4. But, after all, there is another great reason why the glad tidings of the blessed Gospel do not convey any real satisfaction; and that is, because the proper *freeness* of Divine grace revealed

\* "A whole hearted sinner will never know anything of a full Christ."—*J. H. Evans*.

† Job. xxi. 14, 15; Psal. iv. 6.

‡ John iv. 10; vi. 26, 46.

§ "What is the Saviour to any individual who does not know he is a sinner? He is invariably despised and rejected. Who values the physician? The sick Where is his presence prized? In the hospital."—*Howells*.

|| Matth. ix. 12, 13; Rom. x. 3.