

On offering the Gospel,

or

an offered Gospel shown to be contrary to God's Word

and will.

Go ye into all the world and preach (not offer) the gospel to every creature, Mark xvi. 15.

By William Tant 1837

IT would be well if the Lord's people would bear in mind the apostle's words, Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For such is the philosophy and vain deceit of men, that they are continually making the commandments of God of none effect by their traditions. Thus fleshly wisdom too often takes the place of simplicity and Godly sincerity among religious teachers : so that, in order to make the gospel of Christ palatable to human nature, and congenial to man's depraved reason, many dare to interlope earthly principles into the heavenly religion of the Son of God. Thus either to suit man's pride, or to explain the mystery of divine sovereignty, men have so far departed from the faith in these latter times, 1 Tim. 4: 1. as to advocate an offered gospel, which neither prophets wrote of nor apostles knew. And what does an offered gospel consist of? Not of what Jehovah has determined upon, whom he loves, and how he loves : not of the sovereignty of his will, the power of his arm, and the immutability of his counsels : not of the provisions of his mercy, in their sufficiency, efficiency, and glory : not of the great Redeemer's worth, dignity, and deathless fame not of covenant settlements in all their fullness, extent, and certainty : not of

salvation in its gracious origin, perfect accomplishment, powerful application, and glorious consummation; but full of creature dignity, creature power, and creature independence : full of contingencies, conditions, and discord; while discriminating mercy, sovereign grace, and everlasting love, are hid behind the veil of proud Free Will.

An offered gospel supposes every man to have some grace in his heart, or why should its advocates exhort unregenerate men to receive it? But that every man has not grace in his heart must be evident, because grace is said to reign, Rom. 5: 21. So that all who have it are interested in those words, sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace. Now if grace reigns where it exists, all who possess grace must leave the world, hate sin, groan on account of its workings, struggle with the powers of darkness, resist the devil, seek God, have a broken heart, loathe the lusts and corruptions of the flesh, know something of the Lord's words, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, feel the deep leprosy of sin as having tainted him throughout, mourn the hidings of God's face, long after the righteousness of Christ, pour out the soul before him, value nothing so much as the light of God's countenance, while fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ, is esteemed the highest privilege. Are these the feelings, desires, and exercises of every man? Are these fruits of grace brought forth by every man? Decidedly not. But why are they not? Because grace is not given to every man, since where it exists it reigns. Here it may be objected that grace may be given to every man but does not reign because man does not make use of it. To this I would reply, grace is not given, only for us to make use of, but to make use of us too, by qualifying us for communion with God, and forming us as vessels fit for the master's use, that we might be to the praise of his glory. When the apostle had a thorn in the flesh, he besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from him; but the Lord told him, my grace is sufficient for thee : and lest we should

misunderstand these words, and think it meant that God's grace was sufficient, if Paul would make proper use of it, the apostle tells us a little more the Lord said, as explanatory, my strength is made perfect in weakness : not made perfect by human cultivation, human wisdom, or human watchfulness; but made perfect in weakness. If then, grace is God's strength made perfect in weakness, it cannot be because man does not make use of it that-it does not reign in every man: it must be because grace is not given to every man. Further still, if grace is not in every man, then every man is not capable of performing a gracious act. Now to offer the gospel to every man is offering Christ to every man, because Christ is the substance of the gospel; but to receive Christ's salvation, to love Christ's word, and to prize Christ's truth, are gracious acts. Then every man cannot receive Christ's salvation, love Christ's word, and prize Christ's truth, because they are gracious acts, and every man has not grace. Not only so; but God never requires anything of the creature, which he has not first given to the creature, For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required, Luke xii. 48. Much was given to Adam, and in Adam to his posterity. God gave him an upright soul and a sinless body; perfect earthly happiness, and a reasonable law; a capacious intellect, and a knowledge of the effects of his breach of the law before it was broken; and much is required: perfect un-sinning obedience, or death temporal, spiritual, and eternal. God gave him to be the federal head and representative of all his posterity; much is required, their death in him. Much was given to Christ, even the whole election of grace ; and much is required, that he should pay their debts, blot out the hand-writing of ordinances that was against them, remove their guilt, bring in for them everlasting righteousness, and exalt them to heaven.

Much is given to the Father, precious blood, glorious righteousness, a sweet smelling sacrifice much is required, pardon for sin, acceptance of their persons for whom the price was paid, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby it may be known. Much is

given to the Holy Ghost, a people to quicken, a Christ to glorify, and adopting love to reveal ; much is required, a living family, obedient subjects, and loving children.

Much is given to the church, Christ in all his offices, characters, and relations the Holy Ghost in all his offices, faithfulness, and preserving power-salvation in all its fullness, certainty, and glory : much is required, an acknowledgment of wretchedness, poverty, and imperfection ; a laying low at the Redeemer's feet, a rejoicing in electing love, a resting upon the Holy Ghost's covenant engagements, a rejection of every creature confidence, a glorying in nothing but the Mediator's worth and work, and an everlasting song before the throne, when time's adverse scenes are all for ever passed. But no grace is given to some men, and for that reason no act of grace is required from some men. To this point the Saviour speaks when he says, No man can come to me except the Father, who hath sent me, draw him.

If then every man has not got grace in his heart; if every man is incapable of doing a gracious act without grace; if grace reigns where it exists without human aid; and if God does not require gracious acts from men to whom he has given no grace; then that gospel which holds a contrary view must be fallacious, and an offered gospel does so; therefore, an offered gospel is contrary to God's Word and Will.

An offered gospel supposes God dependant upon man, for its advocates represent God desiring to save, but not able to do it till the sinner is willing. Now a will to be saved by the grace of God, through Christ, cannot be in man by nature, because man is represented as being born like a wild ass's colt, Job 11: 12. So perverse that he makes choice of any way but the right way.

Yea, the Scriptures declare the way of man is not in himself, Jer. 10: 23. It is not in man to go that way which leads to eternal life, and the preparations of the heart in man is from the Lord, Prov. 16:

1. therefore a disposition to be saved, in the Lord's way, must come from the Lord ; and if men are not disposed to be saved, they have no will to be saved. Then if man does not naturally choose God's way of saving a sinner, if it is not in him to go that way which leads to eternal life, and if a will to that which is good comes from the Lord, then a good will is a part of God's salvation, and if God waited till a sinner was naturally willing to be saved before he saved him, no man would be saved at all, for the way of man is froward, and strange, Prov. 21: 8. But the advocates of an offered gospel, sometimes adduce the following words as confirmatory of their erroneous views, whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely. These words are not descriptive of God waiting for man, but show with what sovereignty he communicates liberty to the soul of a law-condemned, conscience-condemned, and sin-sick soul. God said, Let there be light, when calling forth the creation works into existence; but we cannot suppose that he was waiting for the darkness to do a something. Far otherwise, let there be light, was his Almighty fiat, by which he majestically ushered light into the world. And when God has by his Spirit shown a sinner his ruin, guilt, and misery ; brought him to behold • the blackness, and darkness, and tempest, of Mount Sinai; made him hear the sound of a trumpet, every note of which speaks God's justice, sin's desert, and law's curse ; and the voice of Moses' words, crying, pay me that thou owest, pay me that thou owest ; the sinner then becomes willing to receive that salvation which removes his guilt, satisfies stern justice, answers all the law's demands, brings a full payment to Moses, and raises him out of his ruin. And God speaks liberty in his soul, saying, let him take of the water of life freely: it is the set time, the appointed period, the longed for- moment fixed upon in the counsels of heaven, that this willing sinner should be made free. Therefore, as in the old creation he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast, so in the new creation, God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, shines in the heart of this willing sinner, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 4: 6. Here then we

discover, to have a will to that which is good is a blessing given in mercy, and communicated in power ; and is not that which a sinner is left to work in himself.

If then man by nature has no will to be saved in God's way; if a will to be saved comes from the Lord: if a will to be saved is not left for a sinner to work in himself; and if every man is willing to be saved in the day of God's power; that gospel which supposes God depends upon man is fallacious: an offered gospel does so: then an offered gospel is contrary to Gods Word and Will.

An offered gospel contradicts itself. What is the meaning of gospel? Glad tidings. What are these tidings? Pardon, Justification, Sanctification, Redemption, and Glory. For what are these blessings? For all who believe Acts 16: 31; Who are' they that 'will believe . As many as are ordained to eternal life, Acts 13: 48. Why are these tidings denominated glad tidings? Because they are bestowed upon, secured for, and wrought in all the objects of electing love by Jehovah, in his Trinity of Persons ; independent of creature merit in creature wisdom creature seeking creature asking or creature diligence. So that God the Father in sovereignty declares, I will put my fear in their hearts, and they shall not depart from me. I will set up one shepherd over them, into whose hands I will give my people, and he shall feed them with my pardoning love through his redeeming blood ; even my servant David, David's Lord and David's son; he shall feed them, with the counsels of my heart as seen in his person, with the purposes of my mind as known in his life, with the honors of my law as discovered in his death, and with the glory of my designs as exhibited iii his exaltation. I will make with them a covenant of peace, in their covenant head, the Shepherd who shall feed them, and will cause the evil beasts to cease out of the land, will cause the reigning power of in-dwelling corruption to cease, so that it may annoy but shall not destroy my true-born children ; they shall dwell safely in the wilderness, notwithstanding their enemies, conflicts, and

dangers ; and sleep in the woods I will occasionally indulge them with my smile upon earth, and as the effect thereof, they shall repose upon my bosom while traveling a waste howling wilderness. Thus we see the blessings of the gospel given in sovereignty, and not one word can be found about the gift of these unspeakable blessings depending upon any act, skill or worth of the creature.

God the Son, in securing to his people an interest in 'the blessings given, does it in sovereignty. Thus he says, My Father worketh hitherto and I work. When he healed the man who had, a withered band, he did not ask him to raise it first, but said to him, stretch forth thy hand, and it was restored whole like the other; and when he raised up the widow's son that was dead, he did not tell him to move first, but, said he, young man, I say unto thee, arise, and he that was dead sat up and began to speak. So Christ bowed the heavens, and came down without creature aid; he travelled in the greatness of, his strength, without creature asking ; he laid down his life of himself, so that none took it from him, he therefore did it without creature wisdom. And declares, mine own arm brought salvation, and of the people there was none with me therefore none contributed to it. And as to his people's meriting this great work, the following is his description of them. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high bill. No sin but what they indulged in, and no guilt but what they contracted.

God the Holy Ghost works this salvation in the souls of the elect in sovereignty, by his quickening, illuminating, enlarging, and reviving power.

Does the holy Ghost quicken? This does not depend upon creature merit, for, says the apostle, you bath he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins. Nor upon creature diligence, for, says Christ, it is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing.

Does the Holy Ghost illuminate? This does not depend upon creature wisdom, for; says the psalmist, the entrance of 'thy word giveth light, proving that all is darkness antecedently, and consequently, that there is no wisdom. And the apostle, writing to the spiritual Hebrews, says after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions; which shows that the illuminating power of the Holy Ghost does not depend upon creature seeking, for neither the spiritual Hebrews, nor God's people generally, are so in earnest after God, as to endure a great fight of affliction till they are illuminated. After ye were illuminated ye endured, are the apostle's words.

Does the Holy Ghost grant enlargement of soul to such as are in bondage? This does not depend upon creature wisdom, nor creature merit, for if so David could not have said after his awful fall, I will sing of thy righteousness, Psalm 51: 14. Nor would he have cried, I am shut up, and cannot come forth, bring my soul out of prison that I may praise thy name, if he knew it depended upon himself.

Does the Holy Ghost revive his people after a season of darkness, barrenness, and weakness?

All rests upon his own sovereignty. Thus he says, I form the light and create darkness; and the psalmist says, lie maketh the barren woman to keep house. He maketh the barren Gentiles to form a vital portion of his family, and his barren people to rejoice in their portion. To them that have no might he increaseth strength, by raising them upon the wings of inward evidences and heavenly earnestness, so that they can mount up into the atmosphere of gospel liberty, and sing, in the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.

If then the gospel is good tidings because it proclaims blessings that are given to secured for, and wrought in the souls of all interested in them, independent of creature merit, creature wisdom,

creature seeking, creature asking, or creature diligence ; then that gospel which gives an opposite view of these things is not good tidings. An offered gospel does do so; therefore an offered gospel is a contradiction to itself, and cannot be the gospel of the ever blessed God, for he is not the author of confusion, I Cor. 14: 23, Therefore an offered gospel is contrary to God's Word and Will.

An offered gospel supposes God false. For its advocates represent God loving all -men-universally with the same love, when, in fact, he hates some. We read, known unto God are all his works from the beginning, Acts xv. 18. He therefore knew that his work with some men was to give them up to the delusions of their own hearts; as he says himself, I also will choose their delusions, Isaiah 61: 4. He knew that his work with some men was to be angry, as we read, He is angry with, the wicked every day, Psalm 7: 11. He knew that it is his work to turn the wicked into hell, and all the nations that forget him, Psalm 9: 17. He knew that it is his work to punish some with everlasting destruction from his presence, 2 These. 1: 9. He knew that it is his work to appoint some to stumble at the word, being disobedient, I Peter 2: 8. and declares, I have created the smith that bloweth the coals in the fire, and that bringeth forth an instrument to his work, and I have created the waster to destroy, Isaiah 54: 11. Therefore to offer Pardon, Justification, Sanctification, Redemption, and Glory, to such, would be to mock them with words of peace while the design is marred, with the shadow, of love while the substance is hatred, with the shell of salvation while the kernel is damnation. Such an exhibition of him who is of one mind, is enough to strike a God-fearing soul with horror; yet this horrid exhibition is the essence of an offered gospel, PAINTED WITH UNIVERSAL MERCY AND GENERAL REDEMPTION. But it is not thus the God of love deals with his creatures. All those whom he determines upon saving, he appoints to salvation; I Thess. 5: 9. for all whom he appoints (to salvation, Christ becomes the author of salvation, Heb. 5: 9.; and all for whom he became the author of salvation, have it

wrought in their souls by the Spirit of promise according to God's good pleasure, Phil. 2: 13. As God thus deals with his people he never offers salvation to them, but gives and effects it; and all whom he passed by when he chose his own in Christ before time, were passed by when he saved his own in the fullness of time, and are passed by when he calls his own at the set time; so that God never makes any offer to them. If then God loves some and hates others ; and if he gives to whom, and effects salvation in whom he will, but does not offer it to any, that gospel which says he loves all and hates none, and that leaves it with the creature to work salvation in himself, is not the gospel of Christ. An offered gospel does so, therefore an offered gospel is contrary to God's Word and Will.

An offered gospel robs Christ of his pre-eminence. The apostle says, he hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour. But nowhere do we read of his offering himself to the creature, yet they who offer the gospel offer Christ to the creature, he being its fullness: so that gospel offers, make Christ lower than man. For Christ could not have been an offering to God, had he not been lower than God, which he was, being made of a woman: he could not have rendered his manhood a sweet-smelling savour to God, or a savour of rest for God, as the margin renders Gen. 8: 21. had he not been equal to God, which he was, for by him all things consist: and he could not have offered himself, had there not been an inseparable union between his Godhead and his Manhood. Thus we see his Eternal Godhead the altar, his Spotless Manhood the sacrifice, and his Complex Person the priest. But to maintain that he offers himself by his ministers to the creature, is making the creature appear equal to the Creator, and degrading the blessed Jesus to be nothing at the option of sinful man. But the gospel, which is of God, declares that in all things Christ is to have the pre-eminence. If, then, Christ cannot be offered to the creature, without giving the creature a pre-eminence above Christ, and if the true gospel says Christ is to have this pre-

eminence, then that gospel which gives the creature pre-eminence robs Christ of his An offered gospel does so, Therefore an offered gospel is contrary to God's Word and Will.

An offered gospel robs Christ of his kingly dignity. He is said to be a priest upon his throne. So that all whom he redeems by his blood, he reigns over by his spirit. He has not therefore, to ask a sinner Will you have me? Will you receive me?

But comes, and with a sov'reign sway,

Drives darkness, death, and hell away ;

Takes up his dwelling in the heart,

And bids each enemy depart.

They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before him, Psalm 72: 9. His church he will allure and bring into the wilderness, and speak comfortably or friendly to her heart, Hosea 1: 14. so that she shall own his authority, seek his salvation, receive his righteousness, rejoice in his grace : and his enemies shall lick the dust, shall contribute, under his overruling arm, to spread his fame, and minister to the well being of his people.

If, then, Christ reigns that his people may by himself be made willing to receive his salvation, and that his enemies shall lick the dust; to offer it to the former, is representing him as only having the name, while destitute of the authority of a king; and to offer it to the latter, is representing him as having the appearance but not the power of a king. Whereas, God says, I have set my king (not under or near, but) upon my holy hill of Zion, Psalm 2: 6. and where the word of a king is, there is power, Eccles. 5: 4. then Christ has both **AUTHORITY AND POWER** ; therefore that gospel which deprives him of both robs him of his kingly dignity.

An offered gospel does so; therefore an offered gospel is contrary to God's Word and Will.

An offered gospel supposes God to hold out a false standard. The gospel is set forth in the Scriptures as a standard, Isaiah 49: 22. to attract, to lead, to confirm, and to distinguish the people of God from the world. But the advocates of an offered gospel represent God as having put the whole world of Adam's race in an ATTITUDE of reconciliation, and thus giving them all a CHANCE of heaven. But either God has reconciled the whole of Adam's race unto himself, or he has not. If he has, then they do not stand in an ATTITUDE of reconciliation, but are REALLY reconciled. If he has not, then offering it to them. is deceiving them with an appearance that God is desirous of saving them when he is not, The Lord has not, however, left us to grope for the wall like the blind, upon this point; for he has said, by the apostle Paul, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, 2 Cor. 5: 19. Then it is a thing done; not to be done.. But for whom? Paul says the world. What world? Not the whole world of Adam's race, because this reconciliation is by Christ Jesus, ver. 18. and he does not say, he gave himself for all Adam's race, but he loved the church and gave himself for it. It includes the same persons that Christ prays for when he says, I pray not for the world, but for those whom thou hast given me; for they are thine, and all mine are thine,, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them. Here we find those whom Christ does not pray for, and in whom he is not glorified, are called the world. And all these belong to the devil. Then why may not Christ's people, given to him by the Father, for whom he prayed, and in whom he will be glorified, be called the world? They, with equal propriety, are denominated the world and are the persons God hath reconciled unto himself in Christ. If, then, God has reconciled a part of the human race unto himself, and if he has not reconciled all the human race unto himself, then that gospel which represents him as having put the whole world in an attitude of reconciliation, is a false standard. And an offered gospel does

so. Therefore an offered gospel is contrary to God's Word and Will.

To offer the gospel pleases a self-righteous Pharisee, because he thinks himself so wise as to have made choice of it by his own skill. It pleases a profane sinner, because he thinks he can accept it when he pleases. But it pains the heart of a saint, because it exalts the Lord Jesus so little, and flatters the creature so much. To offer the gospel pleases the devil, because he knows while human nature is fed with the thought of having much work in its own bands, man will never seek the work of God.

To offer the gospel is to act contrary to the practice of the apostles. Concerning their mode of obeying Christ's command, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature ; and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, we read that they declared the testimony of Men and brethren, what shall we do ? And God, 1 Cor. 2: 1. opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered, Acts 17: 3. Affirming these things, Titus 3: 8. speaking, Acts 14: 3. teaching, Acts 18: 11. persuading, Acts 19: 8. and publishing the word of the Lord, Acts 13: 49. but nowhere do we read of their offering the word of the Lord. Neither did they give exhortations to unregenerate men to do spiritual acts, such as to receive the word, to believe the word, or to hope in the word.

The advocates of an offered gospel sometimes produce the following portions to establish their theory: Acts 2: 38., Acts 3: 19., the parable of the supper, recorded in Matthew 22. and Luke 14: 2 Cor. 5: 20., Mark 1: 14, 15., Prov. 1: 24., and Acts. 8: 22.

We will, therefore, examine each of these texts, and I humbly conceive we shall not find any encouragement for an offer system.

Acts 2: 38. Then Peter said unto them, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. By reading

from the 14th verse to the 40th inclusive, the reader will perceive that the apostle, having preached the necessity and effects of God the Holy Ghost's work, then God the Father's foreknowledge and determinate counsel, and lastly God the Son's complete salvation, Jehovah the Spirit honors his free grace sermon, in which he had not made a single offer, by awakening many of the hearers, for we read, When they heard this they were pricked in their hearts, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? And then, (not before they were pricked in their heart,) Peter said unto them, repent and be baptized every one of you he could not baptize them until he clearly saw they possessed the grace of repentance, the inseparable accompaniment of faith. Then he adds, the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are afar off, (not to as many as have the gospel offered them, nor as many as ministers shall call, but) even as many as the Lord our God shall call. Here then is no offer, no proffer, and no spiritual exhortation to unregenerate men.

Acts 3: 19. Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. This verse contains within itself a refutation of an offer system; because it speaks of repentance when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord. Whatever may be the allusion of the apostle, at the time he made use of this language, to the after calamities of the Jews, I can not think that the apostle here meant that true repentance or conversion was in their own hands; for they are both the gift of God. Nor can I understand the apostle in any other way than as if he had said, through ignorance ye put Christ to death, but when this vail, 2 Cor. 3: 15. shall be removed from your hearts by the awakening and illuminating power of God, ye will believe in Christ crucified, and repent of what you have done antecedent, concomitant, and subsequent to his death. The two following are parallel passages, Phil. 2: 11, 13., and Gal. 2: 20. In the former the apostle says, work out your own Salvation, with fear and trembling; for it is God that

worketh in you both to will and to do of his own good pleasure. Here the apostle does not speak of working out salvation when it was not worked in, neither does he mean that the Philippians should work at salvation that it might be worked in ; but he is exhorting living believers, who have, by a given faith, inwardly appropriated the righteousness of Christ, taking it as their own, and have the Holy Ghost dwelling in them, to bring forth the effects of righteousness, and the fruits of the Spirit, namely, love to his word, joy in his salvation, peace with God and conscience, long-suffering for the truth amidst persecution, gentleness to fellow believers, goodness in struggling with the carnality and corruption of old nature, resisting the devil and living above the world, faith in the doctrines of the gospel, meekness in enduring all reproaches for Christ's name sake, and temperance in all things, so as not to be carried away with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men, Gal 6: 22, 23. And in the latter the apostle says, I live. This, strictly speaking, no man can say while in the flesh; for self is nothing but a body of death, Rom. 7: 24., therefore Paul corrects himself, and says, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. Yes, this is gospel language, dear reader, and every true born child of God can adopt it as his own.

Acts 13: 38-40. Be it known unto you, therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached (not offered, mark,) unto you the forgiveness of sins. And by him all that believe are (vitally) justified from all things from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. Beware, therefore, lest that come upon you which is spoken of in the prophets; behold, ye despisers, and wonder and perish: for I work a work in your days, a work which ye shall in nowise believe, though a man declare it unto you. Here the apostle makes no offer, but gives great encouragement to believers, and a most awful warning to others : for who can read these verses without seeing eternal election, and reprobation, written as with a sunbeam. The latter doctrine is contained in the words ye shall in nowise believe. It was such uncompromising

preaching as this, which having neither offers nor proffers, proved a savour of death unto death to some, and a savour of life unto life to others, 2 Cor. 2: 15, 16.

The parable recorded Matthew 22 and Luke 14 is often referred to for the purpose of establishing the theory of gospel offers.

I think the primary design of the parable might be to set forth, first, the speedy destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans; secondly, the dispersion of the Jews among all nations; and thirdly, the call of the Gentiles. He sent forth his armies; the Roman soldiers destroyed those murderers; scattered the Jews over the whole world; burned up their city; totally overthrew Jerusalem. He sent his servants into the highways, streets, and lanes, sent his apostles and subsequent preachers of the gospel into every nation, language, people, and tongue; compel them to come in, set forth the richness and abundance of the feast God has made upon his holy mountain; and the word shall prove, under God the Holy Ghost, sufficient in itself to make them partake. The spiritual meaning of the parable I consider to be as follows : A certain man, the God-man, Glory-man, Redeeming man, Christ Jesus, made a great supper, for his wife the church ; upon electing, uniting, sanctifying, redeeming, justifying, regenerating, and glorifying love ; and sent his servants, the preachers of the everlasting gospel, at supper time, at suited seasons, to say unto them that were bidden, to all within hearing of the preacher's voice, come, come listen to what the gospel says, for all things are now ready ; the gospel speaks of a salvation quite finished, a righteousness that needs no creature-merit, a perfect work that requires no additions, the all, with one consent, began to make excuse, there are various excuses for hating the gospel of God's grace; but only one consent, namely, old nature. So that servant came and shower his Lord these things, a gospel minister mourns before the Lord while he beholds a free grace salvation slighted. Then the master of the house being angry, God is angry with the wicked every day, said

to his servant, go into the streets of regenerating grace, and into the lanes of conviction for sin, and bring in hither the poor," who find they have nothing of their own to bring before God for acceptance, and the maimed, on whose conscience sin has been laid as an heavy burden, and the halt, who are at a stand, eagerly enquiring the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, and the blind, who cannot clearly see a free grace salvation, and have not yet discovered interest in atoning blood and justifying righteousness. And the servant said, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. All whom thou hast owned, and blessed our message to, seek thee according to thy word, and yet the number of thine elect is not accomplished. And the Lord said unto the servant, go out into the highways of predestinating mercy, redeeming power, and sovereign love; as well as into the field of creature-nothingness, where, under the hedges of electing grace and quickening strength, you will find more sinners than heretofore, who have a right to the supper, and by my Spirit's constraining power, compel them to come in that my house may be filled; that my counsels of old may be seen as full of faithfulness and truth ; that my purposes may be known as ending in my glory; that my arm may be felt delivering my people ; and that my church may be a glorious body, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. In this parable not one word can I find to establish an offer system, but an abundance to prove, first, the everlasting distinction between the seed of Christ and the seed of the serpent. Mark, the serpent's seed are, bidden, to listen to the gospel message. Why are they so bidden, seeing they never did and never will have any saving interest in the contents of the message? Because this gospel comes from their Creator, and they are bound, as creatures, to listen to it, even though they have no part nor lot therein. Christ says, Preach the gospel to every creature: not that every creature will be saved, nor that God desires to save every creature, but it is a message from the Ever blessed God, and all his intelligent creatures in heaven, on earth, and under the earth, shall sooner or later hear it. For when angels, men, and devils, shall be

assembled at the judgment day, the gospel will be preached in - these words, I Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And if a sinner never heard the gospel before, he will then ; though if not interested in it before, he will not be then ; if he did not love it before, he will not then ; and if he murmured at it when he heard a mere man preach it, and died without a saving interest in it, he will murmur when he hears the Son of God preach it in all the glory of Deity, the splendor of Royalty, the Majesty of dominion, and the solemnity of a Judge.

Secondly, to prove God is not disappointed when man slights his truth, for many be called, but few chosen. Many are called by ministers, many are called by their parents, many are called by their neighbors and acquaintance, many are called by churches, many are called by ordinances, are baptized in the name of each person of the glorious Trinity, and sit down, eat, and drink in Christ's presence, whom he never chose as his sheep, whom the Father never chose as his children, whom the Spirit never chose as his temples, and who never spiritually chose God.

And lastly, that effectual calling does not depend upon the creature's skill and zeal in preaching, nor upon the creature's pliability and readiness in hearing, for not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.

2 Cor. 5: 20, Now then we are ambassadors for Christ as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. These words were addressed to persons whom the apostle terms brethren, because they are the persons, who, in his first epistle, he says, are called to be saints, and who had the testimony of Christ confirmed in them: and consequently, were persons who spiritually understood what reconciliation in their own soul's experience meant. Therefore, this is not an exhortation to unregenerate persons, but to believers, who are daily contracting

guilt upon their consciences, by which they often get into a mist of doubts and fears; they doubt their interest in the forgiveness of God, and fear to approach his throne. The Corinthian church, as a body, had been or were in this state when the apostle Paul wrote to them: they had been tolerating drunkenness and adultery among their members, by which they had brought a burden upon their consciences, and distress into their minds. To such burdened and soul-dejected believers, he holds out the encouraging truth; God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself. He was in Christ, and there he beheld his people from everlasting, reconciling them unto himself, notwithstanding the sight he had of all their wanderings, sins, and inconsistencies. And as if the apostle said, (dwelling with the most ecstatic pleasure upon the precious truth of reconciliation in Christ) ; he has done it, brethren, and never will undo it, and he has done it in Christ, where there is nothing but perfection ; he has done according to his own sovereign pleasure, and he declares, I change not, therefore, once reconciled ever reconciled; for he hath put upon him the iniquity of us all, and never will impute it to us again ; and he hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation: sent us forth to preach this part of his gospel as well as the rest we, therefore, as ambassadors for Christ, are commissioned with these heavenly tidings; and we must say, you are the persons interested in this great blessing, because, by the fruits you have brought forth in sorrowing after a godly sort, 7: 11. we know ye are new creatures in Christ Jesus, 5: 17. Therefore we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God, that is, banish your doubts and fears, and quiet your souls with the sweet consideration that Christ was made sin for you, that you might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Mark 1: 14, 15. Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel, An advocate of an offered gospel, to whom I once said, I do not find any warrant in God's

word to exhort unregenerate sinners to believe it replied, I should suppose you would require no stronger warrant than the example of Christ, of whom it is said, now, after John was, put in prison, Jesus came, &c. &c. I really supposed the moment I read his reply, that he was a Socinian,*

** Most probably this page may meet the eye of the learned gentleman to whom I refer : and if so, I hope he will dismiss from his mind any idea that either in my private letter or in this place, I intend offering him the slightest insult : he possesses talents which I both admire and respect ; and literary acquirements, which, if wholly engaged in unfolding the sovereignty, certainty, invincibility, and fullness of grace, reigning through the person of our excellent Immanuel, would make me esteem it a distinguishing honor to sit at his feet. But while he points me to Mark 1. 14, 15. to establish the tenet of universal exhortation to spiritual exercises, I must take the liberty of informing him, I think he overlooks Christ's Godhead, and hope God has taught me, upon this point, a little better than to tell dead men to do living actions.*

for it savours uncommonly of that heresy. Christ could say, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes; but I do not remember that I have any authority to adopt the same language, and thank God for reprobating men, though Christ gives all his true disciples authority to thank for personal election, for, says he, rejoice, because your names are written in heaven. Christ said repent, and he who taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes, Mark 1: 22. whose word was with power, Luke 4: 32. did not speak in vain Simon and Andrew followed him when he called them; James and John went after him when he called them; and all his hearers repented when his almighty power wrought repentance in their souls. Christ said to the stormy ocean, be still, and immediately there was a calm; but where is the minister to whom Christ has given authority thus to act? He could

with a touch heal the lepers, with a word raise the dead, and when he pleased cast out devils: but he has given no authority to his ministers, since the primitive age of the church, to go and do likewise.

His word is sovereign, rich,

Invincible, and free ;

His very touch is life,

And at his word

All nature sinks or rises.

But to this it has been said, by the aforementioned Advocate, just as well may I argue that you and I are not to resist the temptations of the devil, because we have not the divine nature of Christ: these two ideas are parallel to each other.

In answer, I would observe, to resist the devil we are commanded, I Peter 5: 9. but to do divine acts we are not commanded, therefore these two ideas are not parallel. But though we are commanded to resist the devil, let my reader remember, we cannot do this as Christ did. The complexity of the Redeemer's person is very conspicuous, both when he was tempted in the wilderness and when Peter rebuked him. - In the former instance we behold him answer as man, it is written, it is written: and when he had gone through all the temptations to which his people are exposed, namely, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, he said, get thee hence, Satan. And, in the latter instance, after Jesus showed to his disciples the sufferings through which he must pass, Peter took him and began to rebuke him, saying, this be far

from thee, Lord : this shall not be unto thee. But he turned and said unto Peter; get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me. Here we see his omniscience discovering the devil in Peter, and his omnipotence in silencing the Arch fiend; but his manhood is very evidently engaged in sympathizing with Peter, for though Christ rebuked Satan in him,. Peter is not reprov'd at all. If then the complexity of Christ is so conspicuous in his resistance to Satan, you and I, reader, cannot resist him exactly as he did ; but by virtue of union to his person, we shall derive strength, whereby we may resist him in the hour of trial, if so be we are upon our watch tower. Therefore the complexity of Christ is a sufficient reason why he addressed men dead in sin in such Language as is to be found in Mark 1: 15. And I cannot conceive that any man is warranted by Christ's commission, go ye and preach the gospel to every creature," to offer it to any, nor to exhort natural men to receive it in a spiritual way.

But we will now proceed to Proverbs 1: 24. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my, reproof, &c. Here it is thought by some, Christ is described as offering his salvation to men ; but, because they will not accept of it, he condemns them at the last great day: but if we read from verse 10. we shall, I think, discover that there is no gospel offer made in this portion of God's word; and that the allusion is to a period before the great day of God's wrath comes. Let us, then, go through the whole, from verse 10. inclusive.

My Son, chosen, adopted, and loved in Christ, .if sinners entice thee, either by false doctrine or corrupt practices, consent thou not. If they say, come with us, come to our system, come to our religion, join in with us as members of the same society, let us lay wait for blood, by watching for the falls and blunders of God's saints; let us lurk privily for the innocent without cause; let us reproach the lovers of free grace as Antinomians, and so falsely

accuse their good conversation in Christ; let us swallow them tip alive as the grave, and whole as A hose that go down to the pit; let us do them all the evil we can ; we shall find all precious substance, we shall fill our houses with spoil, we shall gain a good name among most professors, and a large circle of friends among the respectable. Cast in thy lot among us, let us all have one purse, let us drop all differences in sentiment, and have as much of worldly dealings with each other as possible. My son, chosen to form a part of Jehovah's portion, walk not thou in the way with them, not only do not become one of them, but shun even the appearance of evil ; refrain thy foot from their path; do not court their company, nor seek their good word, for their feet run to evil ; however pleasing and attracting may be their external appearance, they are earnestly pursuing the path that will lead to hell; and make haste to shed blood, avail themselves of every opportunity of cruelly persecuting God's saints. Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird, or as the margin renders it, surely in vain the net is spread in the eyes of everything that hath a wing. In vain do they lay snares for those of my people, who have discernment enough to see through them, and strength to resist them. And they lay wait for their own blood: while they are contriving to injure the people of God, they are secretly bringing evil upon themselves; they thus lurk privily for their own lives. So are the ways of every one who is greedy of gain; such are the ways, plots, and schemes of men to whom gain is godliness, and who will sacrifice principle or truth in order to obtain some worldly ends, which taketh away the life of the owners thereof: absorbed with the world, spiritual life is not known by them.

Wisdom crieth without, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the wisdom of God in a mystery, crieth or unfolds himself in the preaching of the everlasting gospel. The word crieth, carries the idea of proclaiming, in the manner of an herald, the will of the king: not of offering the will of the king. Precisely so, gospel ministers go forth, preaching the gospel whenever and wherever the Lord opens

a way or door by which they can preach. She uttereth her voice in the streets, wherever people are found who will listen to it; she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the appointed places for assembling, in the opening of the gates, in every institution or ordinance of the gospel; in the city, among the regenerated, called, converted, and believing people of God, who have been, or who are, persecuted as before noticed; she uttered her words, saying, how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? How long, ye upright ones, who are regularly sitting under the ministry of my word, will ye be dreading the adversary, and fearing every day because of the fury of the oppressor; and the scorers delight in their scorning? And ye who are persecuting my people, how long will ye pursue this evil? Turn you, at my reproof. Turn, my people, from your doubts, and fears, according to my word: rely upon my arm for strength, nor fear the enemy; but I know your weakness, and how incapable you are in yourselves of obeying my commands; therefore I will pour out my spirit unto you, and thus work in you to will and to do of my good pleasure. And, ye scorers, turn from persecuting and reproaching my people, for, God is jealous and the Lord revengeth; they possess the power of divine things in their souls, but you do not. I will defend them, and their enemies shall not go unpunished. In order, therefore, that you may know my pleasure, I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known to you, by the preaching of the gospel, the mind of my Spirit concerning the well-being of my people, and the confusion that shall seize their foes. And then, we must consider the judgments of God, overtaking the foes of his people either in providence, by disappointments and losses, or by a stinging guilty conscience, or in pains of body, the same as in the cases of Cain who slew his brother, Nebuchadnezzar King of Babylon, the men who cast Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, into the furnace, Daniel's enemies, Saul King of Israel, Herod who was eaten of worms, and the Jews engaged in the crucifixion of Christ, who lost their city and temple as the consequence. All this I say must be considered as implied, then the words which follow will come in Because I

have called you to desist from injuring my people, and ye refused, I have stretched out my hand to shelter my children, and no man regarded, none changed from his cruelty to them. But ye have set at nought all my counsel concerning my delight in them, and not in you, and would none of my reproof for their protection: I also will laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh. When your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind, when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Here then I find nothing to establish an offer system, but much that goes against it.

The last portion we have to notice is, Acts 8: 22. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of thy heart may be forgiven thee. This has been thought a very conclusive proof, that spiritual exhortations to unregenerate men, and offers of the gospel, are scriptural. But Peter told Simon Magus, at the time he gave the exhortation, that he had neither part nor lot in the matter, and that he was in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; therefore I do not think the apostle alluded to spiritual but natural repentance, anticipating the judgment of God to fall upon Simon Magus, for the particular sin of offering money for the gift of the Holy Ghost. Peter does not tell him to repent of his sins, but repent of this thy wickedness. Natural repentance is referred to in Judges 2: 6. where it reads, the children of Israel repented them for Benjamin their brother, and said, there is one tribe cut off from Israel this day. They had not a spiritual matter to concern them, but that which was wholly natural, therefore their repentance was natural. And Solomon refers to the same sort of repentance, when he says, If they (the children of Israel) shall bethink themselves, in the land whither they are carried captives, and repent, and make supplication unto thee, in the land of them that carried them captives, saying, we have sinned and done perversely, we have committed wickedness, and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, in the land of their enemies which led them away captive, and pray unto thee toward

this land which thou gavest unto their fathers, the city which thou hast chosen, and the house which I have built for thy name : then hear thou their prayer, and their supplication, in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause, 1 Kings 47, 48, 49. All this repentance, supplication, and prayer, which Solomon anticipated Israel addressing to God, must be natural;*

** It may be objected that Solomon must have his eye upon spiritual repentance, for he speaks of those who pray to the Lord, as knowing every man the plague of his own heart. But when Solomon prays for the Lord to listen to those who shall know every man the plague of his own heart, it is that the praying Israelites referred to might fear the Lord. And when he prays the Lord to listen to the national supplication of Israel, it is that the Lord should maintain their cause. So that the objects being different, the supplications referred to are of two sorts, the one national and the therefore natural, the other individual and therefore spiritual,*

for he supposes them looking towards the land of Canaan, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple he had built, while in the land of their enemies. Whereas, to be spiritual in our repentance, we must be looking to Christ the land of promise, where the majestic mountains of divine attributes, the fertile valleys of sorrow, sufferings, and death, the flowing rivers of mercy, grace, and love, the wide-spreading firmament of an everlasting covenant, and the wholesome atmosphere of gospel liberty, are beheld in all their order, suitability, virtue, preciousness, and glory. We must be looking at the vision of peace through the blood of the cross. And our attention must be fixed upon the chief corner stone which infinite wisdom contrived, and almighty skill fixed, in the counsels of heaven, for the resting place of all the precious stones of that mystical temple, which forms the everlasting dwelling place of Jehovah. Nineveh, as I have before noticed, naturally repented, and Nineveh was naturally saved; and so natural repentance God has required; and has been practiced; where no spiritual act has been

commanded, nor one spiritual desire after God existed. Therefore Peter's exhortation to Simon Magus being wholly natural, is no proof that spiritual exhortations to unregenerate men are scriptural.

And now, reader, I think you must, if taught of God, see that an offered gospel is contrary to God's word and will; and should your eyes be open to clearly discover the unscriptural nature of an offered gospel, what a mercy it will be if you are not taken with the delusion. An offer system is Satan's snare to entrap unwary souls, either by lulling them to sleep by a supposed strength of their own, or by frightening the lovers of grace: it is Satan's provender, with which he puffs up the pride of the formalist and blind guide. Beware of this wile of Satan, and be not weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not, Gal, 6: 9. And do you ask me what it is to be well doing? I answer, it is to be resting all your hopes of heaven upon the Mediatorial and Meritorious work of the dear Redeemer; to be resting all your strength upon the Covenant faithfulness of the Holy Ghost; to be looking out for the light of God's countenance; to be standing still to see God's salvation; to be searching the word to discover the land-marks of Canaan ; to be often alone, for Jacob's name was changed when he was alone ; to be brought to lick the dust at Christ's feet; and to be watching the way the Lord has led you : and be not started at the little word if, for that is not a conditional, but a delineating if. It is something like a post on the road, telling you which is the way, and if there were no such directing post, it would not prove you were out of the road: then remember the words, if we faint not, mean, our not giving up the pursuit of a free grace salvation proves we are saved faint you may feel, but so faint as to give up all your faith, all your hope, all your love, and all your desires after Christ, you cannot if born from above, because you are born not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever, I Peter 1: 23. then be not weary in well doing.