

Yea, the Scriptures declare "the way of man is not in himself," Jer. x. 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. xvi. 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. xxi. 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. iv. 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 God's Word and Will.

An offered gospel contradicts itself. What is the meaning of gospel ? Glad tidings. What are these tidings ? Pardon. Justification, Sanc-

tification, Redemption, and Glory. For whom are these blessings? For all who believe Acts xvi. 31. Who are they that will believe. As many as are ordained to eternal life, Acts xiii. 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; independant of creature merit—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 own 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 honours of my law as discovered in his death, and with the glory of my designs as exhibited in 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 travelling

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 hand," 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 hill." 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 hath 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 li. 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, "he 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 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," 1 Cor. xiv. 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 lxi. 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 vii. 11. He knew that it is his work "to turn the wicked into hell, and all the nations that forget him," Psalm ix. 17. He

knew that it is his work "to punish some with everlasting destruction from his presence," 2 Thess. i. 9. He knew that it is his work to appoint some to "stumble at the word, being disobedient," 1 Peter ii. 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 liv. 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 *war*, 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;" 1 Thess. v. 9. for all whom he appoints to salvation, Christ becomes the author of salvation, Heb. v. 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. ii. 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 fulness 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 fulness : 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. viii. 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. Then *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 lxxii. 9. His church he "will allure and bring into the wilderness, and speak comfortably or friendly to her heart," Hosea i. 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 ii. 6., and "where the word of a king is, there is *power*," Eccles. v. 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 xlix. 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. v. 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 hands, 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;" we read that they "declared the testimony of

God," 1 Cor. ii. 1. "opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered," Acts xvii. 3. "Affirming these things," Titus iii. 8. "speaking," Acts xiv. 3. "teaching," Acts xviii. 11. "persuading," Acts xix. 8. and "publishing the word of the Lord," Acts xiii. 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 ii. 38., Acts iii. 19., the parable of the supper, recorded in Matthew xxii. and Luke xiv., 2 Cor. v. 20., Mark i. 14, 15., Prov. i. 24., and Acts. viii. 22.

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

Acts ii. 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 honours 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 iii. 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 cannot 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. iii. 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. ii. 11, 13., and Gal. ii. 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 Philip-pians 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 vi. 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. vii. 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 xiii. 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 (vitaly) 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. ii. 15, 16.

The parable recorded Matthew xxii. and Luke xiv. 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, "they 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 showed 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, "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 splendour 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 neighbours 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. v. 20. "Now then we are ambassadors