

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
ELECTION

W. J. Berry – 1973

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Tom Adams

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PREFACE

There have been many shifts in the sands of theological Issues and terminology since the days of Fuller, Rushton, and Joseph Hussey, but the basic Issues remain the same.

In his Defense of Particular Redemption, William Rushton expressed the truth, that to be clear on the doctrine of election and the atonement, is more important than preaching the gospel; that is, we must first understand the foundation principles of the good news; then may follow the proper manner of presenting that good news.

The erroneous and unscriptural teaching of a universal atonement by the sacrifice of Christ, inevitably leads to the equally erroneous proclamation of a universal offer of salvation. The vital issue, then, still remains, namely, Did Christ make atonement for the sins of the human race? Is the good news or gospel, to be preached as a means to secure eternally the subjects of that universal atonement? Was the utility or purpose of the gospel to, “save” all the lost, or to “call out” or convert only the redeemed elect?

The so-called free-offer system was another by-product of the doctrine of universal atonement. It was the manner of preaching adapted by those men who not only believed that Christ died to save all men, but also that men by nature, possess a free-will ability whereby they may “accept or reject” the proposed “offer” of the good news.

The burden of Mr. Hussey’s arguments is primarily to refute the unscriptural and Christ-dishonoring system of “free offers” indiscriminately addressed to all alike. It is truly a blasphemous presentation of Christ’s “finished” redemption, offered to all who will make it effectual by their acceptance of the proposed offer! The reader will note that Mr. Hussey’s arguments against free-offers of grace, are well under girded with the scriptures of truth, especially those touching depravity of the human will, election, effectual calling, and the work of the Holy Spirit in regeneration or the new birth. The author pauses to ask this pointed question: “Therefore why do you not look to bring the form of preaching to God’s work, than to bring down the power of God’s work to your form of preaching?”

We must face the fact that now in our times, nearly all of “Christendom” is no longer concerned with the foundation doctrine of election and particular redemption. The chief concern is for the best operational “methods” to bring the most members into their system. The chief motive in the religious world is not to honor and exalt Christ and His grace, but rather to advance a religious organization, often called “Christian Evangelism.”

This old writing, will therefore be of interest to those only who still have some respect and concern for “the truth as it is in Jesus” and for “all the counsel of God.” It is to you, the following pages are again presented, for your confirmation and establishment in the truth. Having been written nearly three hundred years ago, you will find the style of expression somewhat different than now used. This, however, in many respects is refreshing and to the point. Once the reader gets the author’s trend of thought and expression, he will be well rewarded.

If it be God's will, may it please Him to use it "in stirring up some "pure minds" on this Important matter.

W. J. Berry, Sr.
Elon College, North Carolina, 1973

BIBLE DEFINITION OF "GOSPEL"

Like so many Bible terms, the word GOSPEL has been given various definitions contrary to its original and proper meaning.

The word has its origin "in Christ before the foundation of the world." This was contained in the "Promise" God made before the foundation of the world. (Tit. 1:2) The "gospel," the "good news" or "good tidings" is the declared fulfillment of that promise.

In Isaiah 61:1-3 is found the outstanding proclamation made by the Sum and Substance of the good tidings, Jesus Christ Himself: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon Me, because the Lord has anointed Me to preach good tidings to the meek, He has sent Me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn. To appoint to them that mourn

in Zion, to give to them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." The Redeemer repeated this same proclamation of Himself in the synagogue.

While this prophetic statement is often quoted, its full significance is rarely understood. In this one sweeping declaration, there is encouched--not the beginning of the gospel, not a part of its fulfillment, the grand total of what the Son of Man declared on the cross: "IT IS FINISHED"!

The Greek word "*evangelion*" is translated "gospel" in the King James Version. This word, together with its rendering of "good tidings," "glad tidings" and "preach the gospel" occurs some one hundred and eight times in the New Testament, none of which intimate anything less than "finished redemption" in Christ.

In no instance does the word convey any thought of a mere "free-offer of grace."

When Jesus stood and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink," He no more invited the thirsty, than He Invited the light when He said, Let there be light. In the first place there is not a soul on the earth that does or can thirst for the living waters which flow from Him, until He quickens it, and makes it thirst, and when made to feel its thirst, and even when the tongue faileth for thirst, it can no more approach the living fountain than it can make a world, until Jesus applies, not the invitation, but the word, "Come unto Me." His words are spirit and they are life; and His sheep hear them, and they know His voice, and they follow Him; because they have no power or even disposition to resist their Shepherd's voice. The calling of the saints is nowhere in the scriptures denominated an invitation. He calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. If he only invited them they would have to get out themselves, or stay behind. But when he calls, the dead hear His voice, (not His invitation,) and they that hear shall live. How would it suit the condition of a poor, lost, helpless soul, one that feels his poverty, Inability and impotence, to read the word thus: The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead

shall be invited to live, and they who accept the invitation shall live. And when He inviteth forth His own sheep He goeth before them, provided they accept the invitation. It is perfectly in keeping with every feature of Arminianism for work mongers to talk of invitations of the gospel, because the very term implies the willing and the doing power to be in the creature. But it is neither in harmony with the doctrine of experience of the saints of God to so speak of His communications to them as to imply that He has yielded up the government to them; that He has hinged the effect and result of His communications on their will instead of His own will. It is derogatory to His character, it reflects on His wisdom, power, and grace.

– Gilbert Beebe, July 15, 1846

Extract of Mr. Hussey's EPISTLE TO THE READER

Having met with very gracious dealings from my (?), in carrying me through a large tract* formerly published, and in blessing the publication of it to many souls, whose savory testimonies, from their own experience of these things, do witness for me. And since there are but very few copies unsold, my heart has been again drawn forth to publish this work also.

This piece, therefore, so far as the Lord hath shown me, is written to set forth some part of the doctrine of the Gospel in a light clearer than either nature or human education can possibly do. To expose and beat down the empty notion of offers of grace, tenders and proposals of grace and Christ to sinners.

Doth this sound harsh in your ears? What makes it so? If you do not know, read the Treatise and then judge, whether the weight is to be laid upon the free grace of God in Christ to sinners; or upon offers, tenders, and proposals of grace to sinners. And you will see that the free grace of God in Christ is far more effectual than proposals, and perhaps far more glorious than ever you thought on.

But there are some among us who say they do not love controversy. It may be so; difficulties and unbelief in doctrines make them controversial. These, therefore, ought to be cleared. He that believes only, what was never controverted, believes, perhaps, in effect, little more than that the sun shines, or the rain falls; he is something of a naturalist and perhaps that is all. If he has taken up anything of religion, he took it upon outward trust, without any inward trial. What a man is convinced he sees, controversy ceases respecting that thing. Till your soul beholds a thing, you doubt whether it be true or false; as it becomes your faith, doubts will vanish. You live by it, and have done prating.

Debates are swallowed up when Gospel evidence comes. But still you say you do not love controversy! It is very hard to beat men off from hanging upon this string. Well, pray what is it you do love? Do you love the shop? Do you love to buy and sell? Take heed; that is all controversy: one thinks the article worth so much, another says it is worth so much; and here they raise a controversy. The buyer is sometimes controverting the price before he can be brought up to the seller's charge; and the seller is controverting it, and giving whole lengths of words, before he sells you one inch of matter, or can be brought down to the terms of his chapman.

Besides, what love have you for your estates? What value have you for your rights and property in this world? Are these never controverted? When they are called in question, and your rights invaded, do you defend your rights, and give fees to a lawyer, and stand a trial of the cause with your adversary, and that at a far greater charge than the price of such a book as this? Is not this controversy? You will go on nevertheless; saying, you are In the right, you will have a trial; you will not be duped. Yet how

suddenly does the name of a controversy run you off from looking into the things of God? how tamely do you give up your rights for fear of religious controversies? Put God's children's right to Christ, and the kingdom of heaven, upon trial, and how easily Satan and corruption run them off from discoveries of their right to the best things, though they have any interest in them. What think you of God's Book? Is there no controversy in that? Why do you buy a Bible with the book of Job in it? That book is a controversy between him and his three friends: and, perhaps, you have not skill enough to tell me which of them was in the right.

May it not be feared, that you who do not love controversy, love the world visibly more than you love the Lord Jesus Christ; for if you did not, it would be hard for you either to find a heart or a tongue to talk at this rate.

Let me conclude in a word. What is it that is not a controversy? Do you give one thing that is good, for any thing that is not so? How can you be against controversies, when God is for them, Christ is for them, and His Spirit is for them? The book of Job is a controversy between man and man. The whole Bible is a controversy between God and the shiner, Christ and Antichrist, the Spirit and the world: yea, it is all controversy between God and good men in their faults. Everything that strikes at a man's faults, as this Book does, is a controversy between God and sin.

Well, but some say the thing is tedious. We love short doings. But why is that? perhaps because you have no inheritance in these matters; or, at least, do not see it. Therefore the book is despised. It does not make out the title to some estate, house or lands; otherwise the length of the matter would be no objection, but a security to the title. Who ever found fault in purchasing an estate, house or land, and cared not to meddle with the estate, because the writings were a little tedious and puzzling; or because in the grand deed of settlement and conveyance there was so much naming of men? It comes to pass that men will not buy the truth: Why? because it is so bulky in leaves, so much naming of men, and so full of controversy, that it is too much for their narrow penny. Whereas they forget the bargain of the book is easy, since the whole estate mentioned in the writings is all free-hold, and given gratis to the children of God in the Covenant's everlasting Rolls! It is plain men trifle with their souls, but are in earnest with their bodies, and estates. Elaborate writings have been sanctified of God to the belief of the Gospel. The more our thoughts are kept close to these matters and to divine things, the more we see into them.

In the chapter which respects Inviting sinners to come to Christ, I have shown the phrase of coming to Christ was fitted to Him when He was once upon the earth. Nevertheless, men have applied it as in relation to Christ, since he ascended to heaven. I cannot say but heretofore I may have used the phrase, though sparingly. 1. When it was necessary I should be understood in it, as keeping close to another man's phrases. And 2. Where my work swelled into so great a bulk, that I had no room to discuss it. But here it comes in my direct way to state and expound the truth of the matter respecting these things.

Therefore I now leave all for perusal in your hands, reader, with the blessing of the Lord of Hosts, Who fills the hungry with good things, but the rich He sends empty away.

J. HUSSEY

Extract of Mr. Hussey's EPISTLE TO THE MINISTERS

Brethren,

Grace, mercy, and peace, be with you, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. My heart is stirred up to write a few things to you, of the truth as it is in Jesus; which truth, you are called by Him to hold forth to others. What cause have you to thank Christ Jesus our Lord in that He has counted you faithful, putting you into the ministry? Such of you who are poor and despised, count it all joy when you fall into divers temptations. Such of you who are learned, as to what men call learning, rejoice in this, that you have learned Christ: Christ is more learned than any, and so are they that learn of Him. Though He teaches not the arts and sciences in His ministers, yet you are ministers in better things, in things of a Gospel revelation.

How honorable a relation do you bear to the highest Lord and Potentate! what transcendent service is the service of the Gospel, in which you are called to labor! and, as ministers of Christ, I am persuaded, you are not without your ministerial trials.

The trials of the ministry are some of the greatest of trials. It is therefore a miracle that any stand: for my own part, I have sometimes been upon the brink of laying down all; nor could I find relief from teamed Annotators, or Doctors, of any denomination, though no sort of interpreters since the reformation have escaped my view. Alas! Sirs, what is Elijah's mantle without the Lord God of Elijah? or Elisha's staff upon the face of a dead child, without the spirit and power of Elisha?

As my ministry was to be of Christ, and not of myself, therefore His grace has been sufficient for me. When one temptation had blown over, another beat upon my soul. That was respecting my own insufficiency to keep off from the Arminianism of my natural mind, without which all Calvinism and Orthodoxy is but form and notion: I felt that the power of grace was necessary to possess and fill up, in the soul, all sound notions of it. Without this vital principle, all orthodoxy or dry doctrine is but a dead burden.

The occasion of this mischief was owing to my laboring to varnish my faith with human testimonies; and I did it not as some do, who think they come off well when they have quoted two or three authors; but I thought I came off poorly if I did not quote a whole string of the Fathers; such as the two Clements, Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Theophilus, Irenaeus, Tatian, Maximum, Tertullian, Hippolitus, Origen, Ammonius, Minutius Foelix, Novatian, Gregory, Cyprian, Victorinus, Arnobius, Iactantius, Eusebius, Athanasius, Didymus, Hilary, Titus Bostrensis, Cyril, Optatus, Ambrose, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Jerome, Epiphanius, Ruffinus, Chrysostom, Auz, and I do not know how many more.

Alas! upon search I found them deceivers, in comparison of the Scriptures themselves, like Job's summer brooks, that deceive the thirsty traveler. And, truly, brethren, having tried human testimonies as much as most of you, give me leave to say, it is a very pernicious practice, and only serves to bring down the wrath of God upon unsanctified pens.

If a man's argument lays in human wisdom, human testimonies may strengthen it. But the best of human testimonies are an ill medium to establish the truth of the Gospel by, because the Gospel is established upon divine revelation, independent of the testimony of man. The man who goes about to defend the faith of the Gospel or refute error, by the testimony of authors, would have been an active

instrument, in some of the ancient councils, made up of learned doctors, in which they put truth itself to the vote, and enacted canons of anathema against all that were otherwise minded.

The value of all such things vanished with me, when the Lord led me into an experimental knowledge of Himself, the everlasting love of the Father, and the operations of the Spirit of my own soul. This sweetly removed the fears of my insufficiency for the ministry, and rebuked the temptation which had held me from going on in the work of Christ; taught me to keep off from Arminianism, that too naturally runs through the labors of some. This also calmed the storm raised up my mind in departing from human testimonies, and helped me to wade through difficulties where no author had ferried over!

The fruit of my labors in the following piece, I therefore dedicate and present to you, hoping the Lord may use it to instruct, or strengthen you in His own work: if He does, you will bless God in Christ for His Word of Truth, which excels all human writings. Therefore covet earnestly the best gifts, and yet show I unto you a more excellent way; which, that you may obtain and receive, is the hope and prayer of,

Your brother in Christ,
And in the Lord's work,
JOSEPH HUSSEY

NOTES:

* What is called a "large tract" was a book of nearly 1,000 pages on "The Glory of Christ Unveiled" or "The Excellency of Christ Vindicated in His Person, Love, Righteousness, etc."

CHAPTER ONE

THE MATTER STATED AND THE PLEA EXAMINED

The method propounded, the matter stated and followed into the grand plea for offers, and here briefly examined and defeated.

The order of this writing will consist principally of three points. 1. Concerning offers of grace; 2. Concerning inviting sinners to come to Christ; and 3. Concerning exhorting sinners to come to Christ. And however I may mostly insist upon the first branch of these three already laid down, yet to rectify the mistaken notion about offers of grace, and to advance the true doctrine of free grace operations, working on the elect of God, I shall likewise add something briefly, belonging to the other two branches. To begin by laying down the method of handling the first, viz. the offers of grace and salvation.

I. To show how men state their offers of Christ, as to the name and the thing.

II. To disprove them, and overthrow their scheme, as anti-evangelical, and that by manifesting three principal points,

1. That to offer Christ to sinners is not to preach Christ to sinners;

2. That to propound such offer in the external means, is no means of the Spirit's working an internal ability in sinners to close savingly with the offer;

3. That to suggest an offer of Christ and a gift of Christ to be both one thing is a barefaced error.

III. To resolve the puzzling question, How then must we preach the gospel to sinners, if we do not propound an offer of salvation to them? In resolving which, proffers of grace, offers of Christ, tenders of salvation, etc. will be withstood and overthrown, as unscriptural and powerless forms of words.

IV. To reply to the misadapting many texts of Scripture that are commonly mistaken on this argument.

V. Lastly, to make a further reply to the more common and current pleas, used by weak men, for want of better arguments.

To show how they state the doctrine of the offer.

1. As to the name, men have stored it with a show of wisdom, and will-worship, as the apostle says, (Col. 2:23) in terms of their own procuring. For, the word offer is not to be found in Scripture in any other sense than to sacrifice. And to be sure, when these men offer Christ, they do not mean that they sacrifice him: no; they have another meaning in the term, as it relates to the preaching of the Gospel, though they thus express themselves. And therefore they speak sometimes of offers of grace; sometimes propounding the offer; sometimes proposals of the Gospel offer; sometimes tenders of the Gospel; sometimes tendering salvation. Blind and scriptureless forms! If men mean preaching the Gospel by these phrases, it is an intolerable assault upon the sacred text of both Testaments, to word it so perversely.

The Oracles of God have an elegant variety of expression, to set forth the preaching of Jesus Christ. As for example, it is called speaking, 1 Cor. 2:7, 13, speaking the word, Phil. 1:14, preaching, Acts 20:25,

preaching the gospel, Luke 30:1, preaching glad tidings, Isa. 61:1, preaching the kingdom of God, Acts 28:31, preaching the Gospel of the kingdom, Matt. 4:23, teaching, Rom. 12:7, Col. 1:28, teaching the word of God, Acts 18:11, teaching the things that concern the Lord Jesus Christ, Acts 28:31, showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, Luke 8:1, declaring glad tidings, Acts 13:32, showing by the Scriptures, Acts 18:28, bringing glad tidings of good things, Rom. 10: 15 and the like. But never once in all this variety of phrase, do the Scriptures call preaching the gospel by the names of offering, proffering, propounding or tendering grace, Christ, salvation and glad tidings to sinners.

How conceited must men be of their own wisdom, who, notwithstanding they have so little to say in behalf of these phrases, are resolved to keep them up. If no more could be said, it is enough to make poor humble souls reject such expressions; at least such of them who are sensible that these men's mouths are not filled with Gospel sweetness, or they would have discovered by the opening their mouths, that the Lord Christ had filled them. Now if men find as great a sweetness in phrases of human invention, and in defense of them, as they find in the Holy Ghost's language of the Bible, it is a sign they do not open their mouths wide, and that Christ does not fill them. There are scriptural expressions enough to fill a man's mouth, when he preaches the Gospel, so that he shall have no need to use phrases, into which the tongues of so many false preachers have been dipped.

2. They have distributed the meaning of their terms into different classes. By which it seems, they do not all speak with one mind, though they speak with one mouth; professing to glorify God and to save men by offers of Gospel grace, or by the proposals of the Gospel, or by the tenders of salvation made to them, in this their supposed way of preaching the Gospel. Some have looked upon these terms to be general redemption offers. And indeed men may easily see that without general offers of grace they preach consistent enough with general redemption doctrines, though without general redemption doctrines they cannot preach consistent with general offers of grace.

Moreover, what they call universal grace offers, or universal proposals, and tenders of grace to sinners, are the same things, while these general men strive to keep up a consistency in their notions of universal philanthropy towards every Individual soul of mankind.

Such persons are understood to be free-will offerers, who ascribe an indifference in the balance of the will, to poise its inclination equally towards accepting or rejecting the offers of grace. And as they admit a methodical offer of grace, necessary for conveying the grace of God, upon the supposition of a free balance of self-power, to determine and Incline the will to accept of God's salvation, they must then suppose a balance towards the grace admitted, so far as their supposed offers, or tenders of grace go to that soul who receives them.

Such free-willers and professors of grace, according to their own principles, are consistent enough with themselves. The great difficulty is, how to bring some men holding our principles to be consistent with themselves. Some have set off with conditional offers, with conditional proposals, and with conditional tenders. That is, you shall enjoy Heaven and salvation, if you will repent and believe, and perform sincere obedience to the conditions of a gospelized law. And thus the Neonomians interwove a coarse thread of Popery, out of which the terms of new law and conditions first arose, as I have observed, (by tracing the Popish writings extant through a long series of ages) as it runs through all the fine cloth they make up for Heaven, spun out of other men's bowels, such as donations, reformation, of manners, sincere obedience, etc. But how short is this of the fine linen, white and clean, and the white raiment, which is the imputed righteousness of God, to be put upon the unrighteous, and thereby made the righteousness of saints, as the Holy Spirit calls it, Rev. 19:8.

Another sort of men, who strictly seem to renounce all the three kinds, do yet stand up very resolutely to maintain a fourth sort of offers; which they would fain persuade us are free offers, effectual offers, obligatory offers; and all of them, to be sure, evangelical and ministerial grace offers. Whatever these may be, yet they have never once attempted to demonstrate what is the nature of an evangelical or ministerial offer, that is free and effectual in the hands of him that ministers the offers; except what partakes with the other three kinds, namely universal grace, free will, and conditional acceptance of the offer. Strange notions about Gospel-offers, professedly separate from the other three, and yet to keep up the very being of them by mingling with the others.

Besides, all the other three are called evangelical tenders as well as this, and under that denomination are, by one or another, made to be the ministerial offer.

For their sakes principally who fall into this evil, through inadvertence, I have been made willing to write this small Treatise.

As for a fourth sort of proposals and offers of grace to sinners, it is, without doubt, a non-entity in point of distinction from the other three. For, indeed, in setting the bias, whatever the pretence about principle and inclination may be, it is already fixed, that with all velocity the bowl runs to the Arminian side; and the truth is, it is impossible for fallen nature to keep against nature's bias in favor of free grace, notwithstanding you may bring in the brave sound of free offers, and grace offers, etc.

But still in a further stating of the matter it must be shown negatively, what men do not mean by these offers, and proposals of grace to sinners; and positively, what they do mean likewise by the same.

I. Negatively, to show what they do not mean by them.

1. By the offers of grace and offers of Christ to sinners, they do not mean that the doctrine of grace, of Christ, and of salvation ought to be preached to Jews and Pagans, if there were such in our assemblies.

For, this was the case of the apostle's auditories, Acts 2 and 2 Tim. 3:8, and of Stephen's auditory, Acts 7. In our days of universal profession, Jews or Pagans seldom attend in our assemblies to hear the doctrine of Christ preached. The object of our preaching therefore is another thing than it was in former times.

If such kind of people were now to attend in our assemblies, yet who, that has received the common doctrine of the Gospel, would dare say that the said doctrine of grace was not to be preached unto them, according to the precedent in which the apostles did it. Here then we all agree without dispute, in one and the same affirmative.

2. By offers of grace to sinners, these profferers of it are not satisfied to acknowledge they mean preaching the doctrines of imputed righteousness, justification without the deeds of the law to contemners and refusers of the said doctrines of grace, and doctrines of Christ. For here again, we do all agree, that the said doctrines are and ought to be preached to all despisers and neglecters, and ought to be preached to all men, though particular truths are rejected by them.

3. By offers of grace, proffers of Christ, or tenders of salvation, the tenderer thinks it not enough to mean that the mere doctrines of salvation in the letter to be held forth to the whole unregenerate part of his auditory. For none of us ever denied this particular.

II. Now positively, and more directly, to show how men do state their meaning touching offers of grace.

1. By offers of grace, tenders of Christ, and of salvation to sinners, they must mean by these terms, the grace itself, the salvation itself; that is to say, a true and saving interest in Christ, is by them made into an offer; so that by accepting your offers and improving the means of grace men may be saved. This is the thing which you offerers do mean by your preaching. But this continued error of the day, I do now oppose for the honor of the Lord the Spirit and His works, notwithstanding so many specious books have been written of the offers of grace; yea and must, through help obtained of the Lord, both oppose and disprove of them.

I know a work of this nature will be to the glory of free grace, not in show, but in substance; and will pull down the notions of men that walk in a vain show, by propounding their offers of the free grace of God, as they term it.

Here may be a discovery by the nature of the offer, propounded and laid before sinners, that it is not preaching the Gospel; much less is it Preaching the true, inner free grace of the Gospel that saves. For though the bulk of matter and method in a discourse may be propounded, with arguments brought to convince the rational judgment, by the outer face or letter of the Word, in doctrine and argument, yet it is but the exercise of common gifts unsanctified by the Holy Spirit. As to salvation in the hidden wisdom or power of the doctrine, as to the true saving grace of the Gospel, there can be no propounding of that. It is all laid transcendently out of their reach, in the upper streams of love, beyond proposals and tenders; so that it flows out of the heart of God alone, and is plenteously shed forth upon all the elect, in the gift of the Holy Spirit and His graces from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, under the preaching of the Gospel of glad tidings, without which effusion of grace, none ever did, none ever can partake of salvation.

2. By offers of grace, tenders and proffers of salvation, it is evident, men do thereby imply that free grace and full salvation is propounded, tendered, and offered to all sinners within the sound. Or why do they make the tender of salvation for acceptance to all that hear, but to imply thereby, that all who hear may be saved.

This they call preaching the Gospel; and this conduct too, in some who, declaring against general redemption, bring themselves in self-condemned. Therefore this idolatrous offer must be struck at, and opposed by the ark, till it fall down; for it cannot stand before the Gospel, in point of power and operation.

God the Spirit is sweetly displayed by the pure Gospel as the free workers of the operations in effectual grace; but mere offers shall tumble as Dagon before the ark; and be shamefully handled too, in being cut off to the very stumps.

By offers of grace, men urge that salvation itself, as well as the doctrine of salvation, tendered to all sinners in our assemblies Indiscriminately, is a work of the ministry: and if this be not done, that is, if we do not offer salvation to all within the sound of our doctrine, according to them, we do not take heed to fulfill our ministry, which we have received in the Lord.

And further, this omission by some is condemned in the ministers of Christ, as the tenth Antinomian error, namely, that if they preach or assert as follows, "That ministers of the Gospel ought not to offer salvation unto all those whom God calls them to preach; but that they should seriously invite men to improve the means of grace that they may be saved; assuring them, in the way of their ministerial duty, of the salvation of all such as believe in Christ; yet because some want ability to close with the offer, all shall not be saved." And then the antithesis or opposition to what they call the error, is this, "That

though men want ability to believe savingly, yet it is the duty of Gospel ministers to make the offer, and testify unto them, that whoever believes and repents shall be saved. And that it is the people's duty to make use of their natural faculties, with such external means and workings which the Spirit of God affords them, that they may believe, repent, and be saved." (Declaration of the Congregational Ministers in and about London, against Antinomian Errors," pp. 41, 42.)

Here is now the true state of the matter, faithfully represented on both sides. But are there none of the honest, zealous, and mistaken brethren who easily discern the feebleness of the plea? As if the all, or any of the all, who shall not be saved, could Improve the means of grace, that they may be saved! Was ever anything more weakly expressed among men, who glory in their profession of being congregational or orthodox?

And again, as if grace might be put off, with the bare offer in a proposition; for instance, that whosoever believes and repents shall be saved.

Do not our brethren see, that as here is their total plea for a grace offer, so here is a total exclusion of the efficacy of the grace offered?

Is not this a piece of robbery against the Holy Spirit, or, in effect, denying His effectual operations of grace, while they make an external show of the offer of grace?

Does not the plea confine the operations of the Holy Spirit to common and external workings? Wherein does your plea give Jehovah the Spirit His due honor in the internal and mighty workings of His grace on sinner's hearts. that sinners may believe, repent, and be saved? I therefore conclude that our brethren, looking upon their plea to a poor fortification for their offers of grace to sinners, will undertake to mend it.

Sinners are nowadays addressed as follows: "Christ has died for you. Salvation is all finished. All you have to do is come." A strange method, truly, of prophesying to the dead! "All finished," and yet something left for the sinner to do! "All finished," yet the redeemed left to do that very thing of which Jesus said, "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him"! Divorce Christ's dying words from their historic connection, and a theological chaos will be the sure result.

James M. Sangar

(From "The Redeemed: Who Are They?")

CHAPTER TWO

TO OFFER CHRIST TO SINNERS IS NOT TO PREACH CHRIST TO SINNERS

A disproof of offers, or a proof that offering the gospel, and offering salvation to sinners, is not preaching the gospel, nor preaching salvation unto sinners.

Do you look, Sirs, upon your free offers of grace, – as you call them – to be preaching the gospel? Yes, you will say, we look upon these to be both one and the same. That is, we look upon it, that though preaching of Christ to sinners is not offering of Christ to them, yet every free offer of Christ to sinners is preaching the salvation of Christ to them. Do you so? then I tell you that offers of salvation are things that fall far short of preaching the Gospel; and a thing that falls far shorter than preaching the salvation of the Gospel unto sinners. For observe, the power of the Gospel attends preaching the Gospel, and salvation attends the preaching of salvation. But neither the power of the Gospel, nor salvation, attend the offer as they attend the preaching of the Gospel.

But here I shall begin my disproof of their vain scheme, and enter upon an overthrow of their doctrine of the offer, as an anti-evangelical form of corrupting the Word of God; being the first thesis of three laid down about offers; and prove from God's Word that to propound the offer of salvation to sinners, as it is an unscriptural thing, so it is not preaching the salvation of the Gospel unto sinners.

1. I argue from the practice of the apostles. Their practice was to preach Christ, not to offer Him. The apostles preached the word of the Lord everywhere, in every city, and in every province, whither they came, (Acts 15:36) as well as at Thessalonica and Berea. (Acts 17:33) But they nowhere tendered or offered the salvation of that word. 2. From their ordination to the said practice. Paul was ordained a preacher, (1 Tim. 2:7, 2 Tim. 1:11) and not ordained a propounder of the offer. He was to keep to free preaching; and not to warp, as men do in our times, to a free proposal.

3. From instances of preachers. Noah was a preacher of righteousness. (2 Peter 2:5) The Holy Spirit does not say, Noah was a free propounder of righteousness; that is, a poor low, earthly thing, that would degenerate the preaching of the Gospel into nothing. Nothing of the true glory of the Gospel appears in it; therefore the Holy Spirit will not so much as give it a good name, or enroll it in His book. Paul likewise was a teacher of the Gentiles, (2 Tim. 1:11) not a tenderer of salvation to the Gentiles. For this latter custom comes by men's conversation with fleshly wisdom, and not by the grace of God. Solomon was an admirable ecclesiastic, or preacher, a preacher that was wise, (Ecc. 1:2) and a preacher that sought to find out acceptable words. (Ecc. 12:8) I the Preacher was king over Israel in Jerusalem. (Ecc. 1:12) Here he is altogether the preacher, and not once the propounder of an offer.

4. From the defect of the poor opinion about offers. One thing it lacks, and that is, text to prove that proffering and preacher are, in the sense of the Holy Spirit, the same thing. The coincidence supposed can never be maintained. The apostle was not careful to ask how they should offer, but how they should preach, except they were sent. (Rom. 10:14) Christ's person and doctrine may be both preached, whether in pretense, as sound, orthodox notion, or in truth, of power and experience, as the apostle says, (Phil. 1:18) yet Christ is preached, says he. But how Christ can be offered the Scriptures assists no man to make out; for there the Holy Spirit is silent.

5. From the flattery of offerers, undertaking to work persuasion; and from thence I argue the faithfulness of preaching. An offer entices a natural man to a conceit of self-ability, even though the tenderer should assure him he hath none. So that propounding the offer of Christ is a flattery. The offer of salvation must be with word, enticing to the ears of natural men. But on the other hand, preaching Christ is not done with enticing words of man's wisdom. If preaching carries not the cause by faithfulness, offers gain none of its ground by creature-flattery.

6. From the nature of an offer to the nature of preaching the Gospel. An offer in Latin is called oblatio, or bringing a thing, and laying it down before one, at some distance; and so, according to the grammatical sense of the word, offering is not preaching.

Offering consists in the doctrine or notion of salvation, in mere sound, being brought to a sinner's ears, and set down against him in so many words, which in all this the speaker falls short of preaching the Gospel, and so fails in his enterprise. The nature of an offer at most is distant; it is not a man's, unless he accept it. The tenderer indeed, may as we say alloquy, in appearance, speak home to us: but, alas! at the bottom it is no such thing, because the tender doth not come home, it not being accepted.

But preaching goes home in the hand and power of the Blessed Spirit, working an acceptance in the soul of the doctrine, or of the salvation, or of both, according as the sinners who hear it are wholly or partially wrought on: consequently, offering is not preaching the Gospel. The nature of that is otherwise; for as preaching the Gospel of God is preaching glad tidings to sinners, so it is bringing the good news home unto the persons; not laying it down before the sinner, and there leaving it, at Midway-Block.

Preaching acts home to elect and non-elect, making manifest the favour of the knowledge of Christ in every place, both in them that are saved, and in them that perish. Offers have no favor of Christ, because they do not reach home. Neither a savor in the doctrine, nor a savor in the salvation. It is neither a savor of death unto death, in formality, to the unregenerate formalist that perishes with the favor; nor a savor of life unto life to the believer who finds a lack of the favor. As soon as preaching degenerates into proffering, then a saint quickly loses his taste.

An offer doth not bring comfort home. Grace offers may move, but it is at a distance from the proper object.

The doctrine alone preached is a home-testimony, even to the non-elect; the doctrine and salvation both together, are home-testimonies to the elect of God.

1. The doctrine alone preached is a home-testimony against such as God hath not chosen in Christ; for such vessels there are, as appear, (I John 2:19, Matt. 20:16, John 8:47, John 10:26, Rom. 11:33, Matt. 7:23) and these are of two sorts, where the Gospel comes; open rejecters of the mystery, and open receivers of the literal doctrine. The doctrine preached, when the mystery comes to be laid open, is a testimony against rejecters. For they soon begin to snuff at it, to stumble at the word, and be disobedient. Whereas an offer of grace is so plausible to nature, that any man may face it; nor will it touch them to the quick to proffer, but it will to preach free grace. For, the preaching of grace, as the mystery of the doctrine is laid open, makes them presently submit to, or reply against God, and quarrel with the Most High, saying, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? as they did in the ninth of the Romans. It soon touched them, especially when the doctrines of God's sovereignty, absolute grace, Irrefutableness, discrimination, and passive obedience, are preached. These are things men cannot pretend to offer a sinner; they are matters of operation, and not of offer: nevertheless the

ministers of Christ are to preach them. And the preaching of them is a home-testimony, even to them that God hath passed by, as to salvation. These doctrines are inimical to carnal wisdom, so carnal wisdom must be inimical to these doctrines.

The doctrine of Christ preached is an enemy to their self-love, carnal interests, carnal ease, etc., insomuch that preaching the Gospel frets wicked men, and chafes their minds, eats into the frame of their spirits, gnaws upon their inward pride, and fills them with rage. Stephen's hearers gnashed upon them with their teeth, to hear the doctrine of truth preached. He did not offer them Christ, they might perhaps have laughed at that, but he preached Christ notably, and preaching enraged them.

Such preaching either kills or cures, and makes a noble discrimination in the auditory. So that refusers of the power of Christ, or open rejecters of His doctrine, cannot stand before preaching.

Offers I know will leave them to debate upon it, but for all that I have observed offerers of the grace of God, as we call them, are blessed with poor success; but preaching will bring an answer from the conscience presently.

Oh how did it enrage the Jews at Antioch to contradict and blaspheme! when the apostles preached, it nettled them immediately, (Acts 13:45) for when Paul preached Jesus and the resurrection, (Acts 17:18), it presently touched the philosophers of Epicurus and the Stoics to the quick, and stirred up their wisdom to encounter him.

If he had stood offering them terms, they would only have laughed him to scorn, and thought it not worth while to have argued with him: but his preaching set them upon a philosophical prating; in the account given of their opposition, it was not that Paul propounded the offer, but he was, as they thought, a teller, or celebrater, as the word in Greek signifies, of strange gods. How Ignorant and prejudiced were they! They took the resurrection to be one god, and Jesus to be the other!

Preaching is a home-act, the doctrine preached reaches men's consciences, let them do what they will. Noah's preaching in his day went home to the disobedient spirits, who, in the apostle's days, long after were in the prison of hell. (1 Pet. 3:19) The doctrine of preservation in the ark was preached, it was not offered.

Again, the ark was built for Noah and his house; it was not prepared for, nor tendered to the old world. Thus the open rejecters of the mystery find preaching of Christ to be a home-act, it stirs up their corruption's.

Furthermore, there are others of the non-elect who do not reject the doctrine of Christ, but receive it in the lump, when the doctrine is preached to them. Thus Simon Magus believed at Philip's preaching Christ in Samaria, (Acts 8:13) and the stony-ground hearers that first sprung up were brought to it by sowing the seed of the Word upon them, and afterwards they withered away. (Matt. 13:5, 6) To these may be added, the hard-hearted Israelites in the wilderness, who, it is said, (Heb. 4:2) had the Gospel preached unto them, but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. The Holy Spirit would, according to the counsel of God, give them the Word but it was not His good pleasure to bestow faith of the operation of God with the Word; nor was he bound thereto in God's covenant and promise. So likewise the Gospel of Canaan's rest had been preached home to them, verse 6, for it appears by their story in the wilderness, that they did many things, as the fruits of that preaching; with an external faith they received the Gospel preached in its types. Then believed they His words; they sung His praise; but they soon forgot His works. They waited not for His counsel. And so

the people to whom the type of the Gospel-rest was preached, entered not in, because of unbelief, at last. Thus the Gospel comes with a home-appeal to the consciences of the non-elect, a home testimony in preaching the doctrine to them that receive the doctrine preached, though they are not the chosen of God. The preaching lays hold, and by a common operation of the Spirit, worketh a common faith in the non-elect. And as a fruit of it they make a profession of the same: however, they receive it not in a new nature, in which not only the doctrine, but the power of the salvation, comes to God's chosen. The others receive it not as a distinguishing work of the Spirit of grace, who is the substance of it, as well as the worker of it.

2. The doctrine of the Gospel preached, is a home-act to the elect of God. The doctrine may sometimes be received by preaching, before the power of salvation of that doctrine be received according to the election of grace by another act of preaching. Observe these two; doctrine and power may be separated in the elect themselves for some time.

And we may perceive this, because the elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, are saved and called with a holy calling, under one Word of Truth, as of His own will begat He us, but are not begotten a second time under another Word of Truth; though, perhaps, as the Spirit will, at other times He severally distributes His gifts. (1 Cor. 12:11) This also cometh forth from the Lord of Hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working. Therefore, I say, we may suppose a separation of these sometimes, viz., doctrine and salvation, as to the elect for a time. Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also you have received, and wherein ye stand. (1 Cor. 15) It was applied, and went home in preaching the Gospel unto them, in that they had received the doctrine, and stood therein. For the salvation is clearly distinguished in the next words; by which the Gospel preached unto you, and received by you; also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory, or hold fast the doctrine from a principle of grace, what I preached unto you: unless ye have believed in vain; i. e. in vain as to salvation, if you have only received the doctrine in the letter, without receiving the power, or a change of nature with the doctrine; or you have only received the doctrine with an outer court faith, if you have received it without a change.

Again, ver. 12. Christ was preached, that He rose from the dead; and this was plainly brought home. For, through the Spirit, preaching had produced faith; there being no more reason to question the truth of the doctrine, than to doubt the preaching of the doctrine. Both are alike coupled, verse 14 so that the nature of preaching is to go home in the power of it, till it arrive at the person's conscience; and not to parley, by suspensions of the will, or non-acceptance of the sinner, in mid-way, as your offers do.

Preaching sticks not in the thick clay of human proposals, nor loses its errand in propounding an offer, by any difficulties in the way whatever, through which it passes.

For though offers be never so free, and Indeed ministers are too free of them to thrive in their ministry, yet give me powerful preaching, for that God hath ordained; it makes its way through, before all your free offers whatever. An offer, though you call it evangelical and ministerial, or what you will, yet performs nothing where it is not accepted.

Your free offer is very indeterminate, and yet pretended to be in the Lord's name too, while the Lord knows them that are His. Moreover, your offer of salvation is universal; for you so offer salvation, as it is plain you exclude none from salvation. You offer salvation to the lump; yet know, that your offer of the salvation can never reach home to all that God calls you to preach to, as preaching the doctrine does. Your obligatory offer is as wide as the rest.

To proceed and prove, as the Scriptures have shown us the effect of preaching, to prove that preaching the Gospel, and offering the Gospel, are not one and the same thing, according to the mind of Christ:

1. By preaching, the doctrine of the Gospel is carried home to the hearers, whether they will or no. We meet with many proofs of this: Acts 10:42. And He commanded us

to preach unto the people. Acts 2:20. And He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you. Acts 17:3. This Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. He is the Messiah, of whom the Old Testament speaketh. Acts 8:5. Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. Acts 13:38. Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins. Hence Paul's anathema in the same style of preaching, and in the same manner of wording it, by which we know the meaning to be quite another thing than that of an offer: Gal. 1:8, 9. Though we apostles, or an angel from heaven, preach unto you any other doctrine than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other Gospel unto you, etc. In all these places it is expressed that preaching applies directly unto persons: but proposals are things that are only put before persons, as the word signifies.

Offers are bringing the things, and leaving them at a distance over against them, which wait for acceptance before the things proposed or offered can approach unto them, or be approached unto. But preaching, whether of life unto life, or death unto death, approaches effectually to persons consciences in the assembly; therefore it is a home-act, and makes a thorough motion to them.

The Holy Spirit tells us so of preaching; men, in order to excuse their hypocrisy, tell us so of offers. Preaching the Gospel testifies on God's behalf, and exalts the Triune Lord in all his persons; the Lord the Father, the Lord the Word, the Lord the Spirit. The testimony of preaching justifies God, in condemning refusers of the doctrine, as well as justifies God in condemning men who, though they accept of the doctrine in a Christ-less state, yet walk unworthy of the very form of that sound doctrine in the unregeneracy of their natures, having secret enmity in their hearts against the power of godliness.

The testimony of preaching likewise justifies God, in holding forth the spirit of grace, as the quickening principle for acceptance, wherewith to receive the salvation of Christ, as well as to receive the doctrine of it; for God gives His Spirit as the life-giving principle to work in all His own elect. Now the offer of the Gospel, because it is not preaching the Gospel, does not justify God in the condemnation of one, or salvation of another; no, but seems rather to justify the creature's acceptance of what the elect by gift shall inherit, who are saved by the Gospel.

Acceptance of the Gospel is a piece of the Gospel wrought in the soul by Jehovah the Spirit, which your tenderers of salvation, every man of you, either overlook or deny.

Offers are by no means calculated to justify God, in condemning men for refusing a doctrine which was never preached to them; but offers justify God in condemning a minister, who, Instead of preaching to conscience, offers proposals, and leaves his messages for anybody or nobody.

Offers lay all down for acceptance at mid-way block, and never get farther. Whatever it be that is offered, doctrine or salvation, before the elect, or before the non-elect, or before all promiscuously, there it sticks in mid-way, waiting for free will to accept of your free offer.

2. By preaching, the doctrine is carried home to the elect of God. personally discriminating part of the hearers. So Christ, Who is salvation, may be personally preached; but how can He be personally offered? The Holy Spirit's language is He is the Word, which by the Gospel is preached unto you, 1

Pet. 1:25. As in Acts 20:7, the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them the Gospel. So Acts 8:35, it is said of the eunuch, Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. Here preaching was a home-act to the good of His chosen. It reached quite through, and stuck not at mid-way.

3. I argue from the scope which the Scriptures give us in preaching, as it exalts the sovereignty of God. (Gal. 3:8) The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen (mind! that is an act of His sovereign grace!) through faith, or bring justification home into their very souls through the eye of their faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham; because, by preaching, God's sovereignty is exalted.

Offers exalt not the sovereignty of God in the congregation, nor are they suitable to it. Preaching the Gospel is suitable thereto. Therefore, preaching and offering are not both one. All preaching the Gospel is fitted to exalt the sovereignty of God; but offering the Gospel is not fitted unto that service. How can they then be proved to be both one? Besides, if offers had exalted the sovereignty of God to the elect, then the Scripture would have spoken of them that they did so. But it nowhere speaks of them after that manner.

Offers, therefore, exalt not God's supreme will. Preaching the Gospel is preaching glad tidings in an effectual sovereign display of irresistible grace, to the Israel whom God has chosen; the blessings of the Gospel, as in Matt. 5 to multitudes. But proffering the Gospel debaseth the sovereignty of God, instead of exalting it. How abject and precarious is it, in the great and glorious name of Jehovah, to stand up and say, Here sinners, I offer you Christ, why don't you take Him? Ah! this is taking God's name in vain, and perverting God's message, if the man may be called a messenger. Preaching is supreme; it breaks in upon a man's conscience by authority: offers are servile; making parleys debase the majesty of God, and so cannot be the same thing with preaching, which exalts the majesty of God.

8. Lastly, I argue from the efficacy of preaching, which God the Spirit savingly attends: And thence I prove, that no offer of grace did ever come up to preaching the Gospel. It is not preaching the Gospel, when it ceases to be the joyful sound. But it does cease to be so while the preacher sinks from operations of the Gospel by God the Spirit, into offers of the Gospel, by mere propounding of empty tidings.

Offers of grace to sinners are, therefore, disproved to be the same with the preaching of grace. For,

1. Preaching the Gospel, is a revealing act: offering the Gospel, is a tendering act. In preaching the Gospel, the soul sees something of the glory of the Gospel by it: but an offer, though it be an open act of propounding Christ to the soul, yet reveals nothing of Christ; it is no glass of the Gospel for sinners to view themselves in, till they are transformed by the renewing of their mind; nor are they changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord thereby. No: though the Gospel is opened when it is preached, yet it is hid when offered. The very mystery is not seen in it. Though men upon the house-tops pretend to offer Christ, the people do not see what is said to be offered. They can behold nothing to answer the pretense, (hear, souls, I offer you Christ, why should you not this moment accept him?) whereas, preaching sweetly reveals Christ in the soul; but offers never so much as lay him open, but tender him, wrapped up in graveclothes, with his face in a napkin. It is plain, then, offering is no preaching.

Besides,

Letter and spirit are separable among the receivers. The spirit is preached to saints, to you excellent ones, yet, to the elected together with you; while the whole visible clutter, the letter, passeth among the rest, who are blinded, and never see the kernel.

It is an unseen thing, therefore, to the eye of the body, so cannot be offered, but must be preached to men. Salvation is the substance of Gospel-doctrine, as the kernel is of the nut, therefore cannot be tendered separate from the doctrine: nor indeed is that doctrine tendered at all, while preached; and while the salvation apart from the letter is preached to those people, who touching election are beloved.

While men, therefore, are making offers of a Christ they themselves have not experienced, let them not think it is preaching the Gospel in the salvation and glory of it.

2. Preaching the Gospel has to do with the elect in order to their conversion, answerable to the settlement of their relation in Christ; and so to bring them, for the making of their calling and election sure, to an evangelical communion with Father, Son, and Spirit, by more lively and fixed faith on the Lord Jesus Christ, through the indwelling and comfortable operations of God the Spirit to this end; preaching the Gospel is mightily owned by the good Spirit of God, to change the sinner's affections, and elevate his mind to a supernatural believing and supernatural communion.

The scriptures do constantly speak of the Holy Spirit's personal work upon the soul, in passive phrases, such as faith, love, repentance unto life. Ministers of Christ, who are put in trust with the Gospel, are to use all such wholesome words and passive phrases, which exalts the Spirit and His work, and brings a good report of the Gospel to the honor and glory of God the Spirit, in the mysteries of Christ.

And surely there never was more ground to require this from ministers than now, when believing is so slightly talked of, and pressed as if it were but a bare natural act; notwithstanding so many books have been written of the Spirit's work to explain the Scriptures upon this subject. For almost forty years long, in an eminent manner, this convincing light has been springing forth under John Owens labors in 1674. Yet much has the Spirit been grieved by the neglect of some of the present generation. For to this day the notion of an offer of grace exists, though it is a mere conceit, adapted to feed unconverted hope; as if believing on the Lord Jesus Christ was an act of the soul, before a man be born of the Spirit.

Offers do naturally feed this conceit, and cherish it in the bosoms of unconverted men, however some cunning preachers have an artful way to shift and wrest, to make you believe they mean preaching, though they call it by this odd name, pretending that offering Christ and preaching him are both one.

3. Whereas preaching the Gospel takes hold of the heart. The reason is, because the Lord owns preaching. It is His own ordinance, and therefore an effectual means. But offers, being of human devising, they must needs prove ineffectual: for offers do not take hold of the heart.

The devil will maintain his fort a whole siege against your offers. The evil spirit in a sinner is never likely to yield, or be subdued at that rate. Jesus I know, and Paul I know, (said the evil spirit in the Acts) but who are ye? The devil hath such a strong hold in sinners, that he will leap on your offers, and laugh at them. The Gospel I know, and preaching of the Gospel I know: but these many offers and proffers, he will exclaim, what are ye, ye powerless motions?

Now consider, preachers, will you go and make proposals to Satan? The devil is to be defeated of his captives by preaching deliverance to the captives, and an effectual opening of the prison doors to them

that are bound. But souls in slavery, and under the present power of the god of this world, are not to be got out of his hand by parleys; they must be translated from the power of darkness. Do not think to bring them off from the jaws of unseen destruction, by tendering an unexperienced salvation to them.

The devil in the sinner, is stronger than the sinner, or you and your offers, put you all together.

Lust in the heart, unbelief in the nature, captivity in the will, do all pinion the man, and stake him down against your offers. But the preached Gospel breaks in with power, opens the heart, disarms unbelief, breaks the bands of the will in two, and by the arm of Jehovah the preaching is not in vain.

Offers rob the Father, and rob Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the soul and all. They rob free grace, in keeping back part of the price of salvation, that is strength to lay hold of Christ. You offer me Christ, poor creature! but why do you not offer me the Spirit, Who is my strength in Christ? Oh! how fruitless it is to speak of Christ as a free offer, and yet keep Him at a distance by thy proposals. I suppose that free grace may not come too near the soul; that you may keep grace and the soul asunder, till the soul agrees to accept it! Yes, rather than preach grace home, you will stand and hammer the sinner, as if you had met him about business at the Exchange, and wanted to drive a bargain with him; tender Christ upon certain provisoes: thus you manage the offer, (at least some of you) as if you wanted to get rid of your son or daughter, and meant to give extraordinary encouragement to the acceptor. You will propound a free offer, provided the sinner gives up himself, wholly and without the least reserve, to Christ. Ah! but the Lord, I am sure, will never make you fruitful in converting souls at this rate. This will never do! The Spirit of Christ must show you quite another way of preaching, and bow your hearts to it likewise.

Preaching of the Gospel is so spoken of in the Holy Scriptures, with respect of efficacy, that no offer of grace can equal it; and consequently it is not the same thing.

An offer is in word only, but preaching is in power. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. (1 Cor. 4:20) Effectual preaching is the stretching forth of the rod of his kingdom. Preaching the Gospel is an act in Christ's name, and in Christ's Spirit, in the preacher Christ hath sent, and so is influenced by God. (Mark 16:26) But man's propounding the offer is never so influenced as I can find, throughout my Bible; for instance, some poor souls who have found God's power attend preaching the Gospel, have found God's power withdrawn under offers.

Preaching is a binding up of the broken in heart, (Isa 61:1) but offers have been known to fetter and to fret the wound. Preaching manages well; it brings deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are nothing but that bound. (Luke 4:18) whereas, offers can say they mean well. They make essays: they essay at this, and essay at that, but they produce nothing. Preaching Christ unto the Gentiles is a home-act; it is accompanied with Christ's being believed on in the world, 1 Tim. 3:16) And says Paul, (1 Cor. 15:11) of the apostles' preaching, Whether it were I, or they, so we preach, and so ye believed. How was Christ preached to the Gentiles? Why He was preached so powerfully, so effectually, so closely, so savingly, that the Gentiles, (Acts 13:42) besought that the same words might be preached to them the next sabbath. But do the Scriptures ever tell us offers had that effect? So that proffers of the Gospel have introduced this controversy, by corrupting the text with foreign phrases, such as proffering, or offering; mean what they may, it is no matter; the word means oblatio, which surely all of them know is not preaching. They who are effectually called, are not called to Christ by offers of salvation, but by preaching salvation to them. (1 Cor. 1:23, 24) We preach Christ crucified; unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

For though wisdom, in the counsels of the Gospel, goes before power, and contrivance precedes accomplishment; yet, the power of the Gospel is felt before the wisdom of the Gospel is discerned. And that is the reason why, unto those that are called, Christ crucified is the power Of God, before He is the wisdom of God to them. In a word, Christ is preached to the saving of the soul; but He is offered to the amusing of the auditory: which produceth nothing that is close home, and applicatory, to neither elect or non-elect, but a mere sound of words to muse on.

Wheresoever Christ is offered, it is certain He comes not home enough for God to be glorified, either in men's accepting or refusing Christ. In offers, Christ is only laid before men distantly, subject to their discretion; and so the Gentiles would be still lost as to any recovering efficacy of help by such tenders.

5. Preaching the Gospel, both in Matt. 11:5 and Luke 7:22 (where the words are, the poor have the Gospel preached to them, and to the poor the Gospel is preached,) is rendered in a passive efficacy of preaching; that is, the poor are gospelized, or transformed into the very image and spirit of the Gospel. Besides, it shows us what poor are meant, even the poor in condition. Because the blind who receive their sight, and the lame who walked, and the lepers who were cleansed, and the dead who were raised lip, whom John's disciples had looked on and seen, were not figuratively and tropically blind, lame, lepers, and dead; but strictly and absolutely in condition were such.

I can say properly, a man converted by preaching is evangelized, and it comes up to the efficacy and truth of the thing, that he is so turned into the life and power of the Gospel. But if I say in the passive voice, of the other word offering, that a man is offered, it would be unscriptural nonsense.

Further, when a man comes to offer Christ, he loses his labor, for, as to him who accepts the offer, what can you say of such a man? you never can say such a man is offered, nor can you say he is offerized. But the man who has received the preaching, or evangelizing, he may be fitly said to be evangelized. On the other hand, if a man should say to him who hath the benefit of the offer, he is offered, and thereby mean he is converted, he would speak nonsense because it would not signify he is converted. The active, (as in the other way, of preaching) cannot be turned into the passive. He that hath the Gospel preached to him to conversion, is preached into the image of the Gospel. But supposing a man were converted by the offer, what sense would it be to say he that accepts the offer is offered into the image of the offer? Preaching, therefore, and offering, are not the same thing.

6. Preaching the Gospel is bringing the blessing of the Gospel to be of experimental virtue, in stating of the purpose of God according to election. A man by experience knows something of the Gospel; and both hears and feels how it enters his soul, under the preaching of it. For my own part I declare, I can give no account of any good I ever got by men's offers of grace: but through grace I can speak somewhat to the praise of the Gospel of Christ, concerning what I have got by the preaching of grace.

Oh! when a minister comes, while under the taste of the blessing in his own soul, to preach Christ, he may be sure that when he comes thus to preach Christ, he shall approach to God's chosen ones, in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ. (Rom. 15:29) He will not then tantalize the people of God with offers, nor talk to them of grace that waits their acceptance, but cannot enter them; whereas grace preached comes with a blessing, and entered as well as draws near. But offers bestow no benefit on the hearers; for the more they are examined, the less they prevail. Thus I have proved that offers of Christ are not preaching of Christ.

CHAPTER THREE

EXTERNAL OFFER IS NO MEANS OF THE SPIRIT'S INTERNAL WORK

Proof of the second of the three points, namely: That to propound the grace-offer in the external means, is no means of the Spirit's working an internal ability in sinners to close savingly with the offer.

THIS proposition is a direct reverse, or quite contrary theme to the triumphs of the plea about offers. It is contrary to the very mending clause of their article suggested so plausibly before in favor of offers. The emendation of defects discovered in their article is this: That while the offer of Christ, say they, is propounding in the external means to sinners, the Spirit of Christ may be working an internal ability in these sinners to close in savingly with the offer. I design, if the Lord will, in this chapter, a direct confutation of this vain confidence. For it is an error vented to the dishonor of God's free grace. And it is also a corrupt principle of some men, wrongfully held to the dishonor of the Holy Spirit and His work! Now the arguments I shall bring against this false opinion, in order to pull down so specious a piece of old Adam, are such scriptural proofs of the free gift of grace, as by the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, may be carried on in this chapter. These blessed truths may be wrought up sweetly, higher and higher, till they out-top the doctrine of offers, in your low lands of a waste wilderness. And in hope that God peradventure may give men repentance to the acknowledging of the truth, a few things shall be made known, which may prove effectual of God to wound and slay the sore-plea, which is so injurious to His grace.

Argument 1. Offers of grace and tenders of salvation are no means of a saving ability to close in with Christ, because they are neither means of Christ's instituting, nor of the Spirit's operating. God has appointed the preaching of the Gospel, and Christ has commanded it, (2 Tim. 4:2) preach the Word: but neither hath God appointed, nor Christ commanded, the propounding of the Gospel, as the means to work His grace. And however God the Spirit works with the preaching, yet He works not with the proposal, nor fills up an offer of grace with any of His own presence of grace, nor accompanies such a pretended offer to the saving change of a sinner.

The Spirit comes down from heaven in the Gospel-fills it, and fills the minister's soul, and so makes it efficacious to an elect sinner in the congregation, and to the elect alone, In respect to saving knowledge; and that so feelingly and distinctly, that every one of such say, Surely it is to me! this is preached, this is brought to me!

What reason is there, then, to expect the blessing of the Gospel in offers of Christ, when indeed it is none of the means of the blessing? the Spirit is concerned in the preaching of Christ, but he is not concerned in tendering of Christ. He regards not proffers, when He reveals the arm of the Lord with power.

Proposing is no apt means in itself, as it is no appointed means to attain the end. It is preaching doctrine and salvation united, which the Holy Spirit delights to work by; that is the means preordained of God, and which God takes up, and puts a divine stamp upon, graciously working therewith to the elect. And as the doctrine is to be preached to the non-elect, for other ends than salvation, (of which hereafter in a separate chapter) so neither doctrine nor salvation are means to be offered or tendered to any sinners for

acceptance: but the doctrine is to be preached, even to the non-elect, for acceptance or refusal, and so is to be preached to all promiscuously.

The doctrine and salvation are both to be preached, as the joint means of faith and comfort, to the elect of God. For so long as a minister preaches the Gospel, he uses Christ's means, and these are apt means to convert souls;* but when he degenerates into offers, Christ leaves him to sound forth a dead letter.

Men whose principles are to offer Christ, do, without doubt, presumptuously take upon them a way of dispensing the Word which Christ has never instituted. Paul's preaching the kingdom of God, (Acts 20:25) was carried on by this apt means, to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, ver. 24. Not by an unapt device of the creatures-in offering the Gospel and tendering the grace of God.

Argument 2. Proposing the offer in the external means, can be no means at all of the Spirit's working an internal ability in sinners to close savingly with the offer; because the Spirit Himself must be the author of an internal ability. The faculty, though sanctified, is no self-mover in the act of sanctification, but is led to Christ by God the Spirit. Now the Holy Spirit, who is the author of the internal ability, and the worker of it, is not offered, nor can be.

1. The Spirit is sent, as God's hand, stretched out through Christ in the office of Comforter. So John 14:26. It is the Comforter whom the Father will send. Also, Luke 24:49. I send the promise of my Father upon you. And in John 15:26 – When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father. And again, John 16:7. If I depart I will send Him (the Comforter) unto you. This was also secretly meant in the breathings of the Old Testament; as Psalm 144:7. Send Thy hand from above; yea, Thy Christ, the man of Thy right hand, and Thy Spirit through him. Also, Rid me, and deliver me out of great waters; that is, out of great deeps of sin and sorrows; out of sins and sufferings, from out of corrupt doctrines (that are foul waters) entertained by strangers to the truth, out of great trials for my faithful standing it out, and my not receiving them, as others do. Deliver me from the hand of strange children, that I may be neither drowned in a spirit of error, nor persecuted for the spirit of truth, by strange or hypocritical children that believe Him not.

Now is it necessary this should be done under an act of Providence, as well as under an act of grace, in translating out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son? Is it necessary to free the soul from the bondage of men, and not necessary to free the soul from the slavery of Satan? If the Spirit is the author of an escape from outward opposition and hatred of the world, how much more is He the author of every deliverance from the inward power of lust and corruption, in his operation of a full ability to believe on the Lord Jesus, and to close savingly with him in the revelation of eternal life?

How sweetly is the sending of the Spirit, as well as the sending of Christ from the Father, hinted in the Old Testament? As Psalm 110:2. The Lord shall send the rod of thy strength out of Zion. And it is plain that the promise was to take place, after Christ was ascended and gone to Heaven. What was that promise of the rod of his strength, to be sent after Christ was gone into Heaven, but the Holy Spirit, Who should be sent down from Heaven, to carry on Christ's government in the world, in spite of all the enemies of Christ, whether among the Jews or Gentiles? The request is, (Psa. 43:3) O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me, etc. Here is Christ and the Spirit, Whom the Father was to send. For, says Christ, I am come a light into the world; and saith the apostle, speaking of Christ, The darkness is passed, and the true light now shineth.

So God's truth, joined with God's light, may well be interpreted of the Spirit, because the Spirit is Truth. These two were prayed for to be sent forth as persons, though under the similitude of qualities;

because the substance of the Old Testament doctrine and types about Christ and the Spirit, ran in these two streams of similitude-light and truth. These two persons, Christ and the Spirit, were to be sent by the Father, to guide the soul to Mount Zion, the true church, where God's presence remains and dwells; of which literal Mount Zion was the figure; and so was the temple upon it, in times of old.

It is an act proper to a person to conduct and lead others; and so these persons, the Christ of God, and the Spirit of Christ, are persons for spiritual conduct. Let them lead me, let them bring me unto Thy holy hill, and to Thy tabernacles; to Thy Gospel churches, wherever these churches shall be planted, while Gospel times exist.

2. The Spirit is said to come (Jn. 16:7): If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. Will not! He has a will of His own! The will of the Comforter is the will of God, because the Comforter is God; and He will not come unto you, if I go not away. Likewise John 15:26. But when He, the Comforter, is come. This is the character of Him in relation to His office-He is the One that comes.

Talk not then of sinners coming to Christ before you duly insist upon the Comforter's coming to sinners; for when He is come, saith Christ, (Jn. 16:8) He will reprove, or convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Again, ver. 13, when the Spirit of truth is come. You see, it is His office to come. Again, Acts 1:8, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you.

It is a wonder to me, that while the Scriptures speak so much of the Spirit's coming to the creature, ministers should still insist so much upon the coming of the creature to Christ, without the Spirit, expressly. But what will not men do to uphold their offers and their offices, when we see they seek to turn the Holy Spirit and His operations out of place?

3. The Spirit is said to fall, (Acts 10:44) while Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word; and Acts 8: 16, as yet He, (the Holy Spirit), was fallen upon none of them. So Acts 11: 15, and as I began to speak, says Peter, rehearsing the matter, (of which he was accused by the Jewish brethren for going in to the Gentiles,) the Holy Spirit fell on them, as on us at the beginning.

4. The Spirit, who is the author of an internal ability to close with Christ, is shed forth, (Acts 2:33) therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He hath shed forth this, which ye now both see and hear. He is shed on, (Tit. 3:4-6) God our Savior according to His mercy saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Savior. He is the worker of all Inward strength, faith, love, and joy, shed abroad. (Rom. 5:5) The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us. Thus the Scriptures witness.

Now let me step to the use of it, and weigh it in the balance of the sanctuary. Is the Spirit sent in your offer of the Spirit, or is your offer a means of sending Him? Is He not sent in the promise? Or rather, is He not sent in evangelizing, and preaching the Father's promise, Christ's ascension to God? and His intercession there at the right hand of God, to send His Spirit? Is God's power of the Spirit stretched out through Christ by means of propounding Christ, or propounding the Spirit to the flock; or by virtue of the righteousness of God by Christ, preached, as God sent His Son by virtue of His own love freely to us, according to the preaching which has been spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets, since the world began? Does the Spirit ,come by means of offers of Christ, or by preaching the mission of Christ, which made way for the mission of the Spirit? Did not the Spirit's coming depend upon Christ's going to the Father? And is not the preaching of the Gospel a means of His coming still; not as means of grace offered, but as filled with Christ's presence?

Again, does the Spirit descend or fall to work an ability by your offers of Christ as the external means; or by advancing the person of Christ as the true cause; and by advancing His office, His dignity, glory, fullness, etc. as so many arguments for the Holy Spirit's descending upon an elect sinner to work faith? It is preaching the Gospel, not offering, that advances the mysterious cause of the Spirit's falling in with the Word. Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? as the apostle says to the foolish Galatians. Mind! by the hearing, not the offering of faith. For if a sinner lays hold of Christ, before the Spirit lays hold of him, he must receive the Spirit of life afterwards by works of the law, and not by the hearing of faith: not by the Gospel, to be sure, for that tells us the Spirit of the Father works in the sinner before the sinner comes to Christ. Is the Spirit shed forth, or shed on, or shed abroad? Is this internal ability of coming and closing with the offer produced by your offers propounded? Or, is He shed down to work the ability to believe in Christ, as the Gospel is preached?

Suppose a minister, in the darkness of his spirit, should say, Lo! here I offer you the Spirit; sinners, take him! Would it not be strange doctrine? And yet why not, Here I offer you the Spirit, as well as, Here I offer you Christ? For as Christ, in respect of order, is, if possible, a greater gift than the gift of the Spirit, so Christ cannot be closed with, in a saving way, without the Spirit create, or work the closing faith. The Spirit cannot come, or fall, or be shed on, to do this separately from Christ; He comes in God's gift of Christ to the soul: One cannot be without the other.

I have Christ as God's free gift, before my having the Spirit of Christ as a worker of an ability to close in with Christ; so likewise I have the Spirit, previous to my having the faith which the Spirit works in me. As none of these can be offered me, for my internal ability to receive Christ, how then is an offer of Christ, as an external means, a means of my internal ability to close in with Christ?

Argument 3. Proposing the offer in the external means, can be no means of the Spirit's working an internal ability in a sinner to close in savingly with the offer; because the Holy Spirit is the living principle of a saving ability, and He continues to work in the soul by and from Himself, both to will and to do of His own good pleasure.

Principles for my closing with Christ can never be offered to me, consistently with the Gospel; for it is in consequence of a prior interest in those principles, that I am ever brought freely to close with Christ.

I cannot have a new heart to close with Christ, but the Spirit of Christ must be the Indwelling principle of that new heart, and in Him the new heart must subsist. All my springs are in Thee, says David. How can I be in the Spirit? (Rom. 8:9) live in the Spirit? (1 Pet. 4:6; Gal. 5:35) pray in the Spirit? (Eph. 6:18) How can I worship God in the Spirit, or in the Holy Spirit, if the Holy Spirit be not my principle of life, the life of my prayers, and of my Gospel-worship? then how is it to worship Him in Spirit? The meaning is evident, that to worship God in Spirit, is to worship Him in the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God being the principle of worship in those who are brought to a participation of the mystery of Gospel-worship.

It is plain that the phrase, "in spirit," is expounded, elsewhere, of the Holy Spirit; as in Matt. 22:43 He says to them, How then does David, in spirit, call Him Lord? It must be understood of the Holy Spirit, this signifying, as the apostle's phrase is. For the Holy Spirit was the principle, as well as the author, of the bright discovery of the Messiah to the soul of David, which inspired and guided him by the Spirit of prophecy.

Therefore to worship God in Spirit, means something more than a union of soul with gross external performances. Yes; there are clear reasons against it.

1. Because then there would be no more excellence in the Christian worship, than in the Jewish worship, where the soul was joined with the external performances.

2. A low conjunction with ceremonies, will never agree with so high a description of it as is given in the following text, in ver. 23 the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. Such having the Holy Spirit to be their principle in worship, shall thereby know what they worship. And thus having the Spirit of wisdom, and revelation in the knowledge of Christ, they have Christ, together with the Father, for the object of their Gospel-worship.

This Spirit of wisdom, the Holy Spirit, is also the Spirit of revelation of the object, as well as the Spirit in which is rightly worshipped, and the only principle thereof. Spiritual worship does not consist in a bare soul-union with external ceremonies of the Christian religion.

3. When Spirit is joined with truth, it does not mean in Scripture phrase our spirit only, but God's Spirit. To this agree the testimonies of 1 Jn. 4:6; 1 Peter 1:22; Jn. 14:17; Jn. 16:3.

4. And we thereby plainly see when to interpret Spirit, to be the Holy Spirit. See James 2:26; 1 Cor. 6:20; 1 Cor. 5:3. The conjunction of the Holy Spirit with our body and spirit, appears in other texts which evidently clear it. To shut it up with one instance, in 1 Thess. 5:23, about spirit, soul and body. Your whole spirit, that is, the frame and temper of your mind and soul, (which hath all the reasonable faculties, understanding, conscience, will and affection,) and body, (which consisteth of the several members) be presented blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus.

Well, how can I be, and live, and pray, and worship in the Spirit, if God the Spirit be not my vital principle, in and from which, through Christ, I live in the Spirit, and pray in the Holy Spirit? Now can a minister say to a sinner, speaking of the Spirit as a principle, here I offer you the first indwelling principle, the Spirit? Or can he say of what is commonly reckoned the first principle of grace, a new heart, here is a new heart for you, sinner; here is regeneration, here is saving faith for you; come sinner, take these principles of life, and come and lay hold of Christ? Why? how would this divinity sound from our pulpits! How would the doves by the river of waters be seared at a preacher that should come among them, and talk at this rate! But if ministers are not wont to say thus to sinners, concerning the Spirit, as a principle of divine life and motion in the soul, working faith for closing with salvation, and all other graces in the soul; then why should men accustom themselves to say thus of salvation, here I offer you salvation, take it? Why do not they at once openly say, Come sinner, here is the Spirit, which is the first principle of all this faith and willingness, by which you have an Internal ability to close with the offer; here, I do now offer you this Spirit of God, and tender this principle; here, take into yourselves the means of this new heart, I offer it you, accept of this ability, and therein close with the free offer!

On the other hand, if they are ashamed openly to say this, nor after this manner, then why should they use themselves to say, here I offer you Christ? It is granted, that such tenders of the Spirit, or propounding such principles of the soul, as the Spirit pleases to work, would be, and is, strange doctrine, when sent along to the ears of men. And yet why may not the sound be, Come I offer you the Spirit and spiritual principles; I offer you the very ability to close with the offer, as well as I offer you Christ, and I offer you salvation? For these latter blessings, which men still pretend to offer, are the greatest of all blessings. Christ is the greatest gift of God's love. And here you see the greatest gift of God's love is to be offered and tendered to men, and yet they will not readily offer and tender you the

less; namely, the saving ability itself to close with the main blessing of all? By all their twisting then, it is plain, that offering Christ to a sinner can be no means of a sinner's obtaining Christ; because it is no means of his obtaining an ability to close with Christ upon offers.

If an offer of the inward ability, be the means of that inward ability, why are men so backward in their offers of Christ, as not to offer the ability also, and urge it home upon sinners to accept of faith, as they urge it upon them to accept of Christ? Why not? Here I tender you faith, the power of closing with Christ practically; I offer you regeneration, I reach out a heart, I tender you a will to do it.

You offer Christ to a sinner. O vain and blind man! why not the Spirit of Christ to a sinner too? If you offer a sinner privileges above nature, why do you not offer that sinner principles above nature to receive them? Surely one may as well be done as the other. Both Christ and His Spirit may be exalted: but who will say both may be offered; what! both Christ and His Spirit? Oh! it shows that offers are not the means to work an internal ability, to quicken the faculty of a soul that does savingly close with Christ, much less to become the true life of the soul afterwards. Exalting of the Father, and exalting of His Christ, are the Spirit's means of working this inward ability. For the glorious name of God the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, are to be lifted tip in preaching the Gospel. These are the means. But your offers lift up nothing, except your own folly and darkness! Oh!! to exalt the Spirit while preaching the Father and Christ, as the fountain of life and motion in the soul, is a means of conversion to many; but propounding the offer of I know not what, while all the glorious mysteries of God and Christ are veiled by the very tender of a mock benefit, is a means to delude many, but convert none, to strengthen none, or work the saving ability, no not in one soul.

The Spirit Himself must be the strengthening principle of my soul's faculties, as well as the author of its renovation, to cause me to act in a saving close with Christ.

For, after all, the soul's faculty renewed, is not the sinner's principle. It is but the instrument for the use and motion of grace in the Spirit's hand. The Holy Spirit Himself, by indwelling in the soul, is still the principle of life; without whose abiding influence, after He has become the author of sanctification, and renewed the human faculties, the man would relapse into a total deprivation of the habits and abilities of the new creature. Grace, as a habit or quality, could never subsist in the faculty of fallen man, separate from the Spirit who is still the principle, to maintain what He creates by a continued indwelling, and in-working.

Now are offers of Christ and salvation to the sinner, the means of working this inward ability of the sinner to close with Christ? Is not this inward strength of power wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit, quickening the faculty, and becoming the principle of its powers, and so enabling the faculty quickened, to will, to choose, and to lay hold? The Spirit maintains His hold by an indwelling abode, as well as by an inward working of power in the soul.

His first operation on the faculty, as the effect of his gracious influence, turns the soul toward Christ. The Scripture is full to this purpose: Jn. 14:17, the Spirit of truth dwelleth with you (as a person of the Godhead in the Trinity) and shall be in you; both as an official worker on the called of you, and so named the Paraclete, carrying on salvation with the Messiah, and as a principle of far clearer and stronger experience and Influence in believing, as well as a principle of Influence for gladness and consolation.

This, as to the principle of conversion, was the substance of that prayer in Ephraim, Jer. 31:18, last word, turn Thou me and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God.

So the absolute promise, Ezek. 36:27, I will put My Spirit within you. There is the Holy Spirit as the cause and worker. Ezek. 37:14, ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I shall put My Spirit in you, and ye shall live. The Holy Spirit is there signified as the principle of life. And in chap. 11:19, I will put a new spirit within you. How? Why, to be sure, as an inward worker of the ability, and as the principle of the ability also. Again, 2 Cor. 1:22. He, the Spirit, is the earnest in our hearts; i. e. a principle of grace, which is of the same piece of glory. God is to use here, only in a lower measure, what He will be in a higher measure hereafter. For as God fills us with Himself, and dwells in us Himself, who is our portion; so inhabiting us more abundantly, He will be in us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; glory to be revealed in us, Rom. 8:18, and the revealer of it to be admired in all them that believe. For, as earnest-money is the same species, though not of the same quantity, the full sum is to be of, which is behind; so the Spirit is given as an earnest in our hearts, God bestowing Himself upon us, through Christ, by the Spirit, in giving us of the same kind of blessedness, which He will bestow upon us with Him in Heaven. Thus, 2 John 2, the apostle speaks of the Truth's sake which dwelleth in us.

Doubtless it is one of the titles of the Holy Spirit, who is there spoken of, whom the faithful were enabled to call by the name of Truth in that daring generation of professors, who were headed by Ebion Cerinthus in their blasphemies against the Holy Spirit, and also of the Son of God. No doubt but they counted and called the indwelling of the of the Holy Spirit in the saints, as their principle of divine life, a lie. Therefore to do the Spirit honor, in the face of that formal generation, the apostle calls the Holy Spirit the Truth, and professes his love for the elect wrought on by the truth of the Gospel, and was knit to them "for the Truth's sake which dwelleth in us." Yea, it is expressly the Spirit's title, 1 Jn. 5:6. The Spirit is Truth. And 1 Jn. 4:12, God dwelleth in us.

He dwells in the believer as the principle of life, motion, and obedience to Christ. Likewise, verses 15, 16, God dwells in him that confesses Jesus is the Son of God; experience being in that erroneous day which the apostle bent his style against, esteemed fanatical and ridiculous to hold. And it cost the saints much to be faithful to Christ in that age: and, it seems, not one in that day was able to come up to this sound, holy and bold confession, that Jesus was the Son of God, unless he had God the Holy Spirit dwelling in him, the principle of the same confession. And ver. 16, He that dwelleth in love; (for in that day also the faithful were hated, for holding supernatural truths) he that dwelleth in love, therefore, of the Truth, and of them that hold it, dwelleth in God, as the principle of it, and God dwelleth in him, as his possession and heritage for ever. So 2 Tim. 1:14, The Holy Spirit which dwelleth in us, as the powerful maintainer of His own interest, and of the Image of Christ in us. To which add 1 Cor. 3:16, Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? And how dwelleth He in you? The answer is in you, as ye are His temples to inhabit, and as He is your principle to actuate you.

The indwelling of the Spirit was acknowledged as a known case in the saints of the New Testament, and His abiding in them, as their principle is shown by His falling on them. Rom. 8:11. If the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead, (i. e. the Spirit of God; for God raised Him from the dead,) dwell in you. It is plain, that this was the indwelling principle of the saints, for by this principle they walked after the Spirit, ver. 1, and by this principle they minded the things of the Spirit, ver. 5. Now this was from a holy similitude between the principle in them and the objects before them. And that the Spirit of God was their principle so to walk in the Spirit, and so to mind the things of the Spirit, as is further evident in what the apostle supposes of these Romans, ver. 9. If so be, says he, that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

Thus the Spirit of God after sanctification and possession of the faculty, moves the faculty towards the object, both as the gracious author, and the gracious principle of the motion.

But yet still, to take in more of the bowels of the mystery, I proceed to a fourth argument.

Argument 4. The Spirit's working an internal ability in sinners, is an operation of God's grace; he works under the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the elect in Christ, according as He has chosen us in Him. How does the Spirit work faith to lay hold of Christ? Without all doubt His operation of faith and all grace is in and under the imputation of the righteousness of Christ; because of the antecedent virtue of His righteousness to appease God's justice, and remove the obstacles in the way of God's mercy. For how can I think the Spirit works an ability to close with Christ, before Christ closeth with the sinner by the Holy Spirit. And how can Christ close with the sinner by His Spirit, except in the righteousness of God? And how can Christ close with the sinner by the Holy Spirit in the righteousness of God, unless He be under that righteousness? And then it must be under the same righteousness that He works faith for obedience to it; because it is in the virtue and use of that righteousness of God wrought in Christ, that the Spirit, or Holy Spirit, works all the ability in the heart of a sinner to close with Christ.

Besides, the Father has treasured up all the store of gifts in Christ, of which fullness we receive, as it is called, (Jn. 1:16) the Spirit officially brings, and must therefore be understood to work from the righteousness of Christ imputed to, and found upon, the elect of God as the predestinating cause of their believing, since all power is put into Christ's hands of the Father. Otherwise we take in wrong conceptions of the Spirit's working, as if the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, Who is the Spirit of Christ from the Father, wrought on the sinner to believe without the glorifying of Christ. But this must not be admitted; for the Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. (John 16:15) Again, faith is obtained through the righteousness of God, (2 Peter 1:1) From whence it is plain, that the Spirit Who is the author and principle of it from Christ, both works it, and dwells in us, to maintain the use of it under the righteousness of God; and so becomes to us, in His operations and supplies, a worker and a principle in the very virtue of God's righteousness wrought in Christ, through the death and blood of His Son. Now to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, what do your offers signify, either as to God's imputation of righteousness, or as to God's operation of faith under it? It is evident the doctrine of Christ is fitted to preaching the Gospel, but it is not fitted to the doctrine of the offer. It is erroneous to suppose an offer can be any means of an inward ability to close with Christ, which close depends entirely upon the operation of the Spirit under the righteousness of God.

This ability or power is to be wrought upon us; it cannot be proffered to us. The Spirit will not, and cannot honorably work without the imputation of Christ; but offers of Christ are without a due regard of the imputation of His righteousness, or the work of the Spirit, therefore are not fit means to work this ability.

How can the working of the ability in sinners by the Spirit be expected under the pretended preaching which exalts not the imputation of Christ's righteousness to the person of a sinner, nor insists at all upon it as the comprehensive act of God's grace, wherein the operation of the Spirit is included? Would they have an internal ability without an internal worker of it? Would they have faith to come and lay hold of Christ, without an internal manager of that faith, and without an Indwelling principle of strength in the soul to stay and uphold the workmanship of God against all the opposite powers of lust, darkness, unbelief, and self-love?

Now as the righteousness of God in Christ abides on a sinner, so in this righteousness abiding there is a foundation of God's free grace to justify; upon which the Spirit does not only work renewing grace, as faith, repentance, humility, watchfulness; and the whole of sanctification, as joy, comfort, stability, and perseverance therein; but the Spirit abides in the soul as the living principle of grace, dwelling there secretly, silently, surely and faithfully; even though He may at times suspend His comfortable operations, when he reproves our follies, and when He is grieved, ceasing His joyous operations and His glad witness with our spirits, thereby putting us to grief, and making our hearts sad, by the testimonies, text, and -arguments, which He brings against our follies.

He changes the theme He used to insist on, and alters His voice in the Gospel into heavy tidings, which will make any new creature to be sad in heart, and full of grief and heaviness! Forasmuch then as He is the principle of this grief in the soul, He Himself is said to be grieved in the provocation of it. For which cause, He further convinceth us of the sin of grieving the Spirit in His work.

All this latitude now, which is consistent Gospel, and respects the Spirit and His work falls in with preaching of the Gospel, and preaching of the righteousness of God, as the chariot of salvation, in which He rides to take possession of the sinner's heart. But apply it to your offers, all this sinks and dies; it is lost; you bear nothing of it in your free tenders. The propounding of the offer is no external means; it is not the chariot of salvation, praise, state and honor, in which the Spirit comes to execute His office, under Christ's mediatorial righteousness.

Argument 5. To go on. The Holy Spirit's operation in all these respects, namely, in the Gospel, on the heart, in moving the faculty of it towards the Spirit of Jesus, both as the worker and the life of it, and all under the righteousness of God through Christ, depends upon a cause, and will work salvation by nothing that is below that cause, as the true means in the hand of that cause.

The cause of the Spirit's working salvation is jointly the Father and the Son. The preacher then ceaseth to preach the Gospel, while by sinking into his offers, he ceases to ascribe glory to Father and Son, in the joint cause of the Spirit's operation. Now the foundation of that cause is a foreordination of the elect to salvation by an act of the Father, and redemption of the elect to that salvation by an act of the Son, and fore-operation of the Spirit upon the means of that salvation, in His applicatory work, while He is applying salvation from the Father and the Son, who have begun it, and advanced it in and by Jesus Christ. Salvation, as it is managed by the Holy Spirit, depends entirely upon the joint cause of salvation in the covenant of Father and Son, respecting what had been wrought long ago by God and Christ, for the ability of a sinner in a work of faith. This traces the work of salvation by the Holy Spirit, from the beginning thereof. The Spirit works all His works towards salvation, by the Father's pattern, and by Christ's sampler. Therefore the Spirit works them savingly on the elect alone, and in providence for the elect's sake, according to what the Father and Christ have done and purposed.

The Spirit's operation produces a new creature in the work of faith, which is called the operation of God. (Col. 2:12) Then it is the Spirit forms Christ in the soul, lets in the object of faith through the eye of faith, to fall in directly upon the new born soul, that hath this ability created in it to discern Christ: and so Christ is formed in the heart, after the manner any outward object is formed in the eye.

When I say I have such a man or object in my eye, it is not meant that the man or object is in my eye locally; that is impossible; but they are in my eye objectively – I see them. So when it is said Christ is formed in us, or Christ is in us the hope of glory; it is not to be understood that Christ, who is now corporeally at the right hand of God, is locally and substantially formed in us. No, but that Christ, Who

is at the right hand of God, the substantial object of faith, is by the Spirit let in to the soul born from above; so that the soul sees Him by the eye of faith, just as he is represented in the word. So is Christ formed in us.

Neither are these, as the Quakers say we make them, two Christ's, one without us and another within us; whereas they have no Christ, but call the light within them by that name. Christ is not divided; there is but one Lord Jesus Christ, and He is yet at the right hand of God, and we believe on Him as being there. Neither does Christ, formed in us, or Christ in us, the hope of glory, suppose two Christ's, any more than a conception of the object; or of a man seen, supposes two objects, or two men, one in the eye, and another before the eye. It is but one object, or one man still; the conception is in the eye, and the object without the eye.

It is here also, as with the face of a man seen in water: when a man looks into the water, and sees a face there formed by reflection, which directly answers to the face formed without the water; there are not two faces, but one face represented. One face is seen, which casts its own single reflection on the water.

It is the Spirit's work, from ascertain cause, to form Christ in the soul the hope of glory. He creates an eye of faith, to discern God in Christ; and thence by discerning Christ's person and righteousness, to feel a heart wrought to stoop to Christ, and the righteousness of God in Christ, and to use a hand wrought in faith to lay hold upon what is brought to the new creature, convinced of self-weakness; and to use a foot, or the new creature's ability for walking, to go or come to Christ, as the soul is ordered and trained up under divers exercises of Providence, fitted to the said motions, which by faith, through the Spirit's office, can be enabled in the said acts and motions, to discern, to stoop, to receive and lay hold of what is brought! also to go or come, and lay hold again of what is set down in the eye of the soul at a further distance. All such acts as these show that the work of grace is begun and carried on in the soul by operation of grace, and not by offers of grace.

Argument 6, and last. The true means of salvation in the hand of the Spirit, to work the ability of believing, is, by exalting the everlasting covenant of God's grace, far advanced above offers of grace. The everlasting covenant of grace which was made by and among all the three glorious persons of Jehovah, Jehovah the Father, Jehovah the Son, and Jehovah the Spirit, upon the foundation of God's electing love, in His own supreme will and free grace. Also, the Father's gracious mission of the Holy Spirit, as Comforter, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, according to the free and everlasting covenant, neither of whom do mention the least provision made for any blessing on your offers, but do confer the blessing upon the operation of the Spirit, as provided in the covenant with Christ (Isa. 49:42) which means are evangelizing, or preaching effectual grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, as begun, advanced, and perfected by the Glorious Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Nothing short of which is properly glad tidings! It is said of the Spirit, Jn. 15:26, 27, He shall testify of Christ, and ye also shall bear witness. Christ could say this to His disciples, for He knew the covenant that it should be so. But now if an offer could bear witness, yet he that hears the offer cannot from the offer bear witness. For this reason it is not provided in the covenant to be a means of conversion; neither is it provided that he who hears the offer shall bear witness; but it is provided in the covenant that he who hears the right Gospel-preaching, which exalts the witness of the Spirit, shall believe under the hearing, and bear witness of what he hears.

Oh! to come forth, and to preach God's covenant operation of His grace, and not to put off poor sinners with your uncovenanted proffers! If you preached the true means of salvation and did not put souls off

with an offer of the great salvation, You would be ministers and workmen, indeed, that need not be ashamed! And It would be a mighty argument that the Spirit of God attended your ministry! Then you would be enabled to go on and do great things in God's name, and in God's hand, let who would oppose you.

The Lord grant, that the Holy Spirit may teach us to preach Jesus Christ faithfully, and burn up the chaff (of which the offers of Christ are some part) with unquenchable fire, even the holy trying and refining operations of the Spirit.

One of the controversies of the present day is respecting the WILL of God-as to whether His will or man's is the regulating power in the universe, and the procuring cause of salvation to souls. The supremacy of God's will over individual persons and events is questioned. Things are made to turn upon man's will, not on God's. Conversion is made to turn on man's will, not on God's. Man's will, not God's, is to decide what individuals are to enter heaven. Man's pen, and not God's is to write the names of the saved ones in the Lamb's Book of Life! Much zeal is shown for the freedom of man's will, little jealousy seems to be left for the freedom of God's will. Men insist that it is unjust and tyrannical in God to control their wills, yet see nothing unjust, nothing proud, nothing Satanic in attempting to fetter and direct the will of God. Man it seems, cannot have his own foolish will gratified, unless the all-wise God will consent to relinquish His!

Such are some of the steps in the march of Atheism. Such are the preparations making in these last days by the wily usurper for dethroning the Eternal Jehovah.

Horatius Bonar

NOTES:

* It is shown here that the purpose of the evangel or gospel is to call out or convert the quickened elect, and not a means of regeneration, which is the work of the Holy Spirit alone. – W. J. B.

CHAPTER FOUR

AN OFFER OF GRACE IS NOT A GIFT OF GRACE

The third principal point is to prove that an offer of grace is no gift of grace; and then where is your offer?

HOW strangely do men run beyond the bounds of truth and modesty, while their zeal towards the doctrine of the offer drives them into this foolish assertion, which afterwards causes them confidently to utter among the common sort of people, namely, that a gift and an offer are both one. How is that Scripture fulfilled – I will put a bridle in the jaws of the people, causing to err here! Let offerers blush! The transport of their pride does most wretchedly expose their judgment, while it causes me some doubt, whether they can fairly tell me what their free offers mean.

Besides, it can proceed from no regular chain of thought, a trumphant identity. It is mere confusion; for a gift and an offer are never one sort of act, nor one sort of thing acted. To make one thing identically of two, that are so different one from the other, is certainly a very inexcusable fiction of the brain.

I will begin to disprove this error from the Scriptures. The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned; as the Holy Spirit teaches us by the apostle Paul. (1 Cor. 2:14) Consequently a natural man's notion of them, will spoil a spiritual man's apprehension of them, while the spiritual man forsakes the light of the Scriptures, to dress up the matter of a gift of God in his thoughts, which must be according to the assistance he receives from a natural man about it, who is both dark and blind.

My meaning to speak home to this matter is this, that he who goes by the mere help of a dictionary in this matter, will soon Injure his concordance in the very doctrinal parallels of his Bible; and that in very fundamental truths too, by this promiscuous confusion of drawing forth gifts into offers. For what though the infinitive verbs 'dare, donare, proebere, etc'. be promiscuously or mixtly rendered, to offer or proffer, by grammarians; yet still the Holy Bible admits of none of this blind confusion. Nay, if we consult natural men themselves in the turning of words, and do weigh some texts, we may find advantage sufficient on the Gospel's side.

We are told in Latin that offers is to offer or tender, to proffer or propose, and that the phrase *oblatio pecuniae* signifies a tendering of money. Now let us bring this to some pecuniary instances in the Bible, and see what will come of it. Where can we find that the Scriptures afford us evidence to conclude that an offer and a gift are both one? Is a tendering of money the gift of money? Is a tendering of any other human reward the gift of that reward too? I say a human reward; for in this I, begin to fall on humanity; because it is humanity here that has corrupted divinity.

To instance in Naaman the Syrian's offer to Elisha, who plainly, among other natural good things which Naaman calls a blessing, (1 Kings 5:15), tendered him bags of money, as appears by the sequel of the matter, ver. 22, 23. Now know I that there is no God in all the earth, but in Israel: Now, therefore, I pray thee, take a blessing, an earthly blessing, some money of thy servant. Well, this was but a tender of money, no gift thereof for the Prophet refused it, ver. 16, I will receive none. How then could that be given which never was received? It was offered, and that is consistent with a refusal; it was not bestowed, for that is consistent only with an acceptance. Elisha would not meddle with the money, but

it was Gehazi, his covetous servant, who ran after the rich Syrian, and begged of him some of that money, which just before had been offered his master. Gehazi sued for one talent of silver, which is three hundred and seventy-five pounds of our money, but Naaman urged him with a large gift of two talents, or seven hundred and fifty pounds; which was more money than the servant knew what to do with, to bestow on himself. Thus Naaman's proffer and tendering of money to Elisha became Naaman's gift to Elisha's servant, in procuring that servant's acceptance of the money. This proves that a gift of money, and an offer, or tender of money, are two things; although some dictionary-divines may take the liberty of confounding or mingling them as much as they please.

So the Scripture distinguishes (in humanity) the offer of a thing from the gift thereof; as in the instance of Balak's offer to Balaam, (Nu. 22:17) I will promote thee unto very great honor. Thus Balak proffers him an outward reward, which he also magnified into a whatsoever he would have – I will do whatsoever thou sayest unto me – if he would but curse the people of God. And Balaam replies, if Balak would give me (as large as he hath offered me, and far more) even his house full of silver and gold, I cannot go beyond the word of the Lord. Here a large proffer was made in Balak's words, though not so large as in Balaam's; but still, as to gift, which lays in the effectual performance of deeds, there was no gift of the proffer, but an absolute disgrace of Balaam, after the proffer was ineffectually made. The gift was suppressed, while the offer alone was expressed.

If Balak had hit on it, he should have promoted Balaam first of all, that Balaam might have been forestalled by his honor; and then if he had miscarried in his point, Balak could the more notably have degraded him afterwards. But look to Balaam, there was no such thing to be had out of an offer – no gift of honor. For when it came to the upshot, the proffer of whatsoever that covetous wretch would have had, who loved the reward of divination, all vanished from proffer into persecution, and from the proffer of honor into the pouring out of contempt upon Balaam. Num. 24:11, Flee thou to thy place; I thought to promote thee unto great honor; but, lo, the Lord hath kept thee back from honor. An offer of honor here was no gift of the honor. Therefore these two are distinct, even in human things. The Scripture does not confound them.

See what will be made of that instance in Acts 8:18, when Simon Magus saw that through laying on the apostles' hands, the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money. He made an offer of it, but he could not make it a gift. They are distinct things, and cannot be made to be the same things in these instances.

Yet I observe the Greek word in the original is, he brought it near. For so the preposition in a compound is elsewhere rendered, Heb. 10:22, let us draw near. So that in Simon's act towards the apostles, there was an adduction of the money; but the word is not an oblation of the money. Oblation, or offering of money, is laying money before one as an enticement towards a bargain, although nothing of the enticement should prevail, and while it is unknown whether the money will be accepted or rejected; but adduction, or bringing money near one, as this word for Simon's dealing in the case signifies, is such a bringing of it, as wherein it is morally reckoned the money will be accepted, and as ready money is brought, in actual payment of a sum, to him whom the money concerns. Thus Simon brought it near the apostles, and immorally concluded they would take it up and grant him the thing he desired.

So that the translation, he offered them money, comes not home to the elegant original, he brought money near; which the holy apostles rejected with the severest indignation, Thy money perish with thee, etc. And here indeed, although it did not prevail on the apostles to become Simon's gift, yet, an ungodly offer, it brought down an effectual curse upon Simon. By all this it discovered that gifts and offers are very distinct.

We have another instance, in money given into the hands of church-officers, at a collection for the saints, or poor. This is the gift of the congregation's money, not the offer of their money. And it is one thing to give the money in the church, and another thing for the church to propose, as 2 Cor. 8:4, how it shall be distributed. By the whole it appears, even in the distribution of human substance, that a gift of money is another thing than the offer of money. Gifts to the poor, as the phrase is, (Est. 19:22) are not offers to the poor. What advantage then have men of their offers, from their dictionary in the dark, while the Bible concordance gives us such an exposition in light?

Further, in the distribution of human gifts: A gift either finds, or effectually procures acceptance, or it is no gift. Indeed, in the nature of gifts in general, there must be a mutual concurrence on both sides. A gift is effectual, to find and make acceptance; an offer is ineffectual, it neither finds nor makes acceptance: because it ceases not to be an offer, and so falls short of a gift, specifically distinguished by the acceptance. It is not contrary to the nature of an offer, that it is tendered on one side, and yet rejected on the other. But giving and having are reciprocal, i. e. where one is, there the other is too. Prov. 17:8. A gift is as a precious stone in the eyes of him that hath it: as he values is upon the score of possession, so it becomes a gift because he hath it. But offering and having are not reciprocal. (Prov. 19:6)

Every man is a friend to him that giveth gifts. That giveth gifts, not that offereth offers. Sure then they are distinct. So Prov. 18:16, A man's gift maketh room for him. He that starves not a cause in seeing it, hath counsel enough to plead for him. The reason is, his gift prevails, and is effectual on the part of the receiver, to make him a possessor, as well as effectual on the part of the giver so as not to be alienated from his own possession any longer. Whereas a man's offering, which, at most, is bargaining, may leave him but where he was.

And be sure, if a man's gift makes room for him, God's gift is so effectual, that it much more makes room for God in Christ, by His Spirit, to enter the heart of a sinner. So Prov. 21:14, A gift in secret pacifieth anger. But an offer only defers anger, if it be hearkened to at all; and if it be not hearkened to, the proposal inflameth anger, as Prov. 6:35.

Next is the consideration of common gifts of God, or divine gifts in human things. A gift is effectual, in what kind soever it is. The wise man says, (Eccl. 3:13) that eating, drinking, and enjoying the good of a man's labor, is the gift of God. It is not written, it is the offer of God, the tender of God. No, but the gift of God. Then they be not both one thing. The rich men, (Lu. 21:1) did not make proposals of their bounty, but cast their gifts into the treasury; and this also was of God that opened their hearts to do what they did, Who yet opened the widow's heart more, though she threw in but two mites, because she cast in all that she had, summed up in one farthing. And here we see in God's gift of human things, giving and having are reciprocal and mutual. 1 Cor. 7:7, Every man hath his proper gift. It is not offered him, so as that he might have it if he would, or he hath it not because he refuses it. But every man has it, the text says. Where one is the other is. Where the gift is, the having of the gift is too. On the other hand, having and offering are not reciprocal. Why then do we make fools of ourselves with the notion of a grace-offer? Besides, it is said of God, in the dispensation of natural and spiritual blessings, He giveth, whereas it would spoil the sense to say, He offereth. Therefore these twain are not the same thing.

For,

1. This is proved in natural things. Acts 17:25, He giveth to all life and breath and all things. It is not He offers life and breath and all things. So 1 Tim. 6:17, The living God giveth us richly all things to enjoy. It is not He proffers us richly, etc. Thus Job 5:10, Who giveth rain upon the earth, and sendeth waters upon the fields. It is not, Who tenders rain by causing His thick rainy clouds to hang over, or before the earth, as they say a tender of grace is laid before a sinner: but the Holy Spirit says, Who giveth rain and sends it. These are operative phrases. So Jer. 5:24, Let us now fear the Lord our God that giveth rain, both the former and the latter, in his season. He giveth rain, not He offereth rain. Accordingly, Psalm 147:16, He giveth snow like wool. Now, if he offered it, as sometimes clouds in hard frosty seasons make a show of, but do not yield it, neither does it come, so the earth cannot receive it. Also, ver. 7, He giveth food to the hungry, with ver. 9. He giveth to the beast his food. And Ecel. 2:16, God giveth to man that which is good. Likewise, Jer. 31:35, he giveth the sun for a light, etc. Yea, Eccl. 5:18. God giveth unto Man the days of his life. It is not in any of those natural things, spoken of as in an ineffectual way, as God offereth to man or beast. Not so. Then giving and offering are not both one.

2. This is proved in spiritual things. Isa. 9:6, Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. So 1 Thess. 4:8, God has also given to us His Holy Spirit. It is not, to us a Son is offered, nor that God hath offered His Holy Spirit. It is said, 2 Peter 1:3, 4, His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue; whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious promises.

The promises are not offered, but are given us, and Christ keeps the gift in His own hand for us, and so manages it to serve all the gracious ends of the donor, Psalm 16:17, I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel. And Heb. 2:13, Behold I, and the children which God hath given Me. Also Job 35:10, He gives songs in the night. And Isa. 40:29, He gives power to the faint. Moreover, Psalm 84:12, He gives grace and glory; and that is quite another thing than the offer of grace and glory. Also Phil. 1:29, Unto you it IS given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake. So the object 'of faith is given, Jn. 6:32, Moses gave you not that bread from Heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from Heaven. And 2 Thess. 2:16, God even our Father, which hath loved us, and has given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace. Again, Prov. 3:34, God resisteth the proud, but He giveth grace unto the lowly. And Job 34:29, He giveth quietness; not He propounds the offer of quietness. So 2 Tim. 3:16, All Scripture is given by inspiration of God. The Scripture is not offered, but bestowed. Then in John 14:27, It is My peace I give unto you. Also Mal. 2:5, My covenant was with him (with Levi) of life and peace, and I gave them to him, even the fear wherewith he feared me, and was afraid before My name. So 2 Cor. 3:6, The Spirit giveth life. And Jas. 1:5, if any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, Who giveth liberally – and it shall be given him. And lastly, I Cor. 15:57, Thanks be to God Who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. So that a gift is no offer.

Objection: Gifts and offers in Scripture seem to be coincident, or words that mean one and the same thing, as Psalm 72:10. The kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Therefore gifts may be offered.

Answer: Gifts and offers in Scripture have been plainly distinguished; and therefore no instances can be brought down to prove a coincidence. Whatever that phrase, shall offer gifts, may mean, it doth not justify the pretension, so long as offer signifies proffer, for that is the sense in which we are distinguishing it. That phrase of the Psalmist signifies the *Minchah*, among the Hebrews, or the

unbloody sacrifice, a gift and present made in the offerings of God, under the law; as appears by the Apostle's use of the phrase, in his coupling it with the Zebach or bloody sacrifice. For sacrifice and gift went together in the same legal worship at the altar. Heb. 5:1, Every high priest taken among men, is ordained of men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices. So Heb. 8:3, 4. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: and there are priests that offer gifts according to the law. So as that in Psalm 72:10, the term is used for the offering of gifts, in the same sense as gifts were offered to God at the altar; and what is this to the offer of grace and offer of Christ to sinners for their acceptance? What cognation or kin is there between the two phrases? I see none. Again, Heb. 9:9, in the first tabernacle were offered both gifts and sacrifices. And Heb. 11:4, By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying to his gifts. His sacrifice,[1] in the repetition of the same thing, is called his gift.

So that we see a gift and an offering, where they are coincident, are of kin; but in the dry offerings, and also in the law of the Zabachim, or bloody sacrifices. But yet they are not so of kin in the preaching of the Gospel to sinners, as to make a gift of the Gospel and an offer of the Gospel to be the same thing. No, it will not hold to argue that these are the same, because offering of sacrifice and gift of sacrifice are sometimes understood to be the same thing; for we have express Scripture to identify a gift and an offering to God, but none to identify a gift of Christ and an offer of Christ to be the same to a sinner. The phrase of the Psalmist evidently comports with the Judaical institution about the offering of the Minchah, the dry sacrifice or gift; to which particular there are many texts in the Old Testament that speak. And upon this ground that phrase of sacrificing praise to God is to be understood; because it holds good even under the New Testament, that praise is one, of the spiritual, or unbloody sacrifices, like the Minchah, except as sprinkled with the blood of Christ when offered up to God. For he that offereth praise glorifies God, Psa. 50:23. Also, tinder grace, by Christ Jesus we are to offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name, instead of offering to God the fruit of the ground, and the first-fruits of all our Increase, as those did under the law: therefore, "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Heb. 13:15, 16)

But farther, as to Psalm 72:10, I need only to observe, that the phrase of offering gifts is Common to all sorts of things given to God in general, and therein comprehends the gifts, which even according to the law of the Minchah, the kings of Sheba and Seba, or the wise men from the East, should offer gifts to the Lord Christ, which they did of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. (Matt. 2: 11)

We have the same phrase of offering gifts applied also to the Jewish first-born, who were given offered to God under the law. The place is Ezek. 20:31, which answers to this phrase of the Psalmist, When ye offer your gifts, saith the Lord God, ye make your sons to pass through the fire, ye pollute yourselves with all your Idols, even unto this day. When ye offer your gifts, what is the meaning? Why, when you offer your first born, you do it after the manner of the idolatrous ceremonies of Moloch. Their firstborn were their principal gifts, which, as they thought they offered to God. These were the first-born of man and beast. They were given to God, according to his own institution. (Ex. 13:2, 12) The ground of it was in remembrance that the first-born of Israel were preserved, when all Egypt were smitten in their first-born, and destroyed.

You, pollute yourselves, says God, with your idols, in that you make your sons to pass through the fire, pretending to dedicate them to me according to the statutes of Molock, which I have severely forbidden. (Lev. 20:1, 2)

That is the meaning of the place in Ezekiel. Now the kings of Sheba and Seba (or the princes, the chief ones for human wisdom, as the wise queen of Sheba who came from the South) offered gifts: it was a part of Christ's right, that He should receive honorary gifts, and offerings of sustenance in His Infancy. Accordingly, the wise men from the East, the princes or chiefs of all the Arabian astronomers, devoted and gave their substance to the Lord Christ, Who, as God, telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names, yet as the Infant Jesus, He was born king of the Jews. Therefore it was that they gave Him honorary hire, as the Hebrew-root for gift in Psalm 72:10 will bear. Shall offer gifts. It is spoken in the same sense with offer an offering unto the Lord, even in the sense of sacrificing, or offering at the altar; and Christ being an altar too in His priestly consecration by God, whereof, or of which offerings at that altar we have a right to eat. The gifts presented to Him, were in the offering of the wise men, and likewise in our offering of praise to God, sanctified by the altar.

Beside, the word here in Psalm 72:10 to offer is but a word that appertains to the external act of drawing near to the object; and yet hath no Inherent power to enter those it comes near to. It comes from a Hebrew root that signifies only to approach, or draw near, Karab, he approached, came to, or was near.

The word from the same root, is used about offering sacrifice of sweet odors in the original, of Chaldee of Ezra 6:10. That they may offer sacrifices, or Mehakrebin, offering sacrifices, as we read it in the participle. So the gifts of those rich men, Luke 21:1, are called the offerings of God. The phrase, therefore, of offering[2] gifts, in Psalm 72:10 is not any proof that a gift of grace in the Gospel, and an offer of grace, are one and the same thing, as some would pretend.

APPLICATION OF THE GOSPEL

Let us come fully to the matters of the Gospel, and there let us see how an offer can claim equal efficacy with a gift; and how men can prove them both one in the matter before us. Be sure, the gifts and calling of God go together, and both are without repentance. (Rom. 11:29)

1. In the Gospel we have positively God's gift of Christ, which no offer can come up to. I argue, therefore, from the efficacy of the gift against the inefficacy of the offer, to prove, they are not the same in preaching the Gospel, or as means of converting sinners.

God's gift of Christ effectually procures acceptance; it is contrary to the nature of the gift of God, that there should be no effectual acceptance of what is given. The Son of God did receive on Him the gift of God, and was to all the full intents of God's purposes the Mediator, the Father giving Him to be Christ, or giving the manhood of Christ unto His only begotten Son, that His Son thereby effectually became the one Mediator in the one person of Christ as God-man; and although the elect, for some time after their being in the world, may not know this gift, may not receive this gift themselves, yet their Head (agreeable to the nature of a head) first knew it, and received the gift of God in Himself for them. Hence John 4:10, If thou knewest the gift of God, etc.

It was an absolute gift, and had been received, though the woman of Samaria, when she first met Jesus, as yet had not received it. Yet it had been received in the settlement by the Son of God, who chose to become Christ the free-gift, before any person in the world had received, or could receive the same gift.

A gift always is effectual, an offer Ineffectual. See John 3:16, God gave His only begotten Son. God gave Him into the world in visible human nature from the womb of the Virgin, according to the secret

settlement of Christ; in which womb he was effectually received, under the overshadowing of the power of the Highest, and hence received by as many as receive power to believe on Him.

2. In the Gospel we have directly God's gift of the Spirit, or the Holy Spirit, by and through Christ, which no offer of the Spirit can equal, for it is an effectual conveyance, and so not an offer, for that is ineffectual.

(1) The gift of the Spirit's person, as the Paraclete or as in office called another Comforter, besides Christ, to accomplish the same ends, which is manifestly above any offer of grace. He Himself is bestowed, as the Comforter, or as a person in office, to work and maintain His gifts and graces. Thus Acts 2:38, Ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit; for as one person in office was given, which person is Christ, as the object of faith; so another person is given to be a sealer, after He is given as a sanctifier, and that other person is the Spirit or the Holy Spirit. Again, Acts 8:18, The Holy Spirit was given. He is called the gift of God.

(2) The gift, as to His several distributions in the offices, or distributions of His gifts to the church; unto some members in one kind; unto some again in another kind. Thus Heb. 2:4. The apostle speaks of these distributions, as God the Holy Spirit's gifts according to His own will.

Above all, the distribution of them is most plenteously displayed, 1 Cor. 12, where, ver. 1, they are called spirituals, i. e. spiritual gifts, gifts of the Spirit, or gifts that accompany the gift of His person in the free bestowment of Himself on the elect of God. The same are called, verse 4, diversities of gifts, but by the same spirit, Who works them and maintains them according to the will of God yea, they are called diversities of operations, verse 6. This plainly distinguishes gifts from offers, for grace-offers can be no grace operations, verses 9, 28, 39. Other distributions of these gifts, as suited to the former times of working miracles, are called the gifts of healing.

These could be no offers because of their efficacy and operations. So that, let us instance where we may, in Scripture, gifts are most certainly not offers: because these gifts being spiritual, to distinguish them from all temporal gifts, they are called the best gifts, ver. 7.

How then will men, who make preaching of Christ and offering of Christ to be both one thing, reconcile this, that the offer and the gift of Christ are one thing too? The gift of Christ and preaching of Christ surely are distinct things.

Preaching of Christ does not lie in tendering but in proclaiming the glad tidings. It lies in showing, telling, and declaring the things of the kingdom of God. These are the proper acts of our ministry in the word and doctrine. Then preaching, and the gift of what is preached, are not the same. Therefore, if you supposed that preaching of Christ and tendering of Christ were both one, yet still gift and offer could not be one. For preaching lies in glad tidings, but the gift of what is preached, is an effectual interest in the glad tidings. And these are very distinct. Besides, gift in the things of Christ and the Gospel is never called offer, proffer, tender, as we can find in the Bible, neither in the original, nor in the translations.

And it is strange to me, if they were both one, why a gift should not be sometimes rendered an offer in the translation, or at least sometimes rectified in the margin, which we do not find. Without doubt it would have been so if preaching the Gospel, and the gift by grace, had been the same as an offer or a proffer of the Gospel. Are these words and phrases ever used synonymously in our Bibles? How readest thou? Men have taken up an ill custom, and they seem loath the people should take notice they

have been mistaken! But nevertheless the people do see it, and will see it more and more. Yea, the more men seek by such means to cover their nakedness, the more they expose it.

BESTOWAL OF GIFTS

Gifts of the Gospel, explained as such, are in God's word thus distinguished: gifts for, gifts to, gifts upon, and gifts into. I may pursue it according to this quadruple distinction.

1. Gifts for. Gifts are for the elect, and are received by one chosen for them, even by their head, before they are accepted of themselves who are the heirs. As the Holy Spirit says, Ps. 68:18, Thou hast received gifts for men. They are effectual gifts, inasmuch as they are received by another, even the Lord that hath chosen Zion, the Lord Christ for them; or rather, according to the original, in the man. Thou, O Son of God! hast received gifts in the man, in the Man Jesus, the chosen of God, as the head of the corner, for every one of the members; and so in the Man for all the elect of God.

Thus Christ Himself, the man in the Son of God, is a gift of God for, that is, for His people to know and believe on, in the time God hath set. This truth will appear in Scripture under a double branch of donation.

As to God's gift of Christ for. So Rom. 8:32, He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, i. e. gave Him for us all. This act of God, in giving Him to the cross for us, was effectual in Him that was so given; for He was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Here a gift is distinguished from an offer, and cannot be the same.

As to Christ's gift of Himself, for, in point of saving benefit, as the preposition signifies. This also was an effectual act. Gal. 1:4, He gave Himself for our sins. He gave Himself, being above the power of them, to bear away the heavy burden, as a porter bears away a load, as the word Sebalam, Isa. 53:4 signifies. That is, gave Himself to come under the imputation of them. Here was not an offer of grace but an operation of grace. So Gal. 2:20-The Son of God loved me, and gave Himself for me, says Paul. He gave Himself for me to out-reach and supersede the power of my own sins in particular.

And withal, Eph. 5:25, Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it, even for the church, to sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water (or with the abundant gift of the Holy Spirit) by the word, verse 26. Likewise, Tit. 2:14, Who gave Himself for us, to wit, for this end, That He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works, verse 14. And Jn. 10:11, The good shepherd giveth His life for the sheep; for this end, that the sheep may be saved unto a life of grace here, and into everlasting life and glory hereafter. Who gave His life a ransom for all, saith that scripture, 1 Tim. 2:6, for all who have their election of God.

In point of substitution and suretyship, as the preposition, or that sort of for signifies. See Matt. 20:28. The son of man came to give His life a ransom for many; in the stead of many, or in the room and place of many. To give His life for many; not to propound the offer of His life for many.

2. Gifts are to. The meaning is, they are discriminating and personal, when or wherever the term is used in the Gospel. Gifts are spoken of on behalf of some one person, as he is by special grace singled out from every creature.

The elect are given unto Christ, by a self-moving act of God within himself, purposed from eternity. Neither is there any other Head or Savior trusted with the bestowment of these gifts, but He in Whom God's soul delighteth. Our persons are an absolute gift to Christ, without any qualifications foreviewed

in them, to incline God to the choice: and is immediately by a gift of God the Father, Jn. 17:6, Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me. Thou didst not propound the offer, but didst promote Thine own free choice. And Jn. 6:37, All that the Father hath given unto Me shall come unto Me. Unto Me!

It is a mighty effectual act, which an offer is not. The Father hath given many to be under Christ, Who were never given to be in Christ, or to be of the mystical body in the everlasting church above. This giving unto, is a very effectual gift.

Christ is given unto the elect. Unto them! so that there is a conveyance of the grant and purchase. He is given, in His person, to be a head over all unto the church, which is His body, Eph. 1:22. All are not His body. His body is of different states. Some of His body are glorified already; some are called, and not yet glorified; others are neither yet glorified, nor yet called. But yet all are of His mystical body still, and shall be called and glorified, if there was no other reason for the assertion but Christ's interest; because they make up Christ's fullness, ver. 23.

Again, He is given in His righteousness, unto the elect of God. This righteousness, unto the elect of God, is the gift, Rom. 5:16. And the gift by grace, verse 15. And the free gift, verses 15, 16. And is expressly the gift of righteousness, verse 17. (The term offer, is all along shut out, as too low for grace.) And Rom. 6:23, The gift of God is eternal life. For as death, the wages of sin, is paid, not offered, for eternal life, being the gift of God, in opposition to wages, is not offered, but bestowed.

And yet ministers come with their propounding the offer, and tell sinners the offer of God is eternal life. Oh! how do these fat ones on earth, when they eat and worship, stain the velvet cushion by pouring out foolishness, and changing the truth of God into a lie!

The Spirit is given unto the saints, Acts 11:17. God gave them (the Gentiles) the like gift, as He did unto us. So Matt. 7:11, If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more then shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him? Which text, compared with Luke 11:13, bring us to this interpretation of the Scripture by Scripture, that the good things which are given to God's children by their Father, are summed up in this one gift, the Spirit of Christ. And why? because the Holy Spirit is the worker and the principle of the good things. Wheresoever God hath given Christ, He giveth the Spirit of Christ to be and to testify of Him.

Grace and privilege are given unto the elect. Thus says the apostle, Unto every one of us is given grace. And Acts 11:18, Then hath God also unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life: There is grace as a fruit of the Spirit; and likewise by the same Spirit there is the fruit of the ministry, in the spiritual distribution of the Holy Spirit, given by preaching the Gospel. So Rom. 1:11, I long to see you, says the apostle of the Gentiles, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end that you may be established; that is, more grace of the Gospel under privilege and operation of the Spirit; and other gifts of Christ by His Spirit, as pastors or officers of the church, made such by the Holy Spirit, for the ministry of the Gospel; both extraordinary officers given to some churches, as apostles, prophets, and evangelists; and ordinary officers given unto others, who continue, in the said grant, being pastors and teachers of the saints and mystical body of Christ, Eph. 4:11, 12. All are for His body, the church.

He does not name to whom they are given, as sinners; but in naming the officers or ministers, he comprehends the objects to whom they are given by grace, as to their mystical relation, being the body of Christ, though so many thousands of them may be yet in their blood, unconverted.

What an encouragement is here for faithful ministers of Christ, in all ages, to go on, and preach the absolute gospel, and throw away all their offers, with their if's and but's, (as ill placed) being assured that Christ will own their labors, by His Spirit, Who preach the pure and unmixed Gospel to sinners, holding Christ in view; because it will be for the perfecting of saints in the end; being sure to have them brought forth under the spiritual labors of such ministry.

Also verse 12 shows it to be a grant unto the church, as the most special object of grace. Verse 8. He gave gifts unto men. That is, by His gifts he discriminated men from evil angels who received no benefit by Christ; for in His ascending, when He had given gifts unto men, He spoiled the very chief of them that were fallen angels, the devils, even principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it, Col. 2:15, after He had wrought out a full victory for such as He had chosen and had not cast away.

In all these instances the matter is home: a gift is unto, but an offer is before, and laid down over against the sinner; and there, according to the nature of a proposal, stops, and comes on no further than midway-block. How, then, is a gift and offer the same thing?

3. Gifts are upon. Upon the person favored. The gift of Christ's righteousness, even the free gift, came upon all men (saved by grace) unto justification of life, Rom. 15:18. All the elect of God are universally powerless and passive under it. There is not one of the whole number that concurs in the least unto it.

The gift of the Spirit is upon. So in Acts 10:44, 45, While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision (the Jews) which believed, were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit. And 'Mt. 3:5, 6, The Holy Spirit, which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. Where now will you find an offer upon any? An offer cannot close, it sticks upon terms, and stands aloof from the sore.

It talks of wine and oil, but pours none on. Whereas the Gospel is a free gift: When they had nothing to pay, (neither Pharisee nor Publican) he frankly forgave them both. Oh! now this works upon a sinner. The Holy Spirit is in it. The power of mortification eats into old Adam, and, as a principle of new life, takes away the disease sweetly. But then,

The gift of a common mercy may be upon men. We read of such an outward mercy as has eminently come on God's servants, in the fruit of prayer. As the Spirit, Who works up the heart to Gospel prayer, and is the principle of it in the soul, comes from God in Christ, so the mercy bestowed is a fruit of prayer, as prayer is a fruit of the Spirit, and that mercy is a gift upon us: and this must be the meaning of that place, 2 Cor. 1:11, You, also, helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift upon us, by the means of many persons, thanks may be given by many on your behalf.

The gift here meant, was that gracious deliverance from death; aye, from a very severe sentence of death for the cause of Christ, which Paul and Timothy had been threatened with by their persecutors, and of which death they had the sentence in themselves, concluding they should not escape the peril, and that there would be no further enlargement for them. However the prayer of many, praying in the Holy Spirit, altered the case; for God, by this means, granted their deliverance from so great a death at that time, as was in all appearance at hand, and ready for them in a perilous hour. This he calls a gift upon them by the means of many. It came upon them from God the Spirit effectively, who wrought it

out graciously for them, and was bestowed on them by the means of many; it being evidently an answer to their prayer, and obtained by the Intercession of many.

4. Gifts are into. Spiritual gifts, into the nature of the person endowed. The gift is in wrought by the Spirit; as the word for in wrought prayer is called effectual fervent prayer, James 5:16. And hereby God's Gospel gifts procure effectual acceptance of the sinner. Hence God's Spirit being given, is put within a man, within the nature of persons effectually wrought on. Therefore, Eph. 2:8, By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. Faith is within us; and if faith be a gift, that gift is within us. But now let any man tell me how offers can be within a man, whereas it is the nature of an offer to be only without a man? Upon the whole, it is plain, that an offer is not equal to a gift. An offer approaches, but a gift enters. An offer is near, but God's gifts come home upon and within one. Thus I have proved that an offer of grace is no gift of grace to sinners.

Last of all. Upon the matter of this chapter I ask, Why does not the preacher sometimes say, Here I give you Christ, sinners! as well as he will dare to say, Here I offer you Christ, sinners! If a gift of Christ and an offer of Christ be both one? But surely his own modesty would blush at the harshness of the expressions, Here, sinner, I give you Christ, I give you salvation! Why, then, does not their wisdom blush at their folly of confounding these two things, and running both into one? Is it not because their folly is overlaid with flint and obstinacy? And till God takes away the stony heart, and gives them an heart of flesh, they cannot be ashamed, or blush thereat.

An honest and faithful minister of Christ comes and tells sinners, from the scriptures, that man is by nature, in a dangerous condition; that his house is tumbling about his ears; that his natural state is corrupt and rotten; that nothing of the original frame will serve; that old things must be done away, and all things become new. Next in steps an Arminian, and blows up the sinner's pride by telling him that he is neither so weak, nor so wicked as the other represents him; that a little patching and whitewashing will set all to rights without taking any part of the building down. "If thou wilt," says he. "Thou mayst repent, believe, be good, and endure to the end, or at least, by exerting thy natural abilities, thou'lt oblige God to lend an helping hand to thy endeavors, and super-add what thou hast not." This is the workman, that will please proud men best.

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NOTES:

1. Every sacrifice is an offering till accepted, and then it is a gift.
2. Offerings while presented, and gifts when accepted.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW CAN WE PREACH THE GOSPEL IF WE DO NOT OFFER CHRIST?

A solution of the grand question: How must we preach the Gospel, if we do not offer the Gospel? Or, How must we preach Christ to sinners if we do not offer Christ to sinners?

Objection: Sir, we are sorry you have struck at the ministry of wise, great, and learned men, far beyond yourself. Pray, if we are not to follow them in this method of the ministry, how must we preach? And for my part, says one, I cannot preach the Gospel if I do not propound the offer of the Gospel to sinners; nor can I reckon that I do preach the Gospel, unless I tender salvation to all whom I am called to preach; nor dare I do otherwise.

Answer: I might take notice that this is poor arguing, when set in the face of the three former Chapters, the strength of which is founded on God's word and Spirit. Nevertheless, if men are at a loss how to preach, unless they go on in the old road, let me solve the inquiry more fully. I must divide my answers, 1. Into one general resolution of the case, How preaching the Gospel must be, and to what end without offers of salvation. 2. Enter into many particulars to resolve this point.

The one general solution to the question is this, We must preach the doctrine of salvation to all sinners, in general, within the hearing; and must preach salvation Included in the doctrine, which is the gift of God, to the elect alone, who are hid among them.

But as to propounding the offer, either of the doctrine or effectual salvation, it is a form of man's devising; and because of the evil nature of it, as I shall show hereafter, we must do it in no respect. Men must preach the Word of God, and the testimony held; that is, they must preach so as to fulfill the Scriptures, which everywhere speaks of evangelizing, or of preaching the Gospel, or, what is in its own nature, good news and glad tidings, which, likewise, in the whole analogy of faith, do give us light to expound the preaching of the gospel according to the above distinctions, but do nowhere speak of propounding an offer, or tendering either doctrine or salvation.

As to preaching the doctrine of the gospel to all, though the salvation of it reach but to the elect alone, the advantage is much every way, as the apostle says; chiefly, because the wisdom of God, the government of Christ, the interest of the church, and the sword of justice, are all magnified, by the preaching of the doctrine of the Gospel to all sorts of sinners, without offers of grace, or proposals of salvation made.

1. From the wisdom of God I argue the solution 'Of the question, How must we preach the Gospel to sinners, if we do not offer the Gospel to sinners?

Answer. We must preach the Gospel in the doctrine. This is to be made known in the letter, or external revelation, to all; because the wisdom of God in that doctrine has engaged to confound the wisdom of this world, I Cor. 1:18. For the preaching of the cross is, to them that perish, foolishness. The doctrine of the cross of Christ then, or the doctrine of salvation, in which the salvation is brought to the elect alone, is a doctrine that must be preached for condemnation even to them that perish: or else, how will the wisdom of God in preaching it appear to be foolishness to them that perish? Especially while they

follow man's wisdom, which aims to alter God's way of wisdom, and forsakes His wisdom for their own way of preaching. So verse 21. For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching (and what was then, is now, the foolishness of preaching, which contradicted, and still contradicts, the method and wisdom the times have contrived,) to save them that believe.

However, there be many ways of deviating from the Apostle's pattern of preaching, some far more gross than others, as I have plentifully insisted upon in my last book about the Glory of Christ unveiled; yet this more refined device of offering Christ, when we should keep to the pattern of Preaching, (especially while one generation has mellowed it for another generation to gather it,) makes the true pattern to be accounted foolishness; while men have found wisdom to change the form of preaching Christ into the modern form of offering Him, God's wisdom in His grace has contrived a way of saving His elect, which the world must hear of, even the efficacy of what they account to be foolishness of preaching, to the end, that man's wisdom may be baffled, and God's wisdom glorified. So Acts 9:22. Paul, in preaching the doctrine of Christ to the enemies of Christ, in their synagogues, increased the more in strength, and confounded, by the wisdom of God in the Old Testament, the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, proving that this is very Christ.

You may be sure he did not carry himself in the matter with what men now-a-days call temper, or candor, which are new phrases, calculated only to make the Gospel beg for its entertainment in the world. The synagogues opposed him, but he had strength from Heaven to confound them all. We read of none converted by it at Damascus. What then? The Gospel is preached, and the end is answered; namely, God's wisdom is glorified while the faith is preached which once Paul destroyed, Gal. 1:23. The wisdom of God must be preached to sinners, and the report made, though not one soul be converted by the grace of God in all that synagogue. The net must be let down into the waters, though the fish may not lie where the net comes, and a man may toil all night and take nothing. This is a mighty argument for preaching the doctrine of Christ, where the salvation in the doctrine, or the power of it, may not be applied to one person.

2. I argue from the kingdom and government of Jesus Christ. There is a singular advantage reaped by the right of Christ's government. It is therefore called preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom of God, Mark 1: 14. And again, Matt. 24:14. The Gospel of the kingdom shall be preached for a witness in all the world. The preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom is preaching of a high and heavenly dispensation in the hands of the Lord Christ, that is above all human, secular, and temporal interests in the world. The Gospel of the kingdom of God is above all methods and ministrations of the wise and teamed, or of their ways of preaching. It consists not in humanity or natural affection, which now passeth for divinity. No, nor in second-hand offers, which force out of the gift of God, and dishonor the operations of the Spirit. The way of man is wide from the paths of wisdom; man, left to himself, in the pride and stoutness of his mind, will adhere unto darkness and vanity, until God has hedged up his way with thorns, by humbling or silencing him in the dust!

The Gospel belongs to a high and glorious kingdom, and shall give way to no one on earth. All interests, dominations, wisdoms, ways, and forms under Heaven, shall stoop or be broken by our Lord Christ's kingdom and scepter, in the efficacy of His Almighty Spirit! All the pride, wisdom, thoughts, and ways of man, must stoop, and shall give way unto the Gospel, the Gospel of the kingdom of God!

The preaching of the Gospel, therefore, is not only to save such souls as are given of God to him who is elect, precious; but it is also to show Christ's greatness in the work, and is part of the travail of his soul,

to see the saved brought into Gospel obedience, out of which number his glorious kingdom shall arise, and be exalted above the tops of the mountains for order, ultimately in the kingdom of glory, as now in the kingdom of grace. Christ's present kingdom, on earth, is not of this world, but differs from all other kingdoms; so this order, I say, is, and shall be, a special fruit of the Gospel; consequently, the government of the spiritual Kingdom of Christ, under the success of the Gospel, is to be propagated everywhere for the elect's sake in the face of men, though they may persecute and despise it.

All the world must thus hear of Christ's greatness, and the report of His doctrine, which, as a king, he hath received by authority from the Father to bring into the world, though they can neither enjoy the salvation, nor believe into Christ's person without power from Him. Do not the ministers of Christ know how to preach the Gospel to sinners, that the non-elect may believe the testimony of Jesus, without offers of grace to them?

Christ hath a monarchical government in an the world; all the world are subjects of it in providential administrations. He has also a special government in the churches of Christ, and in the consciences of believers. The scepter of His government of the world extends regally beyond the saving virtue of His priesthood. The Gospel, therefore, by virtue of this extensive government, is to be preached on the behalf of God's elect to all people, to all sorts of sinners, under the whole heavens, in season and out of season, wheresoever there is an opportunity to utter the joyful sound. Millions of non-elect sinners have been, and must be, though under other sins, respited; and have not been, nor shall be, damned, till they have heard the Gospel, and sinned against it (more than all their other sins amount to) by despising the wisdom of God in it, and trampling on the government of Christ set up among the elect, being included within the monarchical government of Christ extending over all the world.

The Jews had the doctrine of Christ preached to the body of them throughout their towns, cities, and villages, to show God's sovereignty in commanding them to bow to His Christ's authority, though He had not given Mm to be a Savior to any except His elect body.

The kingdom of God is concerned in it: therefore, though you do not offer salvation to sinners, you must preach the kingdom of God to sinners. The Jews had it preached to them. (Acts 28:31) And the elect of God among the Gentiles had it preached thus to them, openly, in the face of the day. It was preaching of the kingdom of God, or God's will, who would have the election to obtain it, though the rest were blinded; and it should be done, whether the world would or no. (Acts 20:25) I have gone among you all, says the apostle to them at Ephesus, preaching the kingdom of God.

Oh! This kingdom of God, this sovereignty, this same I will, and you shall, among the people, makes free-will to buckle, and puts Satan's kingdom under daily contribution. When men were sent forth by the Holy Spirit, they preached the Word of God to hearers whom they might be morally confident would oppose, Instead of receive the truth as it is in Jesus. When Paul and Barnabus were set forth by the Church at Antioch, they went each of them to Salamis, among the self-justiciaries, and the zealous enemies of the Gospel, yet, (Acts 13:5) they preached the Word of God in the synagogues of the Jews. The Jews everywhere, good and bad, must hear of this man's scepter, and the record that God hath given of His Son, though they had no right to His blood; and that in an especial manner, as He was the King of the Jews, though they impudently derided Him with the title.

He is a special king to crush gain-sayers, as well as a special king to defend the Church, or all those who by virtue of His blood believe on Him, and regard His pure worship entirely. The Holy Spirit says, He shall be great, Luke 1:32.

Well then, shall not enemies hear of His kingdom, as well as the elect of God hear of His salvation? He shall be called the Son of the Highest. Oh! blessed be God for this, it makes me not to fear men nor their reproaches, nor their hatred, nor their standing aloof from me; (as if the poor creatures were afraid of catching the plague in coming near me, so little have they of Christ); it tells me, when they come to town, to keep off the infection.

We should be bold in Christ's cause, and they who are made free by the truth are so. Since we see Christ is to be exalted in our preaching, do any of His ministers now, who read this, cry out, How shall we preach the Gospel, if we do not offer the salvation of the Gospel to sinners? The Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David, and He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there shall be no end. This is the good news which we tell to all sinners, as we have opportunity, within the hearing, whether they will hear or forbear. Luke 19, though His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us. Yet what came of it; could they withstand this mighty king, after the solemnities of His coronation? No; verse 27, But, saith He, those, Mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, ye angels of God, that are strong enough to bind them, and slay them before Me. But it is good news to God's people, who, though for the Gospel's sake they are disturbed by the adversaries of the Lord Christ, and of His throne, yet here is a scope to preach the Gospel of His kingly office, the Gospel of the kingdom, since He is a king to them to whom he is no priest.

But now do you go and offer Christ, for a priest to all sinners without distinction, and so give them all secret hopes of salvation? And then cry, if we do not preach the gospel with offers, how shall we preach the Gospel to sinners? The text tells you, you must preach the Gospel of the kingdom to them: exalt Christ. Do this, then, when you do not preach the Gospel of the blood of Christ to them. For that is a blessing of the kingdom, and to be given to none but to them for whom it is prepared. How can he be a priest to all, if he hath not died for all as an atoning sacrifice?

So, then, as many were made, only to be ruled over by Christ as a king, there is enough of the Gospel to be preached to them; namely, the Gospel of the kingdom of God. Ministers are not to offer the salvation, but to preach the Gospel of the kingdom to all sinners that come within the sound of it. That is, you must preach that the Gospel comes down from Him who hath a royal and supreme scepter in His hand, and that He will give His efficacious blood and His Holy Spirit to whom He pleases. This is the Gospel of the kingdom; that effectual salvation by Christ, conveyed in the good news, must go according to the laws, counsels, settlements, and eternal decrees of Heaven! Oh, now, this is good news for me to wait under such a Gospel as comes accompanied with this powerful rod in Zion, till the Spirit of God clears it up to me, as an effectual gift of the grace of God upon me.

It is the Gospel of the kingdom of God, and, therefore, not one strong lust in my heart shall master it. God's Spirit will be too hard for my unbelief, and for all my other corruptions, while I sit under this unchangeable Gospel; though men and devils strike at it, yet God has said it shall stand! This Gospel of the kingdom of God and Christ satisfies Me, though others take no delight in it. It brings salvation to me among thousands of men who are left to drown in sensuality, pride, covetousness, malice, and wrath; while the Gospel breaks ground, and maintains the field of battle, with the sword of the Spirit, against every false profession; and neither pulpit nor pew can stand before it!

It is to me! To me a sinner! To me a vile worm! It is a melting thought within me that the scepter of the kingdom should be a marriage-scepter to me, which, in the hand of Christ as a judge, is an iron scepter

unto others, Psa. 2:9. The Holy Spirit now accompanies this distinguishing Gospel, because it is truth. But He never goes along with men's sermonizing offers, because it is flattery and falsehood.

Again, as John the Baptist, before Christ's coming, first preached the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel, as it is said, Acts 13:24, so the doctrine and testimony of salvation, and the doctrine and testimony of the forgiveness of sins, ought to be preached to sinners through this man Jesus, Acts 13:38. The doctrine is to be preached to all, according to the general command of Christ in the commission He gave unto His apostles, Mark 16:15. This commandment of preaching was, that they should go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

Go, preach to every creature, i. e. go, preach glad tidings: for this is the nature of the Gospel to all the elect of God. Go and preach, in a general extent, even as Jesus among the Jews departed to teach and to preach in their cities. And it was done accordingly, Col. 1:23. The Gospel (says the apostle) was preached to every creature which is under heaven, whereof I Paul am made a minister. Go, preach the Gospel to all, making known the doctrine to Jew and Gentile.

It is plain, Acts 10:36, that the word which God sent unto the children of Israel, related to Christ's dominion, which must be extended, and was extended, as the commission ran for preaching the doctrine of peace by Jesus Christ, through the blood of His cross, as He was Lord of all, though only Savior of the body to some, was first published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the baptism which John preached, as faith the apostolical history, Acts 10:37. This produced a more general effect in the scepter of Messiah's kingdom then begun; but more especially under the power of His kingdom's rod, while the people had a sight of miracles, and the apostles spake with tongues. (As Acts 2:3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 11) The doctrine sometimes closed in notionally, with their faculties, where it had no special given power to close in savingly with their hearts. Likewise their faculties had the common power of influence, to receive and close in with the notion of the doctrine, and with the truth in the letter. For by this means the Holy Spirit intended the sound of the Gospel should go forth into all the earth, and their words (not their offers, even the apostle's preaching) unto the ends of the world. (Rom. 10:18)

And again, a very large ground-plot of profession was designed for the new building, and that by the power of the Spirit of God from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum in Paul's travels, Rom. 15:19 (which, in the whole, from his first beginning, until his being prisoner at Rome, are computed by a very ingenious and learned geographer, to be 190,270 miles; though from Jerusalem and round about unto Illyricum, abstractly taken, it was not more than a thousand miles travel in all), where the apostle had fully preached the Gospel of Christ.

Moreover, all the whole square of Europe is since taken in. And why so? To this end, that the owner of the structure might still be exalted, and His title magnified as Lord, Who had bought the whole extent of ground in the charter of His covenant, to plant and to sow in, and to build upon: insomuch that we find the apostles strove to preach the Gospel where Christ was not so much as named, (Rom. 15:20) and partly to this end, that it might be seen that Christ's scepter had lost nothing, but had gained ground, by the falling off of the Jews. Hence men's rational powers are made to stoop and witness to the Lord Jesus, whom God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds. And a community of men, being, by God's providence, made subject to the Mediator, through teaching and preaching the word of the Lord in every city where the Lord has sent His word to be preached, though there may be but here and there one, among the hearers, who are to be made spiritual subject to the Lord Christ.

Besides, it must need be so, for He is king of all, and hath a right to govern all by His rectorial scepter. For He is both Lord and Christ the Anointed One, or the Messiah, anointed for the rule and government of all in the natural part of religion, as well as Messiah under the special unction of .Jehovah, anointed for the salvation of the Church alone.

Hence, when the Evangelist gives an account of the preaching of the Gospel, he tells us, that all the cities had the Gospel preached in them, Acts 8:40. Likewise it came to pass, from the universal kingship of the Lord Jesus, that kings themselves were exhorted to believe the truth, Psa. 2:10, 12, as a greater King than themselves, and were foretold they should lay their hands upon their mouths, and not utter a word against it. For God will have it so, or He will pull them out of their thrones, as He hath not only threatened, but performed, to Pagan and Papal monarchs. Where the Gospel of the kingdom has been resisted, He has destroyed the bloody instruments that did it, while He has saved His chosen by the Gospel, in giving drink to His people, even His chosen. Shall He not avenge His own elect? The Gospel is a Gospel of free grace to Ms elect, and in it is displayed Christ's full prerogative, both as to them and all the world besides.

Thus the Lord our Righteousness will carry it on amidst the world, even His Gospel, as the proclamation of a sovereign and uncontrollable king, the high magistrate, justice and judge, who will have Ms own laws stand, and make all other laws stoop and give way to His. We must preach Christ thus; and this indeed is good news to the elect, to strengthen their hearts.

HOW THEY MUST PREACH WITHOUT AN OFFER

Now will any ask me, How they must preach the Gospel to sinners, if they do not offer the salvation thereof unto them? I answer, there is subject enough respecting the Gospel and kingdom of Christ to preach to all: in it there is the good news of the scepter, a sceptre of righteousness and power, to make as many as the Lord pleases outwardly bow to Christ, the whole scepter is providentially swayed for the good of the elect, who receive the salvation of the Gospel. Each have their portion; and that which natural men love they have. But if they will not live peaceably with God's people, but persecute them, He will make their hearts ache, under the very message which is good news and a joyful sound to His own. To the end that God's people may lead peaceable and quiet lives, in the exercise of all godliness and honesty, the Lord will have many saved out of the superfluity of naughtiness that drown men in destruction and perdition, and will bring them to the knowledge of the truth. Accordingly, both Jewish and Pagan worlds, in the general lump of sinners, were exhorted to a natural acceptance of, or submission to, Christ's scepter, in receiving the doctrinal report of the Gospel taught in Christ's name.

Thus sinners are still, in general, to be exhorted to accept of the sound doctrine, or form of sound words they seem to come short of; that while by a common blessing attending the natural capacity of receiving it, they embrace the doctrine of salvation, the elect of God may fare the better, whose lot it is to be awakened, or fall under the power of godliness in their quarters.

This necessary and natural subjection to the King the Lord of Hosts, is in right of His being the universal King of the nations. Therefore, a rejection of the doctrine and witness has been, and is, dangerous; though the salvation in it, through the influences of the blood of Christ in the operations of the Holy Spirit, is applied to, and received by the other, the elect only.

Therefore, what with rejecting the doctrine by some, and corrupting the doctrine with Pagan and Jewish mixtures of worship and practice by others, who have outwardly embraced it, as to some parts of the

Gospel, under its debasement, it has woefully involved a vast number of people beneath the desolating strokes of Heaven. Whole countries have been ruined for opposing the revealed Gospel, and rejecting the witness God has given of His Son, or despising the doctrine of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Many places of the Roman empire have been dismally shattered and broken up with earthquakes for the same cause. God has pierced them through with the sword of war, and infected the air with noisome pestilence's, for despising the wholesome breathing of the Spirit of His grace. Yea, as to ourselves, Instead of fanning winds to cleanse us, He hath, with stormy winds, rent us, because of the reproaches we have cast upon His Spirit in His messengers who have both preached and written, by His authority, under the evident operations of the Holy Spirit.

Other places also, for provoking the great King of Heaven, have been filled with plagues and covered with inundations of wars and waters. Kingdoms and nations have been laid together, in one common heap, under wasting and consuming judgments. At times, plagues and judgments have wasted much of the blood and treasures of all Europe. And why? Because the Gospel of the kingdom of God has been despised among them, both by professor and profane. And the ground of God's secret controversy with man was, and is, the quarrel of his covenant.

3. I argue again, separately, from the common advantages which accompany the interest of Christ, in preaching the doctrine and testimony of salvation to all, notwithstanding salvation by the doctrine is received by none but the elect. And I argue thus, to solve the question, How must we preach the Gospel to all without offers of grace, or tenders of salvation?

To answer this end, the doctrine is to be held forth in preaching the Gospel to all people, whether the salvation of the doctrine has accompanied it or not. This sound was to come to, and upon, all whom Christ sent the apostles forth to preach the doctrine of the Gospel to. The reason is, because God had an elect people among them in the different cities; as in Rome, Rom. 1:15, in Corinth, Acts 18:8, 10, in Troy, 2 Cor. 2:12, in Antioch, Acts 13:48, in Derbe, Acts 14:20, and in other nations abroad likewise, that have heard the Gospel preached since.

For, indeed, to the elect, lying hid, the salvation in the doctrine hath ever belonged; yet they have fared the better in that the doctrine hath come to others though the salvation did not: For which cause the body of the nations are punished who refuse to accept of the doctrine, which, as an highway of common profession, (Isa. 35) serves as an outward means of bringing the salvation in Christ, who is a way distinct from the outward professional highway, furnishing temporal advantages to the elect. And accordingly, in the very first ages of the church, the power of salvation attended the doctrine of godliness to the called, and chosen, and faithful; chosen from the beginning to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth; for such have been always, more or less, a scattered people.

To gather in such faithful preachers who, through havoc of the church, have been scattered abroad, and made to go everywhere preaching the word, which, through the power of the Spirit, finds the elect. The chosen generation have ever been found out by the preaching of the Gospel, as they have lain hid among the pots, or among a greater number in the world, as Acts 11:20, and sometimes among a greater number of Jews, as when the apostles traveled as far as Phoenice, and the isle of Cyprus, and the city of Antioch, preaching the word to none but the Jews only, as saith the Holy Spirit, Acts 11:19; and sometimes among other visible professors round about them, and among them, while God has been bringing forth His chosen with gladness; at which angels have rejoiced, even when one sinner has

repented; the world has been angry, and has not done so, but has reviled them for leaving them: though Egypt was glad when the children of Israel departed.

Furthermore, thus, through the dominions of the empire belonging to Rome Pagan, the elect of God, even the chosen and sanctified, were more advantageously covered, and thereby the sheep of His pasture were folded. Distinction between the letter of the doctrine and the power attending it makes the very doctrine of election useful, in preaching it among all nations, to find out the elect of God, and to bring Jacob, whom He has chosen. Whereas offers of salvation are but the quieting device of fallen nature to lull the doctrine of election asleep, thereby to please men and give less disturbance to the world.

Besides, there is an additional advantage gained in defending the true church of Christ against the wild boar of the forest, or from the infidel world that would root up the very doctrine preached: this is doing greater good to the true church of Christ than could otherwise be done.

The testimony of the Spirit's operations on the elect, the chosen inheritance, have been demonstrated by providence's and judgments, whereby the outward safety of the church has been affected: thus the earth has helped the woman, while the dragon has been wroth with the remnant of her seed. So that even persecutors have prospered, on behalf of the church, beyond all that could visibly appear.

For, suppose only the number of the elect had been reformed by the Gospel, and all the rest of the world had remained in utter enmity against it, the fruits would then be too naked, being alone without the leaves. And as the leaves of a tree, though not fit for the table, are serviceable to the fruit, and ornamental to the tree, without which it must be naked, and exposed to ripen on naked twigs; so are professors in this case of preaching the Gospel.

Hence there are texts that speak of provincial preaching the Gospel of the kingdom among the people of the Jews, while Jesus preached in their synagogues through all Galilee. So again, Matt. 4:23, Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. Likewise in Matt. 9:35, Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the kingdom. The Scripture tells us of preaching Jesus Christ the Son of God, among the Corinthian Gentiles, 2 Cor. 1:19, Gal. 1:16, of preaching the Son of God among the heathen, and of the Gospel which Paul preached among the Gentiles, Gal. 2:2, Eph. 3:8, preaching among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ. Where the Lord has chosen Jacob to Himself, there will appear many saving conversions, attended with power, in change, image, feeling, and Gospel experience, which may be compared to ripe fruits. And there are many conversions of quite another kind, which are only in form, which may consist of an acceptance of the doctrine of the Gospel, either in part or in whole, as it happens. So the Apostle implies, 2 Cor. 11:4, by putting the case of another Gospel which they had not accepted.

Now an acceptance of the doctrine of the Gospel, where it is not accompanied with a change of heart, may be compared to leaves or branches that only shelter and protect the fruit; so far they are serviceable, but not valuable in God's account, nor in man's account, except it is to be burnt. And as there are several kinds of these serviceable formal conversions, so the brighter and more evangelical the form, still the more serviceable is the conversion, though not the more valuable. The leaf of the vine does more good to the grapes against a scorching sun, than the leaf of other trees does to their own fruits which may need the leafy covering less.

Now the doctrine of grace, in the common lump of it, has been made useful, and may be made of special use again, to some of the elect of God, or the children of Jacob His chosen, through an external acceptance of the Gospel among mere professors; such, likewise, may serve, in God's purposes and providence's, to form a kind of bridge for the Gospel to pass over more effectually from one nation to another, for the sake of the elect. God may make use of them to take the common clutter in the garden of nuts from among scholar-like preachers, and thereby to carry the kernel still farther on, where it profits the eater, being stripped both of case and shell.

Therefore the Gospel ought to be preached to all, to maintain its orthodoxy, where yet its salvation doth not come. There was need of the general notion and common reception of the doctrine of Christianity in the world to a common end. Hence the Gospel was preached apostolically in whole provinces, as likewise in the Cities. When they had preached the word in Perga, they went down into Attalia, as the witness is, Acts 14:25. And so it must go on still ordinarily in that outer and visible doctrinal way among the non-elect, as well as among the elect of God. It was formerly useful to maintain the general expectation of a Messiah's coming to die for sin; that God was in Christ reconciling the world. To this end was the Law and the Prophets given, to take of f the common enmity of the world, both of Jew and Gentile, against the doctrine of a Messiah; and so was bowing the world promiscuously to Himself, as to the general reception of Gospel truths.

Thereby His own elect have often been outwardly shaded and covered through men embracing the common doctrines of salvation, than an handful of them could have been in towns or countries, in the times of open and Pagan persecution.

Such a general reception of the Gospel still keeps up the common interest; for there is a great deal of Christ naturally, fitted to the reason of man. He is the true light that lightens every man that cometh into the world. He is the head of nature, the ruler of nature.

In the common notional acceptance of Christ, there was room for nature, in common light and gifts of reason, in temper, largeness of interlectual capacity, and other endowments and human qualifications thereof, to stoop to Jesus Christ professedly and externally; to exalt Christ nominally by men's falling in with the surface of the Gospel, and by espousing the outward face of the Christian religion. Thus it tends, under a wise and providential management, in the hands of Him that hath made all things for Himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil, to fulfill the Scriptures: for thus the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind, which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. (Matt. 13:47, 48)

We are therefore to preach and witness the doctrine of Christ with expectation of fruit, at least according to a doctrinal profession; and that many will be brought in professedly to serve, at least, for a defense to the out-works of the church, in a way of Providence, round about the Lord's own. Thus it shall be by preaching the doctrines and records of the Gospel in the external forms of truth, profitable works, necessary to all within the sound, and to all that usually come in and go out among us.

MUST PREACH THE INTERNAL SALVATION

But we must preach the internal salvation of the Gospel, which, in the Lord's hand, will discriminate and gather together His elect from the four winds; and thus the Spirit works savingly in them to believe on Jesus Christ, guiding them to this eternal life, using His ministers by His power to gather His elect,

under their preaching, as the angels shall collect their bodies, and gather His elect together, at the latter day.

We must therefore preach so as to discriminate the power from the form, as the Spirit of God will own our preaching for the elect's sake, who have already, perhaps most of them, accepted so much of Christ as to have begun their out-works of profession. But profession is for the most part in our day wide enough. We want more of the inward work. We want more of the special power to go along with the common form, as there once lacked common form to go was the special power. But there lacks no power now to cause the form, because not only education and custom, but the liberty of the day, have made it the common fashion. Moreover, as to the outward works of profession, raised in all ages out of the mere doctrine, the doctrine alone has been sufficient to advance an outer court, which, in the several ages of God's purifying and trying dispensations, has been made serviceable to the inner-court change, for defense and protection. For God will raise out-works to beautify and protect the in-works.

TEMPORAL ADVANTAGES

4. I argue for the necessity of preaching the doctrinal report of Christ unto all, distinct from the power of the arm of the Lord, revealed to save; distinct from the salvation in the doctrine to the elect. And this I argue to a further solution of the question, How must we preach grace if we do not offer grace to sinners?

The preachers of the Gospel must preach the doctrine, though it be not accompanied with the salvation, and to those to whom salvation may not belong. There are temporal advantages attend it, to the mere doctrinal receivers of it, which does accompany their outward acceptance of the doctrine of the Gospel. Wherever God sends the Gospel of the kingdom, it is not in vain. The doctrine, we are assured, shall be received by many; and doctrinal advantages, as gifts, learning, reputation, and rewards of common usefulness, will be received by many to crown the outward reception of it; and with property far beyond the measure of the good things of this life given to many of the real receivers of the salvation itself.

Protection in Providence is a constant effect of the outward reception of God's messages. A common faith, that has entertained the doctrine, has saved nations from many common judgments; it has relieved them from national calamities: such are the favorable consequences of a natural entertainment of the Gospel truths.

This natural receiving the doctrine of the Gospel, and the temporal effects of it in Divine Providence, has been much like the natural repentance of Nineveh at the preaching of Jonas; and may be compared to the sparing that great city the space of forty years, which was meant by the prophetic forty days in the prophet's message. Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown. At the end of which day, or years, Nineveh was appointed to be overthrown, for the wickedness that had passed already. However, the Ninevites took the limits of the prediction to be forty natural days, in which space the threatened overthrow not coming to pass, as they apprehended it would, they returned to their wonted wickedness, and so Nineveh was destroyed to purpose, according to the true intent of the Lord in Jonah's preaching; even at the end of forty prophetic days; which destruction we read of in the first and second chapters of Nahum, containing the substance of the fearful overthrow of that city.

A common reception of the truth of the gospel has sheltered nominal Christians from the ruinous seizure of infidel nations, and has been blessed to an expulsion of the Turks Iii Germany, and of the

Moors in Spain. So great numbers of doctrinal believers have been protected, for the sake of their doctrinal believing, among ourselves; the Lord has rewarded that doctrinal faith in this life by the preservation of our public liberties, which the mere handful of the new-born sons of God, who are scattered through this isle of Great Britain, could never, humanly speaking, have enjoyed without the others, who make by far the greater figure.

So the more extensively the doctrine and the testimony of grace is received in congregations, the more God pours out the fruits of that doctrine, and blesses the substance of congregations, to enrich men for the maintenance of ministers and ordinances necessary in their assemblies.

If the elect in all nations who are called inwardly, were to be brought forward without a vast number of others called outwardly, and lodged in the out-works of Zion, they would be swallowed up in this world, because of the abounding wickedness of it, were it not for so many thousands of professors, where the Gospel comes, who temper the common profession, and allay the prodigious enmity that is in man against the sovereign grace of God in His elect.

So a common profession may bring the peace of man to men, having many common advantages in it, where the salvation of the Gospel may not come, or the peace of God in their souls.

Peace with the times, peace in families, or peace from the common miseries of war, may be the fruit, either of countenancing, or of entertaining the doctrine of the Gospel. On the contrary, the Romans destroyed the Jews, over whom yet they would have had no power if the Jews had embraced the common doctrines of Messiah.

FOR THE JUSTICE OF GOD

5. I argue from the justice of God, that will be glorified, even upon refusers of the sound doctrine of salvation, when that doctrine hath been preached among them and rejected. And this also I argue in defense of preaching the word to all men, notwithstanding salvation by the word is to be preached to God's elect alone.

For a further solving the question, How must we preach Christ, if we do not offer Him, and tender salvation unto sinners? I answer, the doctrine is to be preached with an eye to God's mercy as to the elect, and an eye to His justice, as to despisers. It is also to be preached boldly, as Paul preached at Damascus, Acts 9:27. For though salvation cannot be offered, yet we are to bear a testimony of the word of the Lord, notwithstanding it brings down a judgment upon men for refusing it.

Our work is to testify of Christ to men, not to offer Christ to men. Acts 8:25. When Peter and John had testified, and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, and preached the Gospel in many villages of the Samaritans. When an assault was made, both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews, with their rulers, to use Paul and Barnabas despitefully, and to stone them, Acts 14:5, 6, 7, they were aware of it, and fled into Lystra and Derby, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about; and there they preached the Gospel.

We cannot suppose the Gospel could be preached in whole regions, but the justice of God would meet with provocations enough among contemners and clamorous Christ-opposers, to send forth His wrath upon such heathens till it consumed them as stubble. The kingdom of God is not only to be preached where it hath met with success, but also where it has been rejected; as Christ said, Luke 4:43, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also; for therefore am I sent. And no question but in such a

variety of places the Gospel preached doth arrive where the open refusers dwell. Christ went through the towns preaching the Gospel. (Luke 9:6) Now when the Gospel is preached in any town or country, fame carries the tidings, and tells men, by hearsay, what the doctrine or report is. The message brought is soon broached, and dispersed in all our coasts. The errand comes mixed with heavy tidings, to condemn a generation of gainsayers in Chorazin and Bethsaida, as well as with glad tidings, to delight the Lord's city of Mount Zion.

The testimony of Christ comes to all, but principally on the errand of salvation to God's elect, to bring the true efficacy of that eternal redemption which is in Jesus Christ, derived from the main fountain of God's eternal purposes.

On the other hand, while men refuse and bespatter glorious truths, such truths as most exalt God in Christ, and most debase man in himself, some of the other ends, even purposed by the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, are accomplished.

It was once said of Christ Himself, for the glorifying of justice, as well as setting forth the mercy of God, This child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Of which words I can truly say, it is a text which God the Spirit has marvelously used to strengthen my faith in Christ. For if it was so with Christ, I need not wonder if it is still so with a book or a sermon that does most eminently exalt Him.

One righteous end of bringing the Gospel to a place, is the condemnation of the enemies and opposers, who stand up against the doctrine; for as to the main and essential points of the doctrine of Christ and salvation, they are made out so plain in God's word, that when made out agreeably, by preaching according to the common light in the letter of the word, none can deny them. For which cause non-elect opposers and refusers of the pure doctrines, by which salvation comes to a Rufus, chosen in the Lord, or to an Elect sister, will be justly condemned for their hard speeches spoken against them.

The Lord only knows what a sermon, or what, the very title-page of a book, that exalts Christ more than flesh or blood may desire to hear of, have extorted from the mouths, of men of a reprobate mind! All which has been written in heaven, and will one day or other be produced from the mouth of conscience against them! A refuser of the doctrine of Christ dies with the greatest aggravation under the Law of Works! The doctrine will come in as a swift witness against such as reject it, whether they be opposing preachers, or incensed people.

For there be of both, sorts whom Satan stirs up against some of the eminent doctrines of the Gospel, yea, against the whole Gospel plan; some men not being able to endure it, because the wisdom of God in a mystery confounds their own darkness. It is not difficult to produce individuals of this sort who are mounted up on a very high profession in the church. Howbeit I am to preach every true doctrine as Christ preached them in the synagogues of Galilee, though the power of godliness, as the alone foundation of practicals, will surely be despised in Galilee, and in every synagogue will be spoken against.

This now is a way of preaching in which God is glorified, though it be eventually to the condemnation of many who have shut out the very doctrine as soon as it hath arrived at their doors. Likewise, it will more evidently condemn the assembly of the wicked, who have gathered themselves together, not to answer it, but protest against it, and the salvation, in the mystery of doctrine, as a free gift. Nevertheless the Lord bestows it upon whom He will; and those whom He wills to possess it are the Jeshurun whom He has chosen, and whom, by the Gospel, He effectually calls to a knowledge of it.

But the doctrine, as distinct from salvation, is to be preached to ministers and people, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: because the doctrine or report reaching their consciences, will have some effect to the glory of God. And if that effect be the glorifying of God's justice, by aggravating the condemnation of those haters of God who do not belong to the Lord, then the Gospel of the kingdom is not preached in vain. This is an end which must be accomplished against the wicked, who have eyes to see and see not, ears to hear and hear not; as well to be glorified in those to whom the Spirit makes it effectual for life, comfort, and salvation.

By this it appears, that sinners who despise the doctrine of Christ, slight Him upon the cross and upon the throne, neglect His person, or despise His offices, deny His divinity, or stumble at the glory of the humanity, which broke out in open apparitions by the God of Israel, as the Glory-man, (Ex. 24:19) they will each one have a dreadful account to give unto Him that will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained, and His glory manifested in God's raising Him from the dead.

FOR THE GLORY OF THE MAN CHRIST JESUS

We preach the glory of the Man Jesus, since God has now opened that heavenly glory in the Scriptures. We tell all men the glory of the Man, Ezek. 1:26. For, indeed, He is often called the Man, 1 Tim. 2:5, Zech. 13:7; Judges 13: 10, 11; Eze. 47:3; Psalm 80:17; Eze. 10:2, 6; Zech. 6:12; Eze. 40:4; Dan. 12:6, Ez. 9:3, 11; Zech. 1:10; Lam. 3:1. And this Man, Isa. 66:2; Mic. 5:5; Psa. 34:6; Mark 15:19; Acts 13:23; Heb. 10:12; Acts 13:38; Heb. 3:3-24; Heb. 8:3, 10, 18.

We preach a whole Christ, and believe into His whole person, as God-man, Rom. 9:5; Heb. 1:6, 8, though some have believed and confessed His humanity, as Messiah, who had no understanding or belief of His divinity, so John 7:31 and 46, John 9:33 and John 10:41. I say, we are to tell all men the glory of the Man, as Joseph said unto his brethren, You shall tell my father of all my glory you have seen in Egypt. For Christ's sake, and for Zion's sake, we cannot hold our peace. We tell all men of the glad tidings of the everlasting love of the Father in the glory of His Son Jesus! We tell all men of the glory of the Man, that His was a glory before time; a glory hid with God! We proclaim to all, the glory and preeminence of the Man, clothed with wonder, under the Old Testament, and fore-appearing to give most certain notices of the New. We preach the glory of the Man, as Alpha; and His glory, as Omega: for He is the beginning of the creation of God, and the ending of all the works of wonder! They are begun and finished by Him. They run on apace to an open consummation of the glory union, as the works run on through the channels of redeeming love into the ocean of eternal wonders, and the bosom of everlasting grace!

We tell all men that Christ, as Mediator, is fitted to establish our study and knowledge of the glorious Trinity; thus we still keep Christ in our eye, as we pass in our thoughts through Him to the knowledge of the Father; so that Christ had a divine nature, before He received on Him His human nature, as Man-mediator; therefore as a believer, I must pass in my thoughts through the manhood, to discern and look upon His first nature as God. Otherwise, I am a natural Deist, yet a poor dead philosopher still; but under the vain application of my thoughts to God in the darkness of Gentilism, I am nothing of the Christian.

However men cavil, yet it is plain to him that believeth, that Christ appeared in human form in the garden of Eden, a real blessing of the church under the Old Testament, and for our sakes really became poor under the New. His fore-appearances, under the Old Testament, were real, and not imaginary. Christ was no incomplete Christ, though not come into the world in the flesh, under the Old Testament.

His humanity was spiritually real under the Old Testament, though not incarnately real till the New. He was the substance of the manna in the wilderness, and so was the super-essential bread of Heaven, even as the Lord's Prayer teaches us, Matt. 6:11. He was as the Man of the right hand, the bread of Heaven before His descent, or before He came down from Heaven. As John 6:38. As largely made out in my other book, of the Glory of Christ Unveiled.

The humanity of Christ was a spiritual body in the Old Testament, as it was a natural body in the New from a supernatural cause. It was a subsisting humanity before time, and it was an existing and pre-existing humanity* in the times of the Old Testament. It was subsisting, as it stood personally in God the Son. It was existing and pre-existing, as it stood forth (from Christ's secret subsisting with God) to be seen by men, and stood forth to be so seen in Christ's fore-appearances of the Old Testament; while His body was spiritual and super-celestial, and such as was every way fitted to give being to the shadows of the law; for these were all necessarily younger than the body of Christ that was cast upon them, or from which body Christ the shadows of the law fell.

Now as this preexistence was peculiar to Christ, because of the true fore-appearance of His incarnation, so it conforms unto me, that Origen's hypothesis about the common preexistence of souls as a dream fetched from the schools of Plato; because it is essential to all preexistence, that there be a fore-appearance. But this reality was peculiar to Christ's humanity, as a fore-display of the future incarnation from the womb of the Virgin palpably, and has never been common to souls, as the Platonists and Origenians have asserted.

So, we tell all men of the ancient glory of the humanity of Christ, and of the everlasting love of the Father to all the elect of God federally in Him. We tell all these things from the house-tops! And though we gather but handfuls of corn, yet the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon! We tell men, light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil. We tell men that in the very preaching and professing at this day, there is a despising of the great salvation.

Poor creatures neglect Christ Who is the great and only salvation of God's elect. For Indeed the words in the second of the Hebrews are but an application of what the apostle had opened of the person and righteousness of Christ in the former chapters. We tell sinners how dreadful it is to be found refusing of the report of Christ, in their not submitting to the doctrine of His sovereignty, namely, that God is the master of His own grace, and that He calls out whom He wills, and whom He will He leaves.

We preach that there is an operation of Power under the doctrine, to discover, by an effectual call, who are God's elect. We teach men, that there is an aggravated condemnation upon the refusers of the doctrine. That this doctrine comes to all; that salvation comes in and by the doctrine to many, and is put into every chosen vessel. We declare to men, that the refusers of glad tidings are such as put away from them the doctrine of Jesus Christ, and put a slight upon the doctrines of the highest grace. We preach the truth of God, while some call it error, who never could from God's word prove it error.

We preach the deep things of God, while men who pretend to fathom them, run up and down any where, to friends or enemies, all is one to them, saying, these mysteries of Christ, because they do not relish them with their carnal and prejudiced spirits, are heresy, blasphemy, delusion, and count our message damnable.

Oh, but when it is found to be otherwise, what will become of men's tongues that have been set on fire of Hell! How will men be horribly afraid, who have let fly their passions against the Lord Himself! because though He was the Son of God, yet He was the first man and before Adam! Fearfulness will

surprise the hypocrites, that pretend to believe in a crucified and humbled Christ, and yet reject the doctrine of His condescension to the womb and cross from that high and exalted throne, where the Son of Man, the Lord from Heaven, or Man of the Right Hand, was set up of old, yea from everlasting! Besides, how many hypocrites have we in Zion that will not have this Man to reign over them! For ought I know, of five hundred pulpits, even of our Dissenters, there may not be five and thirty of them, that, in fulfilling their ministry, do ordinarily honor Him as God Man, Mediator.

How many cowards have we in Zion, who refuse to receive Christ joyfully, and take up all from this green fir tree in whom our fruit is found! Perhaps, because they have climbed up the sycamores of their own wisdom, with a wanton design from the top of their parts, to take their prospects of Christ for curiosity's sake.

Have they ever in temptation, poverty of spirit, sense of sin dwelling in them, or true humbleness of mind, heard the voice of Christ (that bids every self-confident climber, whom He saves, to come down) calling them to make haste, to Him as their own? How many faithless preachers have we now-a-days who dare not preach Christ according to the measure of their light? Oh! such a rich man that I am beholden to, will be offended if I speak out all that God shows me of His counsel. But what do I think Christ will be, Who is a greater rich Man than the poor rich man with you?

Again, How many reproachers and despisers of a full Christ; how many haters and halvers of a whole Christ; how many fighters and disputers against the Christ of God, have we? It shall, be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment; and it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for some of these, whom the Lord will surely make examples of!

How dreadful will their condition be for sinning against the doctrine, after all this light of the glorious Gospel which is broken forth! The doctrine of Christ breaks out more and more. As it is prophesied of Christ, Who is the path of the just, that He shall, as their path, shine out more and more unto the perfect day.

And no wonder, for He is the light of the world, and the path of the righteous too. Howbeit, men grow more angry at the light, more bitter, more violent, more enraged, more subtil and cunning, nay, as the apostle says, more devilish, to supplant it than ever! And many, even of whom we are ready to think the best, do visibly prefer their proffers to a preaching of the everlasting Gospel, and advance (dreadful to be spoken!) a natural and powerless religion in mere external modes and forms, before and above what they will venture to say of the mighty operations of God the Spirit, in effectual calling. And where there is one sermon preached to advance God's new creation in the soul, I fear there are twenty sermons read, uttered, and offered, merely to jog, beautify, and bolster up old corrupt fallen Adam.

Well then, having been helped to fix the distinction of the Gospel into doctrine and salvation; and to show that both are to be preached to the elect, and the former alone, as to visible interest, is preached to the non-elect. Some pains have been taken to show how we must preach the doctrine, and not offer it; preach salvation, not propound it; how preaching becomes a sure means of reaching God's true end in the Gospel of Christ towards all men, wheresoever the Gospel comes, whether the hearers are the elect, or the non-elect. For that great end hath been declared, namely, the glorifying of God's mercy and justice; on the one hand, in the saving, with a special salvation, all the elect of God; and on the other hand, in securing the common advantages of Providence, which attend the doctrine in a way of common good, where there is a withholding of God's grace unto salvation.

The doctrine is to be preached to all, but still the salvation by the Gospel is to be offered to none at all. The offer of salvation being no means towards God's putting forth His power; no, not so much as upon the elect themselves. I have insisted so much upon the doctrine of Christ, as separate from the salvation, that now the distinction is plain and uncontrovertible to him that sees the Son of God experimentally, and believeth on Him, some having known the form of doctrine, before they have seen the mystery, or felt the power. For in regeneration the truth is said to be a form of doctrine whereto ye were delivered, as the Greek reads that text passively of the converted, into which type, or style, of doctrine ye were delivered, Rom. 6:17. Though the translators, not seeing the mystery, were contended to read it passively of the form itself, as the form of doctrine which was delivered to you.

He likewise, who hath the love of God dwelling in him, hath far more than the orthodox doctrine of the love abiding in him. And this indwelling love, because of the Spirit of Christ Who upholds it, is a strengthening experience in the soul concerning God's grace; and will cause a true believer faithfully to prefer God's honor in the Gospel to all other interests. God's thoughts and ways are honorable; at the same time they debase our own thoughts and ways.

And he that is practically in his own heart led into the truth of God, will see a large field of the doctrine of Christ to preach at all times, faithfully, and will be contented to preach evangelically, and not trust in lying words that cannot profit, in the common flattery of offers, and proposals of salvation, to all men before whom he stands up to preach.

We should take heed of a blind arrogance in the pulpit! We are to eye the fruits of our ministry under the operations of the Spirit, and not entertain a fruitless philanthropy, or a love of all men to salvation in the gross. We ought to have a fervent love for Christ's body, but not a fond love for the members of a harlot. We are to take heed to our spirit, lest, while we offer salvation to all, we deal treacherously against the spouse of Christ, in not holding forth the blood and righteousness of Christ to her edification.

We have field-room enough in doctrine to deliver all our holy errands, if the Lord be pleased to make us wise to know, and faithful to keep our own bounds. The Lord guide the steps of His ministers, so as they may not err in vision, nor stumble in judgment, by making the preaching of doctrine and preaching of salvation in the doctrine, to have both one object, and to be both of one latitude. The Lord enable all His ministers to preach discreetly; and while they preach the Gospel, not to propound it as an offer; but preach the Gospel doctrine to all, and preach the salvation of the Gospel, with their hearts salvation-wise, towards the elect of God alone. Finally, the Lord grant, that we may neither attempt to rob the Father's gift, nor the Spirit's power, by degrading God's faithfulness into man's flattery. Amen, Amen.

Men may call these speculations. They may condemn them as unprofitable. To the law and to the testimony! Of such speculations, the Bible is full. There man is a helpless worm, and salvation from first to last, is of the Lord. (Jonah 2:9) God's will, and not man's, is the law of the universe. If we are to maintain the gospel – if we are to hold fast grace – if we are to preserve Jehovah's honor we must grasp these truths with no feeble hand. For if there be no such a Being as a Supreme predetermining Jehovah, then the universe will soon be chaos; and if there be no such things as free electing love, every minister of Christ may close his lips, and every sinner upon earth sit down in mute despair.

Horatius Bonar

NOTES: *Human form but not human [fallen] nature.

CHAPTER SIX

DOCTRINAL APPLICATIONS

Some distinct resolutions of the puzzling question, How must we preach the Gospel to sinners, if we do not offer the Gospel to sinners?

ETERNAL, VITAL ELECTION-UNION

I need not speak much by way of recapitulation, having so much to add by way of enlargement. And yet I shall not utterly reject all coincidence. We must preach the Gospel as the things of the Gospel are, and not as things of the Gospel are not. We must lay open the things of God, to the glory of God in Christ, and to the glory of God through Christ. In Him; in the deeds and settlements of God the Father. By Him; in the purchase and conveyance as God-man Mediator. And from Him; in the springs of influences, even through Christ, by the Spirit, which are quite distinct from speculations concerning Christ.

1. We must preach the Gospel as the things of it are in Christ, by a settlement of God the Father. We must preach the Gospel so as to honor and commend the Father's love, in His choosing the elect in Christ before the foundation of the world. Here is a special sort of union in God's act. Now preaching the Gospel is carrying the Gospel altogether, as it stands in all parts of it, fulfilling of our ministry, with this election-union. Offers agree not with election-union. For though men who talk of offers may hold election faintly, yet it is very little they hold, and none of it in the strength of Christ; neither do they live by the doctrine they pretend to hold, notwithstanding all their pretended temptations to drop it. Men so warped, for forty years of the last century; who only prepared matters for this generation to deny election, and hate it the more.

Very few of these offering-men who pretend to hold election do seek heartily to take part with God therein; but men sleep and nod, till perhaps the noise of a book is got among them, that lays the sleepy disease for a time, and in a few weeks it all wears off, and then to nodding again. Whatever it be, it is plain that some who pretend to hold election, do it half-heartedly; for they insist not upon election-union, or the election of grace, as it stands in the everlasting covenant in Christ Jesus.

The term being in Christ, is used in scripture, under a diversity of comprehensive phrases; as in 2 Tim. 2:1, Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Eph. 1:3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenlies in Christ. We have, therefore, all the spiritual blessings in heavenlies conferred upon us in Christ our covenant Head already.

So 2 Cor. 5:20, That God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. In the Lord. Isa. 45:24, Surely shall one say, in the Lord have I righteousness and strength. Who hath saved us and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose, and grace which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began. 2 Tim. 1:9; Col. 1:19; John 1:4; 2 Cor. 1:20; Col. 2:10; Eph. 1:4, which term in Him signifies in Christ. As in some other places of Scripture, viz. 2 Tim. 1:9; Eph. 1:4 and Col. 2:10, The phrase in those places implies a distinct mystery of the union far beyond the mystery of it in the letter, or in respect of instrumental union, which we have sensibly in Christ, by the conveyance of grace when faith comes.

And that this election-union, the root of all the other unions, is so great and deep a mystery of grace appears by what is said of it in Col. 3:3 and John 14:20. In Him at that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

The other text mentioned does not strictly import the union of our persons in Christ, but something else in Christ: Yet it is a comprehension of phrase, that takes in the other settlements of God the Father which He appointed in Christ, distinct from the election of our persons in Him. Particularly, that place, John 2:4. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men; discovers that all fullness of nature, and the common blessings of life, are settled in Him. The other place, Col. 1: 19, For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell, speaks more comprehensively, as the extensive fullness of nature, grace, and glory dwells in Christ by the Father's settlements. Then lastly, that text, 2 Cor. 1:20. For all the promises of God in Him are yea, and in Him are Amen, unto the glory of God by us;comprehending the perfect unity, harmony, and stability of all the promises founded of God in Him. Thus, as the Father's settlements stand, all is sure in Christ.

But as to electing grace, the Father's settlement makes us one in Christ, as the union is a root, or radical interest, that in time brings forth our conversion. It is said, Prov. 12:12. The root of the righteous yieldeth fruit. Who is the root of the righteous but Christ? The Messiah is here distinguished from the wicked one. For it is plain, that all the righteous ones are righteous in Christ, even as branches in a common root that bears them. See Isa. 11:10 with Rev. 22:16; Acts 26:18. That they may receive forgiveness of sins. This goes deep into the mystery of the pardon of sin. For it implies forgiveness already prepared, without which it could not be forgiveness; and bestowed, without which it Could not be received. Receiving it implies clearly, that the thing received was made ready in Christ, and had an existence in Him by free grace, long before our receiving it.

Besides, if things(as the blessings wherewith we are blessed in heavenlies) be in Christ before they are revealed by Him, then sure they must be in Christ, before there can be faith on Christ, or what would faith have to view in Him. Acts 26:18, By faith that is in Me, says Christ to Paul, in giving him his commission to go and preach the Gospel successfully to the Gentiles; or by faith, into Me.

But now, when men have gone and preached against these eternal truths, and they know they have, to this day, sermons lying by them quite opposite to the doctrines of eternal election, or what we call the first truths: Alas! Here is their temptation; though they may of their error be a little convinced, they do not find in their hearts(one of a score of them) to venture for Christ, and go and alter their tone! They had rather stick by their offers. They are run into offers of Christ, and there they think to keep. Now offers of Christ are directly opposite to the doctrine of spiritual union with, and eternal election in, Christ. They would rather give more honor to the creature's act, than to the Father's own act in election-grace.

Men have got an anti-scriptural maxim about election. What is that? Why it is, "*Electo nil ponit nec tollit,*"say they;that is, election neither gives, nor takes away anything;neither fixes a thing nor removes it; a pretty election indeed! But that is a mistake. See what it is for men to leave the Holy Oracles of God, and paddle in streams of muddy divinity. For the Scripture is as contrary to that notion as can be. Says God,(Psa. 2:6) I have set My King, or I have put My King, upon My holy hill of Zion.

Now is this setting of His King upon His holy hill of Zion no election, no bestowment? Was here nothing fixed do you think? Did men make nothing of this King elected, set, put, and bestowed, all the time of the Old Testament dispensation? Yet the next words are, concerning the everlasting decree of

this King's election of God,(verse 7) I will declare the decree, Thou art My Son, says God: this is the Father's decree towards Christ. Here is a regal Son and a filial King, and yea a King and a Son in decree, before the decree in David's time had openly brought forth Christ.

If our wills, therefore, rightly bow to the truth as it is in Christ, we shall cheerfully own what is clearly revealed, that God's decrees do put forth something, or bestow something in God's account. For putting or granting the thing is setting it, and setting it is settlement with God, and is the Father's act, before it takes place in any open and subordinate act of ours in believing. To be chosen in Christ implies a union in the choice answerable to the choice itself.

Now offers of Christ agree not with this doctrine of eternal union, but agree best with that doctrine of proud nature, which denies all sorts of union before faith takes place. Offers agree not with any one Gospel-mystery, as the truth is in Jesus; it only has to do with something about Jesus. They do not agree with the mystical doctrine of the elect being quickened in their Head, much less of their being set down together with Him in heavenly places.

How shall we preach, you cry? How? Preach the Gospel as Christ has commanded; the Father has absolutely declared, that He has raised us up together with Christ, even when we were dead in sins, He has quickened us together with Christ. By grace are ye saved; as saith the Holy Spirit, Eph. 2:5, which quickening and raising up was in our Head even before we believed on Him. For Christ rose from the dead long before the Ephesians were converted; and they were quickened in Him virtually, when they were unbelievers in themselves.

Therefore offering of God's grace, which was eternally settled in Christ, does wickedly and directly strike at the settlement. Shall we then dare preach the Gospel against the settlements of the Gospel: If we do, after all our boasting of faith, and pressing of faith, and offering of Christ, it is plain we have little or no faith in the foundation, or we should not want to lay another foundation. Eph. 1:3, 4.

We must not preach the Gospel so as to suit the errors of the Anti-Christ's, for they give no testimony that they know the things of God experimentally, but take them upon trust, one from another. Neither will they bear with any other union in Christ, than by a few dry notions, or a form of words! a mere sentimental union; a work of natural reason, a branch-union. If any man abide not in Me, he is cast forth and withered; but the vital union is effected influentially by the Spirit, in faith and love, knitting us to Christ. Beside this, where is their root-union? Is not that root of David a more ancient union than the branch-union, or than the husbandry? How little does their doctrine of offers acquaint sinners with the Ancient of Days, or with the ancient settlements of grace, given us in Christ Jesus, before the world began! To talk of a choice of persons in Christ, and a gift of the elect to Christ, or a gift of grace to us in Him, as Ms gift and choice, and all this to be disjoined from an eternal union in Christ, is vain talk! and talk that tendeth to penury, but will never bring a sinner to Jesus.

We must preach the Gospel, as all the things of it are given into the hands of Christ, to be dispensed by Him to whomsoever He will.(Col. 1:20; 1 Cor. 8:6; Acts 13:39)Thus all is by Him as our Redeemer. 1. As the things of it are by a redemption which the elect of God have in Christ, that was accomplished and brought about by Him, even before they believed, or ever heard of His name. So we have the redemption fixed and invariable in Him, at all times the same, which redemption was brought about by Him transiently, in the taking away the whole Iniquity of His (Emanuel's) land in one day. And the full stock lies in Christ, in Whom we have redemption, as Eph. 1:7, and Who is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, Col. 1:14. There it lies whether we believe, or whether

we believe not. For if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful, and He cannot deny Himself, or lessen Himself of this redemption wrought out once for all.

Throw down the practice of your offers then, O ye ministers of the letter, and preach Christ! For Instead of offers of Christ to sinners, it is plain we should be opening of Christ to sinners, or we do not preach the Gospel to them.

We must preach the Gospel to sinners, as the things of it are by Christ, as the worker, procurer, and conveyer of redemption to and in their believing. This is the gift by special grace.

Thus must we preach the Gospel, and not abuse the Lord our righteousness, nor our Redeemer that is mighty, as His character is rendered, Prov. 23:11, by sinning against the light, in hiding the conveyance of the purchase to God's elect. For their Redeemer is mighty to stand up for His people in defence of their own land-marks, and to plead against the oppressor, who enters the fields of the fatherless; how will He deal with those men, who do in the worst sense remove the old landmark, which He set up in the beginning of His way, before His works of old; they hide, as it were, the doctrine of His everlasting love, making His love to begin with our believing in time? And not content with that, instead of advancing the power of the conveyance, after sin has entered, dwindle the purchase and conveyance into the purchase of an offer of grace! How will the Lord deal with men, who say, My Lord delayeth His coming, so smite their fellow servants, and corrupt the preaching of the Gospel, turning it into another thing?

It is preaching the good news, which is appointed to make the heirs of salvation meet for the inheritance of the saints of light or undefiled, as Peter calls it, I Peter 1:4. How often do His judgments appear, when He punishes men with blindness, hardness, and sleepiness, who are agreed together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord; in keeping back part of the price; which is no less than the right of conveyance, making it a mere offer of grace.

OFFERS ABUSE THE REDEEMER

It must be a grievous and presumptuous offence of men to alter the Lord's own prerogative of redemption, into an offer of theirs! As if the sinners we preached to were now to take up a new right from a profferer, Instead of taking up the only proper and ancient right from the Son, Who has the only power of conveyance. Oh! this is an impudent lessening of redeeming love, wherever it is persisted in! Offers abuse the Redeemer: for they Insist upon the acceptance of a sinner, but not upon Christ's redemption, who hath procured the conveyance. For it is in this very conveyance that the acceptance must come to thee, and be wrought by the power of God in thee.

A proffer operates not as a conveyance of Christ does; for in that, all obstacles are done away. A tender of salvation to all that come under the sound of the Gospel, advances the creature's glory, in the required reception of it, as a work of the creatures; but advances not the glory of Christ, neither in the procurement nor conveyance of the work of redemption, which work is wrought out and brought home to the elect of God.

God has appointed the effectual conveyance of it to them, not in a casual propounding the offer of a universal grace, according to your doctrine of offers, teaching men to rest in an arm of flesh: no; but as a certain free gift. Some certain men's labors would be more acceptable to God, if they made more noise about Christ, the means of acceptance, and less noise about men's performances in the act of acceptance.

3. We are to preach the Gospel as it is revealed from the Father, to the elect of God, through Christ. It is not sufficient that we speak concerning Christ, or about Christ. We may say many pretty things about Christ, but if we do not set forth and advance the Holy Spirit's work, which is wrought through Christ, our preaching, if it may be so called, is vain, in point of usefulness; as it shuts out God the Spirit, He will shut out our dry doctrine. "He that honoreth Me, I will honor; but they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed. For of Him, and to Him, and through Him, are all things, to whom be glory for ever, Amen." He that honors the Son, honors the Father that sent Him.

When the Holy Spirit operates on the mind, as the working principle of our faith on Christ, then it is, that in believing we have life through His name. (Jn. 20:31) When it comes to a believing by an operation of the Spirit of God, then it is a believing wherein we have life through His name,

So, when it is wrought through Christ, it is brought about efficaciously to be to the sinner's acceptance of Christ. The election accept of Him, when the rest are blinded. Offers do never exalt the effectual provision in, by, and through Christ, for sinners acceptance of Gospel salvation. Nevertheless, we must preach the Gospel thus, otherwise we abuse the efficacious gift of God to the elect. Offers do but abuse the efficacious gift of God to the elect. For God hath appointed the effectual gift of special grace to the elect, who shall not be seduced, though they may be abused by what falls too short of the special grant, that is by the common offer. And so much the more abused, by how much the more men sugar it, to make it go down as a: free offer. We are to preach grace as freely given, and the Spirit as given, and all the benefits of Christ, as freely given to a poor sinner, and to be brought home by the Holy Spirit to a poor sinner's heart, under preaching.

This meets with the elect of God, because it comes to them through Christ, and converts them. Whereas your offers do but abuse them, by debasing God's gift into a proffer of your own, and His truth into your tender. The elect are to receive under our preaching, if we are ministers of Christ, the special gift of the Father, bestowing Christ and salvation on them; yea, and all that accompanies the salvation of God with Christ. Whereas, if ministers in their errand stand proffering the grace of God to poor sinners, they do not preach in and through Christ, but only hold forth something in a general way concerning Christ. And so bring no more salvation ministerially to the elect, than they bring to the non-elect: And what a gross abuse of the elect is this by them who seem to profess election! The non-elect have the common notion of salvation already concerning Christ: that is, they have the common doctrine of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ died for sinners, that they are sinners, and the like.

We are for the loaf to our own children, not the parings separately. We are for the substance of Christ, to be preached to elect sinners, through him by the Spirit of God (for this Comforter is the conveyancer) that the elect of God may not be put off with ineffectual offers of Christ.

A superficial offer of Christ in the notional and external part of the doctrine may perhaps satisfy some preachers, but do they think it is the way to save their hearers? No; it is not the way. Now the question is this, do you offer the Gospel concerning Christ, or do you offer the Gospel through Christ? If it be but concerning Christ, pray do not think your ministerial free offer shall be a means to save men.

It may serve externally to cultivate and dress up some of the non-elect, in a mere profession, for some external service of the church of God, as the elect may want assistance from the non-elect in some of their doctrinal notions of Gospel truths, that so by these notions of Christ in some of the non-elect, they may be some ways serviceable to the gospel in its out-works.

Preach concerning Christ absolutely, among all, to all, and before all; that hereby the doctrine may reach some of the non-elect, if it be possible, while the salvation goes forth in operation to, and upon the elect of God.

Indeed, an effectual knowledge of the Gospel, and the power of the Gospel can never be separated, but they will, in conversion, fall, in life and sweetness, on the elect, notwithstanding a knowledge of some parts of the Gospel, as the history and form of it, are separable from the power; so that the former may be in many of the non-elect, who are utterly destitute of the latter. Ministers of Christ therefore should preach the Gospel, with clear distinctions between what they have to say concerning Christ, and what they have to say through Christ. But the evil is, that instead of this, men go beside all rules of Scripture example, and proffer Christ in the lump, either to those who have already received Him in the lump, or proffer Him so for salvation to sinners; whereas, He was never so proffered by either apostles or prophets, in all the Scriptures. But salvation was preached through Christ, to guilty sinners, till Christ was formed by the Holy Spirit, in the hearts of the elect, and the elect alone, among numbers of them who perhaps partook of nothing but the clutter and shell of Christianity in the same sermons.

Apostolical preaching aimed at conversion among Jews and Pagans; and that conversion to be effected on some notionally concerning Christ, in others powerfully through Christ. But preachers in this day aim more at conversion to forms and parties, than conversion to Christ spiritually, out of the conversions that are made to Christ already notionally, or nationally, if you please.

GOSPEL TO FIND THE ELECT

Our work is to bring men to receive the power of the Gospel which they have not received, and so go on unto perfection.

1. To preach Christ with power, that the Gospel through Him may find out the elect, and distinguish them, from among others of all persuasions, who live in a form of godliness, but either deny, or are destitute of the power thereof. 2. To preach the pure, though despised doctrines of the Gospel, concerning Christ and his kingdom, to all, and through Him to the elect: such as the antiquity of Christ's humanity, Who is the root as well as the offspring of David, Rev. 22:16, and the Incomprehensible glory of it, as the alpha, who is now set down at the right hand of God for us. Likewise, the everlasting love of the Father to the elect of God in Him. Also, the salvation of the elect in Christ, as the representative Person, and the root of all election, before their salvation, by influence and conveyance through Christ, as the living Vine to all the branches in Christ, to discern and feel their own union in the tree of life.

Further, the doctrine of the righteousness of God, through the obedience, sufferings, and blood of Christ, Imputed and counted, put to and upon sinners, as the true cause of their believing, through the Spirit of Christ, by virtue of this imputation, revealed within them to bring them under it, without imputing their trespasses, or their deeds of the law. Herein lies the despised doctrines and scriptural forms of preaching.

Also, in preaching, if we go on unto perfection, the Scriptures must be opened out of themselves, and not out of any other book at random. There must be a distinguishing between foundation and superstructure, or fundamental texts and superstructure texts; superstructure texts and the sense of them are to be carefully built upon the fundamental, and not the fundamental upon the superstructure, as the corrupt manner of some is.

There must be also a right knowledge and use of the three distinct offices of the Mediator, in their season and order. Without this, no sermon can lead us to the best and most profitable way of preaching, so as to show distinctly what pertains to an absolute work of salvation, and what to the absolute providential government of Christ, for His church's sake, for the service of it throughout the life of grace, to the glory of the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, through Him by the Spirit of our God.

Hence there ought to be an altering of our common applications, into an advancement of the work of God the Spirit, throughout all the practical parts of His operations, and motions; such as believing, repenting, duties, and services, by and with the operations of Jehovah the Comforter, as His operations are deep, working by and under the righteousness of Christ.

Lastly, We should preach the order of Christ in His church. And when we have done, take heed we do not practically pull it down, by getting under connections, Presbytery and Synods. We should preach these points, and many such. And thus you have, in a few words, a draught of preaching. To which may be added, a clear distinction of the persons of the one God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and their operations in, and through, the Mediator in all His offices. And while we keep to these,(however Gospel preaching is despised by worldly preachers and professors,)we shall do well.

I am persuaded, if more of our ministers were helped to preach these points of the Gospel,(as few of the ministers of Christ I hope do though they labor against a strong tide of opposition,) they would in a few years find the Holy Spirit had owned them, to the conversion of many sinners, the edification and strengthening of the churches, against all opposition, beyond their expectations. For my own part, I declare I have graciously found it so; and I am confident others would, far beyond what the Lord has ever owned them yet, and far beyond what they ever met with in the ministry, both as to the life of grace in their own souls, and the flourishing state of their churches.

If we preach now at this day the despised doctrines of the mysteries of the Gospel, we shall do most good; I mean such mysteries of the Gospel as are despised among those who call themselves Calvinists; whether we preach concerning Christ, or through Christ; whether to plant the notion and doctrine, or promote the life of grace. The common doctrine of Christ in the lump, should be despised by none; it is special truth as it is in Jesus.

Well then, our work in preaching, if we go on to perfection, is not to confine our ministry to the common doctrine ,of the Gospel concerning Christ: we are not to be ever laying the foundation, or to preach the Gospel in our congregations, as if we were beginning to preach the Gospel to every creature, and to every nation; or after the manner it should be done, if we were just going forth to preach the Gospel in Turkey and India, where it is not yet received, even in the common notion. This the Apostles did in the Pagan and Gentile world. Neither should it suffice us to preach any doctrines concerning Christ, unless we preach them through His name, and therein preach the life of Christ, and salvation by Christ through Him, which are wrapped up in the special doctrines concerning Him.

Preaching through Christ exalts Christ and debases the creature. The elect shall find the life of this, and life by this; there are promises annexed to it. Some may indeed take up quietly with a bare notion of it, who shall be rewarded with a greater stock of common blessings, the principal things they aim at. The truth is, we who preach, want more sense of our own insufficiency, and a life of dependency upon Christ's all-sufficiency. Instead of which, how many who profess to depend upon Christ for praying, count it rambling to depart from their notes, high presumption, the way to be out and disesteemed, to

depend but a quarter as much on Christ for preaching the Gospel through Him, as they depend on their notes without Him.

Who, of the book gifted among us, or men of letters, as they love to call themselves, dare speak to men, though men have but their breath in their nostrils, with that liberty and boldness the great God commands them! This is every jot of it wrong, because it savours of the fear of man.

However, the elect of God shall never be deceived. The special salvation being wrapped up within the cover and outward extent of the common salvation revealed, is safely settled upon the elect of God in Christ: whereas, offers of grace are not appointed of God to effect the conversion of the elect. That is done by His own operations.

The operations of God are divine principles; your offers (if you make them) are nothing but promiscuous proposition. For which cause, the elect by meeting with no more under your ministry than what you bring to the non-elect, mere conditions, and empty sounds, are woefully wronged by what you call your ministerial free offers. What! Must special grace be debarred their souls who are given to Christ? must special grace stand still, and wait upon common offers, which you propose to all men? Must the elect whose portion lies in special grace, perish for lack of bread, while you propose common grace to sinners?

UNIVERSAL OFFERS VS. SPECIAL SALVATION

You do no more than preach a universal grace, while you offer Christ to all sinners. Proffers are made up of free will and human power. For Christ has been already professionally revealed in a common way to all, while the common salvation has been openly shown in the sight of the Heathen. The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men: It is not said, has been offered to all men. And please to observe, that an offer, or proffer of special grace, is another special absurdity. Ministers of Christ are to preach special salvation to the elect, that they may not be wronged in having less than God's free gift declared under our labors; mere professors, or outward-court worshippers, have their share still, as to matters of form concerning Christ: that is, they have the common doctrine of Christ, testified in due time, which is their share, and so they cannot be abused while they have the lot they are best pleased with: while, on the other hand, the Gospel is preached through Christ, the elect in all ages receive pardon and peace through Him, in the special salvation which He bestows.

Special grace cannot be offered; the nature of it is to be conveyed. It is not merely what is received concerning Christ, but what is to be received through Him, by the operation of JEHOVAH the Spirit. There may be a moral persuasion wrought in men by words, or by arguments and reasons proposed to them, so as to gain an orthodox persuasion of truth, opposed to any heterodox persuasion of error in the mind.

Yet such persuasion, such empty dead and corrupt faith, cometh not of Him that calleth you. (Gad. 5:8) The Holy Spirit in effectual calling sanctifies the judgment, and works tip the thoughts of the heart into principles of truth, forming a sound mind. A mere moral persuasion of the truth falls very far short of the faith of God's elect, which by preaching the Gospel forms Christ, in the heart the hope of glory.

In a word, the Lord never offers saving grace to those whom He never intends to save, because He cannot act deceitfully. Bat yet the Lord will send the report faithfully to them, and that to answer ends of another sort, even where He has never appointed nor Intended men to believe unto salvation. To the

one the Gospel is a savor of death unto death, and to the other the savor of life unto life; and who is sufficient for these things? (2 Cor. 2:16)

CHAPTER SEVEN

20 RESOLUTIONS

Particular resolutions of the question – How must we preach the gospel to sinners, if we do not offer the Gospel to them? To lay open the religious cheat and the nakedness of your free grace offers. For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering. (Isa. 6:1, 8)

First Resolution

IMPUTATION OF THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD

The First resolution of the question. We must preach the Gospel, as it agrees with the reconciliation of God to sinners, and sinners to God, through the gift by grace, in the imputation of the righteousness of God in Christ to them; for not as the offence, so also is the free gift: It is a gift by grace, and that by one man, even by Jesus Christ, abounding into many. Let me begin and make out the doctrine of imputation from Rom. 4:22, 23 and therefore IT was imputed unto him for righteousness: now it was not written for his sake alone, that IT was imputed to him. IT; what was this IT? Abraham's act of faith say some. No; I answer, the IT was the object of that act of faith, called the promise, or the hope of Israel. (Acts 26:6, 7)

1. The Scriptures do everywhere in an analogy, lay the stress of the matter upon the object; that is to say, upon Christ, upon His righteousness and blood to justify: and therefore that object must be the matter of the imputation here meant. 2. If any will forcibly wrest it to mean faith, because of the coherence, v. 18, Abraham against hope, believed in hope. Also the context speaks, v. 19, of his being not weak in faith; and v. 20, of his staggering not at the Promise of God through unbelief: likewise, v. 20 of his being strong in faith; and v. 21, of his being fully persuaded, all which bespeaks faith, and that this faith is the IT which was imputed; I will still answer and say, faith was not the IT imputed. One place must be expounded by many, not many places by one. Therefore, by the IT is to be understood that the thing he had in his eye was imputed: as if I should say, my sight tells me, then the meaning is, these things seen tells me.

So if this faith, which is the spiritual eye-sight of the soul be interpreted to be the IT which was imputed, it must be understood, according to sound doctrine, that it was the thing imputed to Abraham, which his faith, his spiritual eye-sight had discerned, which thing was the object Abraham believed in, namely, Christ and His righteousness.

Besides, we have Scripture enough to justify us in this interpretation of it, if you suppose his act of faith was imputed.

This appears by the common instances of a Catachresis, or a figure of speech which signifies the use of a word beyond the common acceptation. As Jer. 46:10, "The sword shall devour." Here to devour, which is the property of a living creature with teeth, is catachrestically applied to the sword. So Rev. 1:12, "I turned to see the voice." It is seeing the voice, which by this figure is used for seeing him that uttered it. And Psa. 132:5, "Let my right hand forget her cunning." Here forgetting is applied to the right hand, in the same way of speech as it is put for the memory failing, to direct and employ the right hand in the skillful management of instruments in music.

Likewise, Hos. 4:8, "They eat up the sins of My people." Sin properly cannot be eaten with the natural mouth; but the meaning is, with their mind they feed upon wickedness, or they live at the idol's table; they eat the sacrifices that are offered to false gods. (Prov. 30:15) The horse-leech has two daughters, i. e. two of her own kind. So an ewe-lamb of the first year in the Levitical sacrifices is called in the Hebrew phrase, a daughter, Lev. 14:10. A kid of the goats is said to have a mother. Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk. By the same figure the ants are a people, and the conies a feeble folk. (Prov. 30:25, 26)

After this same manner, faith being understood to be the IT that is imputed for righteousness to Abraham, it is but catachrestically spoken, by ascribing the imputation to the act which strictly belongs to the object of that act; namely, the imputation of what faith discerned and laid hold of to justification in Christ. This is the IT which in the faith of Abraham was imputed to him for righteousness.

3. It expressly applies to the promise in the verse before, verse 21. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief." And what was contained in this promise but the seed, or Messiah? verse 18. So shall thy seed be; which seed is Christ, Gal. 3:16. He says not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed which is Christ. Christ the head, and all His numerous members, heirs of the faith of Abraham, more in number than the stars of Heaven, or the sand of the sea shore. (Gen. 15)

4. This was promised Abraham, as a type of Christ, should come to pass in his seed, in, by, and through Christ the anti-type. The meaning then of those words, Rom. 4:21, "And being fully persuaded that what He had promised, He was able also to perform," must respect the promised righteousness of the seed even Christ, and so resolves what the IT must mean, in verse 22. IT was imputed or accounted to him, namely, the righteousness of God, which had been promised in this seed: which plainly expounds that radical text in Gen. 15:6, from whence the other in the Romans is derived.

And Abraham believed God (in His promise, at verse 5) and IT, the promised blessing in the seed Christ, was counted to him for righteousness. IT, not the faith, but what the faith beheld; for it is in the seed promised, Gen. 3:15. IT shall bruise thy head, as Elohim threatened the serpent, respecting the victory to be obtained over him by Christ, when He should bear our sins in His own body on the tree from which tree or cross we should fetch our spiritual food, and feast upon It as a sacrifice from the altar, better fruit of life, and of a better Eden than that wherein we lost our first righteousness; even of Christ the glorious tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God: where we shall better know Him than now we do, both as He is Alpha in the upper, and Omega in the nether streams.

This IT imputed, Rom. 4 is Christ; and plainly means the imputation of the righteousness of the promise, or the righteousness of God in Christ, that was lodged in the bowels of this promise. And by comparing the place again with Rom. 4:11, the thing is more plain, that it speaks of a righteousness imputed.

Further, whereas they lay so much stress upon an act of faith, the Scriptures, foreseeing the disorder in men's thoughts, have quite shut the mention of faith out, saying, we shall be justified by His blood; ascribing the whole of justification to the blood, where the virtue of the mystery lies. Much more then being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. (Rom. 5:9) Here the object of faith is expressly mentioned without the act of faith. The blood that paid our debt, our eye beheld it, or our hand received it. This may still serve to confirm us in the matter, and well explains the IT to be meant of the blood of Christ, wherein His consummate righteousness, which paid our debt, lay.

It is His blood that stamps all virtue upon our faith. No virtue or influence whatever can be added by our faith, to or upon that blood. Observe, how in being justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. (Rom. 5:9) Here faith is not at all expressed.

But you will say, it is implied; the Romans were justified by faith, ver. 1. Well, be it so; then is not justification by the blood implied, notwithstanding it is in words expressed that we are justified by faith; therefore the blood is implied where it is said, it was imputed to him for righteousness. What is expressed of faith, verse 1, is an open expression, and leads to the mystery of the blood, couched under it, and expressed elsewhere. All is to signify that the Holy Spirit under the imputation of the righteousness of God in Christ, has wrought faith in the blood of Christ, thereby, even by which blood we are justified.

4. That text, Isa. 54:17, plainly discovers, and sweetly speaks of the imputation of the righteousness of God. Their righteousness is of Me, saith the Lord. Of Me, consequently from Me, and so must come upon them by imputation. And faith also comes in virtue of the blood of Christ, through the righteousness of God, witnessed by 2 Pet. 1:1. Not that the righteousness of God comes to us in virtue of, or for our faith: no; nor in virtue of, or for any thing we have, or can have, in ourselves. I shall now observe, that offers of grace do not stand with this great truth of the Gospel, even the free gift by grace, in the imputation of the righteousness of God. For,

1. Offers of the Gospel are no ways or means of bringing home the imputed righteousness of God in Christ, which is God's free gift of grace to sinners. (Rom. 3:24) Because the righteousness of God is imputed, not offered. Preach imputation then, and not proposals of the righteousness of Christ. The doctrine of imputation will always answer the name God calls the Gospel by, good news; but the notion of propounding salvation upon my acceptance of the offer, is ill news. For I find no heart to accept of Christ upon proposal, but to keep my sins rather, and walk in unbelief! because my sins are stronger than my resolutions; whereas, I feel my heart finds hope upon the view and virtue of imputation; the righteousness of God in Christ imputed to me implies some power independent of my own, there the Spirit quickly makes sinners sensible the remedy lies, and that there the virtue consists which is to help them.

Offering the Gospel is no way of advancing the said imputation. Now to preach up the fruits of imputed righteousness, advances the grace of God, because it shows Poor sinners how one branch of free grace streams out of another branch of free grace; that being justified by His grace (see, I am to lay it still upon grace) we are made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3:7) Offers do not advance the imputation of righteousness, so much as they advance the creature's supposed power in the acceptance.

I am to preach and insist that where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. (Rom. 5:20) But offerers have no right to speak thus; no, you free offerers, who serve tabernacles, have no right to eat at this table; it destroys the nature of offers to bring them into plain language, as nothing abounds towards guilty helpless sinners; when I come to my offers I lose sight of wisdom's enlarged views, because I leave instruction, and err from the way of understanding, therefore must remain in the congregation of the dead while the offer stands so darkly before me, like a curtain of the night; whereas grace abounding to the chief of sinners, swallows me up; but there is nothing abounds in all offer, so as to make the thing offered mine.

What signifies the offer-blow beating about my faculty? I want the view of a complete unconditional and advanced righteousness, to be applied to and put on my person. What do men mean, but to knock me on the head with their offers? for it is no better. I want atoning blood, freely streaming on my wounds! They tell me I must lay hold of their offers, but I want to hear of something that will lay hold on me: Christ's righteousness, when advanced, how sweetly it takes hold of a poor sinner, because it suits his case.

The preacher spurs me on; he says I must make no delay. But all this time he does not lift up the righteousness of God high enough for me to see it. I want to find the Spirit of God in a ministry causing me to feel it, while it is exalted over my head, that I may see I am under the covert of it. This must be done before I can set one step towards Heaven! The effect may be easily known, for the imputation of righteousness takes away all iniquity from the conscience. (Hos. 14:2)

The man that preacheth thus to sinners, advances Imputed righteousness and free grace; but he that offers salvation to sinners upon their own acceptance, covers no iniquity with the mantle of Christ's righteousness, nor advances the imputation of the righteousness of God, that does so. Offers in no wise serve to advance the virtue of imputed righteousness, as of a comprehending righteousness, that contains within it a complete Christ, and the grant of the Spirit, promised in office to work regeneration, or, the new creature, and faith the visual power of the new creature, and repentance, the effect of both.

Second Resolution

GOD'S GIFT OF THE SPIRIT

The second resolution of the question. We must preach the gospel in showing glad tidings to the people, namely, that God's gift of the Spirit, or internal operation on the soul's faculty, that secures a sinner's acceptance [receiving] of Christ in the preaching of the gospel; whereas an external offer is a mere delusion, for offers are without men, not within men.

We preach the blessed gift of the Spirit of grace, and not abuse it in pretending to turn it into an offer of grace. What God has granted freely, we should not go about to propose or bargain for. This is acting like Simon Magus's disciples. God pours out His Spirit. (Zech. 12:10) What business have we to tender the Holy Spirit? Wherever the righteousness of God is imputed, the Spirit of God is bestowed, to reveal and apply it. In this way saving grace is given to all the elect of God. It is of special grace when God gives men His Holy Spirit, but it is not of special grace when ministers offer Him to men.

The Spirit is exalted in the bestowment of Himself upon us. But how is the rich grace of God exalted, if you descend from a gift to a proffer of the Holy Spirit? How shall we preach, you say? I say preach down offers, and exalt the good news that God has revealed in the gospel, namely, that of bestowing His free Spirit upon us. If God helps you by His Spirit, to preach the efficacy of His Spirit, under the righteousness of His Son, you will do this work faithfully. And you will tell sinners, that through your vain offers, the Lord has not given you an heart to perceive, nor eyes to see, or ears to hear to this day. Tell the elect of God that their participation of the Holy Spirit put within them, all is a free gift, and not one dram of it a free offer.

We ought to preach the Spirit (who is an undertaker in the work of grace and salvation of the elect,) as positively as we preach the Father, or the Son; whereas on the contrary, what a poor ineffectual helper, do most men in their preaching make the Spirit of God appear to be.

Third Resolution

FOR THE DISPLAY OF EFFECTUAL GRACE IN ALL ITS WORKS

We are to preach the Gospel whereof we are made ministers, according to the gift of grace; the grace of God given unto us, by and for the effectual working of His power. This effectual grace of God is preached by exalting the operations of God the Spirit.

We must preach the operations of grace, and throw away from us, and put out of our mouths these vain offers, or what men are pleased to call evangelical offers. We are to preach the Spirit's efficacy, as absolutely as we preach the Father's election and the Son's redemption; all beside is delusion. For want of these things the work of preaching has been spoiled. Effectual grace is to be held forth in passive phrases; and we must so preach the Gospel as it is most suited to the work of God, on helpless subjects. Nothing short of this is good news. Then preach thus, and away with your offers.

In this branch of the discourse, may be further advanced the operations of free grace, in the room and place of grace offers. For grace conveyances may be proved effectual and operative, or prevalently by the Gospel in the hand, or office, of Jehovah the Spirit, on all the elect of God. Operations of grace are wise as well as efficacious; but offers of grace are foolish. For an offer of grace supposes Immediately a practical acceptance, upon a mere supposition of the creature's own ability, and not upon an advancement of the Spirit's work in creating a capacity for the sinner's choice, and for acceptance of Christ in effectual grace. If the preacher believed this, and saw it in its proper light as he ought, he would turn his old offers into thankful admiration's of the operations of the grace of God! whereas, instead of the effectual and approved Gospel of Christ, he is by his offers bringing into the Church Saul's unproved armor to put upon God's David; but when they come to have more light in the Gospel, and clearer views of things, they will confess these empty offers are nothing to them. Many have attempted to put on such harness, and use such weapons, before they had proved them.

If a sinner receives Christ, he will have some experience of the effectual working of Him in his own soul. For I am confident this doctrine of passiveness under the Gospel preached, or effectual grace to be wrought in the soul by the Spirit, will overturn their offers and proffers, according to the manner in which men now pretend to offer Christ, tendering Him and eternal salvation to the soul of men.

I shall next (if the Lord permit) present such arguments against these devices of men's purblind reason, in behalf of their sermonizing, as may, if blessed of the Lord, advance the effectual operations of His own grace upon the elect of God.

Offers cannot stand before effectual grace, because they consist not in a close advancement of a passive submission in the sinner to stand still and see the salvation of God; but consist partly of an active work in what the preacher does; as, Here, I offer you Christ; and partly 'Of an active motion, required of the creature, and insisted on by the preacher.

Whereas, it is in the light and power of effectual and purifying grace, bestowed and experienced, that a sinner believes in Christ unto salvation, renouncing all that is his own; nor can he do otherwise in a real

experience of Christ. But offers agree not with this doctrine of passive obedience, advanced in speaking the word of God to sinners. It is not suited, it does not agree, with an offer of Christ to commend, praise, and set forth a distinguishing work of grace upon the soul.

We must preach the new birth, the washing of regeneration and the renewing power of the Holy Spirit. That is far beyond the tender, and far better than the doctrine of the offer. We are to preach this new birth, as men born from above, and therein born of the Spirit, John 3:5 and born of God. (1 John 5: 1) We must preach that which is productive, not that which is fruitless. An offer produces nothing towards grace; but an operation of the Spirit produces the new birth.

Preach operations then, and preach down offers. How can the new birth be offered men; and yet by the new birth Christ is formed in them; men's offers, therefore, are most inconsistent with the glory of the Spirit's work! We should preach the Gospel, which is consistent with the praise of the Spirit's work in regenerating grace as it is consistent with the praise of the Father's act in election; and yet I am sure the preaching of very few tends to this end.

We are to preach the new birth (Eph. 4:24), the hidden man of the heart (1 Pet. 3:4), the inward man (2 Cor. 4:16), of the inward parts and the hidden (Psa. 51:6), all which tells us it must be operations, not offers of grace, that are to be used of God and exalted of man. We must preach the circumcision of the heart (Rom. 2:29), the new nature (Job 3:6), the new heart (Eph. 3:6), a clean heart (Psa. 51:10), all which passive phrases show, that a great and effectual door is opened of the Lord, in preaching; through there are many adversaries ready to cry out against operations of grace, in opposition to offers of grace.

Offers cannot stand before the test of effectual grace, which speaks in positive terms respecting the new creation, because offers are more fitted to man as a reasonable worker, than a spiritual workmanship, or as clay in the hands of the potter. How can the Spirit's workmanship in the soul that is created, be effected by proposals? We are said to be the workmanship of God. (Eph. 2:10) In the original it is the poem or epistle. Can such an epistle write? It is itself a piece of workmanship contrived and wrought by manifold wisdom? For how is a poem made? Is it by proposing to pen, Ink, and paper, or is it done by an operation of the undertaker in his undertaking? In the same manner, we also are the workmanship of God not by offers to us, to partake of the workmanship, but by operations on us forming us into the workshop or poem itself; ye are His epistles known and read of all men. For though in natural religion men's hearts and thoughts are not pen, ink, and paper, but unstable cogitations and diction's, yet respecting spiritual and supernatural things, they are so when made subject to them.

Before the Spirit's workmanship antecedently men are not blank paper, but blotted nature, and can a blot accept of a proposal to become an epistle? What is there in nature that can bring men to Gospel compliance with Gospel offers? neither offers nor offerers can perform any of the Spirit's work. They cannot guide and lead the soul to Christ, or keep the soul in Him. And if there be something more than nature in Gospel believing, then the work of the Spirit of Christ must be therein.

If these are truths, why do we then stand of feting, when we should be exalting Christ, the free gift of the Spirit, and His operations? If it be necessary that the Spirit be efficaciously given to convince sinners before they can receive Christ, then offering of Christ is in vain, since Christ is the first gift of the Father to none but His elect. If Christ could be given in the offer, so might the Spirit of Christ; if not, how comes the glorious gift of God to be abused by a nickname? Do men think to cover it, saying by offer they mean gift? If so, let me ask, Does an offer change the nature of a sinner, or create a new

heart, which is the workmanship of God? The gift does, the gift of Christ, the gift of the Spirit, changeth the nature of a sinner, and created a new heart, which is the workmanship of God.

Now let me question a little respecting this offer, after a sinner has received the Holy Spirit, previous to the proposal, and antecedently, is the proposal to be made to such an one? If you say Yes, I answer, If effectual grace came by the Spirit, without and before the offer, then what need any offer or proposal to be made? The Gospel preached in the power of God having the Holy Spirit descending on it will alone do the work of conversion. You may venture to trust it; if God teaches you, you will never try your offers more; it will do very well without proposals, and carry all before it in the strength of the Holy One of Israel. The gift of the Holy Spirit with the Gospel is effectual, but your proposals stand aloof, unnoticed by the Spirit, therefore they are ineffectual. How weak then is it to glory in proposals, to plead for proposals, in order to make a fair show in this poor piece of proud ineffectual flesh!

How are offers suited to translate men out of darkness into the kingdom of God's dear Son? (Col. 1:13) And out of darkness into marvelous light? (1 Peter 2:9) How do offers suit with a work that is above all created power? For so is regeneration declared to be. (Eph. 1:19, 20) The offer-doctrine is a way of preaching more fitted to things done by us as men in weakness, in formal profession, than to things done upon us, by the infinite grace and power of Jehovah. It is not fitted at all to passive subjects, under the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. It agrees much better with the free agency of the old man, than the life and formation of the new creature. More with self-justification, than justification by grace. It is suited more to a disposal of our own goods, upon proposal made, than to the adoption of sons, by grace. More to an ordering of our own faculties, than to a renewing of them, by the shedding of the Holy Spirit upon us. More to an act of natural morality, than to the internal sanctification of the Spirit. More to a power of signing some personal treaty, than to a being written upon, as an epistle of Christ, by the Holy Spirit, or putting Christ's laws within our hearts, as Jer. 31:33. And giving them an heart to know the Lord, as in the same Prophet, (Jer. 24:7) in a word, man's offers are not fitted to exalt God's operations.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST EXALTED

The new creation and workmanship of God has a personal worker who is to be exalted, not an offer of grace to be set up and defended. The heart of a sinner is drawn to Christ in effectual grace, personally and by a person; and you that were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled. (Col. 1:22) Now has He reconciled; it is not, now has the offer reconciled; or, now has tendering the salvation done it, notwithstanding some love to magnify the offer, more than they dare magnify preaching. But it is, now hath He reconciled, that is, Christ has, not an offer. Paul exalts Christ, but he does not defend the offer. It is He Himself that has reconciled you, and not your faith, as some tell us; but He by the Spirit has wrought your faith not by the offer.

The Father too is exalted in effectually believing, not the offer of grace. No man can come unto Me, says Christ, except the Father which sent Me, draw him. (John 6:44) And He said, therefore I say unto you, that no man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father. And so Christ is to be exalted, but not the offer. Draw me, we will run after thee. (Song 1:4) Here Christ is exalted for faith, as the Worker of it, but not offers of grace, that works nothing. The apostles exalted Christ when they said, Lord, increase our faith. (Luke 17:5) We are to set forth the Lord, and not stand pleading for offers, if we would preach effectual grace.

The issue of choosing Christ is in Consequence of the application of Christ to the soul, and the operation of the Spirit of Christ to salvation, not by offers and tenders of salvation. And you hath He

quickened. (Eph. 2: 1) Christ is our quickener by the Holy Spirit. As God is our Father, and quickens us by Christ, so Christ quickens us from the Father by the Spirit. Thus God's gift of the Spirit quickens and converts to Christ savingly. (I John 4:13, Rom. 8:14; John 14:17)

We must therefore preach effectual grace. We must preach to sinners God's new creation, by Christ Jesus. That it is not by the work of the offer, but independent of the offer, by grace operating, that produces a new creation. We must not preach men's being new-born according to the will of the offerer or of the acceptor, but according to the will of God; which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, but of the will of God. (John 1:13) The Spirit commands this; wait for this, He is the gift of the Father, to enter the sinner's nature, as the voice drops into sinners' ears.

God uses ministers' tongues as instruments in preaching, but they are not to use their own whims in offering. It has been by God the Spirit, applying as ministers of Christ have been directed to speak home, that any good has been done; not while they have made offers and overtures, and stood aloof with propositions; as if the ministers themselves did not believe the efficacy of their own message to sinners, or effectual grace, by pre-operation of the Spirit upon their own hearts.

THE NEW CREATION NOT PROPOSED OR OFFERED

We must preach in the passive style thus; for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. (Rom. 6:5) Turn Thou me, and I shall be turned. (Jer. 31:18) In our being brought to preach thus, we must first hope God will own us, before we can hope sinners will hear us. Remember, nothing is done to purpose without a new creation: then we ought to preach Christ's influence on the soul, not Christ proffering to the soul, nor Christ proffered, nor ourselves proposing.

Did God, when He would make the world, propose to the world, or did He create the world? Was the world consulted for cooperation, or was it formed by pure creation? Why then are proposals made to an old dead creation about making a new creature? Or to produce a new creation? Faith, repentance, regeneration, are of a new creation, and parts of a new creature. They are all distinguished in the soul, but they cannot be separated. Regeneration is the new creature stirring; repentance is the new creature sensible of the evil of sin darkness, unbelief, etc., and melted under grace; faith is the new creature opening its eye.

Now in the first creation God said, Let there be light, and there was light. This was a command, and creation of light followed it. So in the new creation, God answers to His former work in the old creation, by passives in operation upon the human faculty, (2 Cor. 4:6) Christ breaks in upon the soul, and through the eye created, shine in the true nature of light, while the Gospel is freely and absolutely preached to all the elect of God. The love of God is shed abroad, (Rom. 5:5) Do we think a soft tongue breaketh the bones? (Prov. 25:15) So the love of God shed abroad in the heart breaketh the heart. Love takes away the stony heart out of our flesh, and gives us an heart of flesh!

May the Lord humble preachers, that they may lie in the dust, and never open their mouths again to tell sinners they offer them Christ, since there is such a large theme of effectual grace to preach the true God and eternal life, both to saints and sinners of the elect of God, by exalting the Savior.

Saving conversion-work is wrought by exalting Christ in the face of sinners, not by offers and tenders of Christ to sinners; by the absolute grace of renovation, to all the elect of God. For of sinners, are the elect of God; neither hath His grace singled out any object in the whole world, except such. Suppose, as

to a couple of men, the one chosen in Christ, the other passed not; the Spirit of God never mistakes the Father's choice, so as to sanctify the non-elect, or to pass by the chosen vessel. Therefore, man's free will and power never superceded the Father's purpose, or the Son's particular purchase, however he may work and tug.

Now preaching the operations of the Spirit exalts the sovereignty of grace, in distinguishing our elections and new births, according to the settlements of grace, by the will of God and our Father. But offers of grace can never be thus effectual, because they are not fitted to express or convey the operations the Spirit in every way performs.

We should then under our own personal experience of effectual grace, leave off these offers, and never talk more of proposals, but tell the people continually in every sermon, by the very passive frame and style of our expressions, that man's heart is under God's operations, and that the best of us all in preaching the Gospel are but pens in his hand, and not Lord-dictators to make or utter our own proposals. We ought to tell the people with all becoming confidence, when we speak unto them in Christ's name, that our preaching the Gospel to them is God the Spirit's means of bringing it home to them, and that as we have received this earnest of the Spirit in our own hearts, so we graciously hope that He also may bring home the same word upon the hearts of sinners also.

He has taken room enough in the riches of His grace by Christ Jesus to do it! We wait, therefore, upon our ministry, and trust the Lord with the rest, as to begetting power in your souls, and causing the word to abide upon you! Such a hint may be more effectual in knitting the heart to Christ, while Jehovah the Spirit has taught us to open His own word, after His own manner, rather than by whole sermons shaped and contrived to make the most specious appearance in offers.

Effectual preaching is searching preaching; it is not daubing with untempered mortar that wounds! I have known dame nature run for it, under faithful preaching, while a poor sensible sinner has been broken down and melted under it! The ministers of Christ ought to preach what they effectually feel and soundly believe; if they do not, they are not faithful, nor fit to preach Christ.

I am sure of this, that when I do not feel what I preach, it is the grief and burden of my soul that I am obliged to stand before the people as if I were offering the Gospel instead of preaching the Gospel. Whereas preaching of the Gospel is sure to work some change by the Gospel. Paul was effectually led by Christ to beget many; and of these Corinthians he writes sweetly: In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel. Herein he exalts the Gospel, but not offers of the Gospel: He lifts up Christ, and shows us that all his ministerial virtue lay in Him. He knows nothing about offers, neither here or elsewhere, nor of tenders and proposals, according to the degenerate language of these latter days and perilous times.

It was under the apostle's preaching of free and absolute grace (in that day wherever Paul came, the conduits ran with new wine) that the Holy Spirit gave to some a draught, and to every one of the elect, more or less, He gave a taste. It was under such preaching, as now we lack in most churches of the saints, that the Holy Spirit opened blind eyes, and showed to sinners through the eye of faith (while looking unto Jesus in the glass of the Gospel,) that the very efficacy of the work in the new birth and its consequences, are all a free gift indeed! An offer produces nothing, but an operation of the Spirit produces the whole workmanship of God.

We are to hold forth and preach that the Spirit works this new creation by His operations; namely, from Christ's living Intercession and the Father's grant. These are operation of the Spirit, and not offers of

the Gospel; they answer in regeneration to the mystical quickening before spoken of, (Eph. 2:5) and how do they answer? By an implanting of sinners into the likeness of Christ's resurrection by the co-quickenings pattern. (Rom. 6:5) Operations of the Spirit do produce the whole workmanship of God in the soul. (2 Cor. 4:6) Is this good news? Yes, it is; then why do not you preach it?

The experimental part of religion, to wit, Christ formed in the soul, the hope of glory, and salvation by grace, written on the heart, are wrought by God the Spirit in the souls of all the elect of God. But in offers of the Gospel there is no preaching the Gospel, much less of the experimental and inwrought part thereof; no, not so much an acceptance of a good part of the notion, or the doctrine itself; but the Holy Spirit works the very principle of that acceptance in the elect of God.

Offers all lay in assays; and being conscious of their own weakness, they are obliged to call in pomp and parade, raving, sweating and broiling, as Baal's priests did; yet they noise and show, the organ and the harpsichord, roaring and produce nothing. An offer assays and assays, it promises and vows, stamps and stares, but being weak and unproved, it is above its own sphere to effect any thing, till, like the snuff of a candle, it goes out with a stink. Now is this good news? No, you will say. Then where are your evangelical offers? Never preach them any more. We are to exalt the Spirit in preaching the Gospel, and not offers, which are but windy conceptions, and untimely births at best. The Spirit is far above them, and checks man's assay when he will, as (Acts 16:7) After they were come to Mysia they assayed to go into Bithynia; but the Spirit suffered them not. The Israelites could prevail by faith of the operation of God, and go through the Red Sea, which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned. (Heb. 11:29)

But now hath God ever assayed, and not wrought? Is not the Spirit in an operation efficacious? (Deut. 4:34)

We must preach the word of Christ as it is most suited to God's husbandry. For so it is again expressed in the passive style, (1 Cor. 3:9) Ye are God's husbandry. This is altogether against the doctrine of offers, in a way of the people's becoming so by the Gospel.

We must preach the Gospel as it is suited to an ingrafted word. (Jam. 1:21) Receive with meekness the ingrafted word which is able to save your souls. As if He had said, Do not fly out against the Gospel, because it debases human power; for it will surely make old Adam stiffer for it, while sawing off an old member of the body of death, cleaving into the stock, piercing a heart of flesh; but it is only to let in the graft deep into the quick. This will be the effect of evangelizing. As an evangelized word of the Gospel is an ingrafted word, it can be no offered word, no proposed word of grace. The word of faith being ingrafted, is united to the heart, and rooted there, as the effect of God's operations in the husbandry, not united by offers of His grace.

All propoundings of the offer, and all language in the offer-form, fall woefully short of a passive reception of grace. And indeed, let it be considered, according to the energy of the similitude in husbandry; how are trees and orchards planted and grafted? How are fields and vineyards sown and husbanded? Is it done in the way some men pretend to preach the Gospel? Is a piece of husbandry upon an estate effected by the owner or husbandman's offering to graft trees and plant vines? Is it by proposing of grafts to the stock? Is it by tenders of his seed to the ploughed lands? Sure sowing is quite another act than what can be represented by an offer, or tender of the seed. When he has made plain the face of his ground, does he not cast abroad the fetches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal

wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye in their place? For his God does instruct him to discretion. (Isa. 28:24)

How do these acts of the husbandman put to shame the vanity of many offerers of the word? who stand in their own natural strength and wisdom? Offering Christ to sinners; for lo! here it is said of the ploughman, that his God does instruct him to discretion. And being so instructed, he does not bring his seed forth to the ground, and stand over the ploughed lands, making overtures, motions, and offers of what he hath brought, nor propose any quality of the seed; nor tender the fitches, the cummin and the principal wheat. No, his God does instruct him to discretion. And he does cast it abroad, he does scatter it, he does cast it into the mouldy earth.

Now let any man search the Scriptures, and see if these three phrases in God's Word, casting abroad, scattering, and casting in, do not far outweigh the other three phrases, so frequently in the mouths of some spiritual seedsmen, viz., offering, proposing, and tendering the seed of the Gospel (for the doctrines and salvation they offer are the seed of the Gospel) which they profess to preach.

Preaching the Gospel is casting abroad the precious seed of the word; it is scattering it about, as near, among, and within our auditories, as we can, letting it fall how the Lord pleases, either upon the stone of the heart, or upon the mouldy earth; so long as it is within the bounds of a professional auditory, so much the better.

He that preacheth the word faithfully lets the word go: He does not stop his hand, and say, maybe the seed will fall upon the stones, and then my labor will be lost; but he throws it upon the land; that is enough. It will fall well in the main, though it may prove absolutely lost on some.

According to your faith, oh, ye seeds-men, be it unto you. We must not keep back our hands in sowing the doctrine of free grace among the people who sit under our preaching constantly, who have, by the Lord's blessing on the other parts of our ministry, been ploughed up quite through the outside of their natural religion, natural duties, natural righteousness, and natural grace, into a sensible conviction of their sin and natural unrighteousness. When Christ's sowers have got thus far on ploughed land, it is time to sow the field with mercy, righteousness, and faith, of the Gospel kind, lest heavy tidings sink them too much, and make deeper impression on them than is meet.

No impressions are made upon the common world, never ploughed up by the doctrine of the Lord the Spirit. It is the Spirit poured out on men, under searching doctrine in gospel ministry rips them up, saint or sinner; and that Holy Spirit of God thoroughly searches their nature, and turns all, like a plough that enters the lands, upside down; afterwards doctrine that drops as the rain, (more gracious words in Gospel speech,) distills upon the heart as dew, while an increase of the word maketh it soft with showers. When this is done, cast the seed abroad into such mellow earth among Poor lost sinners, instead of misspending your precious time in offering of Christ to them.

Well, on the whole, we see by the light of the Scriptures, that God's husbandry lies in an actual planting, sowing, and engrafting, not in offering to sinners that they may do these things. The Lord himself bestows His grace, but doth not offer His grace even to the elect. It is grace bestowed, (not men's fair show in the flesh about the offers), which makes the elect to be God's elect, converting sinners, and planting them in His husbandry.

We should preach, therefore, nothing but what is God's own appointed means for making them so. And these means are not offers, but effectual grace, brought home to his elect, into their very souls. The pure

Gospel is of an operative nature in the hearts of the elect, because herein the Lord the Spirit waits that He may be gracious, as under the Old Testament the Lord Christ waited till the fullness of time that He might be gracious. How often hath grace been sealed with the effectual operations of the love of God on the hearts of elect sinners, in the day that the Lord makes the elect his husbandry! Now, if this be accomplished by free-grace preaching, which is the only effectual preaching, then the other is but an idle prating, a mere form. We may be satisfied that preaching the Gospel, and speaking these mysteries of Christ to souls effectually, in this husbandry, is wrought, but can be done by no offer of the grace of God, no tender of salvation to men; it must be by the doctrine of free grace, scattered upon them in preaching the Gospel through the Spirit.

Again, as the husbandmen's seed, when his God does teach him to discretion how to use that seed, is scattered and cast into the ground, so should we, who are ministers of Christ, scatter abroad the Gospel liberally, through the whole ploughed auditory, even among a people whose fallow ground is not broken up by offers of the plough, but by the actual ploughing of the Spirit; by the word He breaks up their very thoughts. When men were at ease, He has often broken them asunder. Thus should we cast in the principal wheat, by sawing the word of Christ among them, that the Spirit may root it in their hearts, who attends while the seed of the Gospel is cast in; but he minds not the seed which is held fast in your hands by parley-offers, whilst you refuse to let it go, or cast it boldly into the mould beneath you. An offer produces not a graft, nor is Instrumental towards the propagation of the seed in God's husbandry; but an operation of the Spirit propagates God's husbandry.

We must preach effectual grace, it being most suited to further God's building. So the words are, in 1 Cor. 3:9, Ye are God's building. To this purpose, the Holy Spirit is pleased to use the word instruction, which signifies a building upon.

An operation of the Spirit carries on God's building; but offers of grace, proposals, or tenders of salvation, neither instruct nor build up God's elect in the true mysteries of grace and salvation. Right preaching is a building of the new-born soul upon God's foundation, Christ. For why do I preach grace, if God does not work by grace? Better put oil sack-cloth and lie in the dust, and cry, Lord, show me Thy, truth, and let me not go on my own errand. Howbeit, if I see my way before me, as Christ's minister, whom He sends with the sufficient furniture, both of spiritual and common gifts, then do I see preaching is a building upon his foundation of grace in Christ, or a raising up something that must appear upon God's foundation.

This is the nature of instructing, it is building up, and building on, the grace which is in Christ; building upon the things of God in Christ, agreeable to what I preach. This now is instructing a man. It is edifying him upon what he has seen of Christ from the Lord's own work upon him. Now this view of my ministry raises my own soul quite out of sight of men's carnal reason; and fetching the materials of my ministry far above short-sighted nature, even out of Jesus Christ, I can instruct through grace, while I see what I do, by aiming in the Holy Spirit's light and strength, to break in upon poor souls with the glorious Gospel.

What, if but one spot of ground receive a grain of seed, or but a corner of the building rise today, or even a handful of the auditors, here and there, whom Christ has chosen, be wrought upon, I shall rejoice, having wrought with God, and seen the manifestation, by working upon God's foundation God's power.

Furthermore, in preaching the Gospel I have good hopes, through grace, among a congregation of mixed souls, uncalled as well as called, that I preach the Gospel to the elect of God to purpose. I may expect that the Lord applies the word, and seals my message upon their hearts to this or that man.

But offers of Christ come short of this. They carry on no instructing or building act on the basis of grace, God's foundation, which He hath laid; because instructing in the truth of the Gospel, is building upon Christ the foundation, and is causing experience to abound where soul-tribulation has abounded, by an increase of something that is of the same piece with the foundation, as it is conveyed of the Lord, through our hands, towards raising up the structure upon the foundation already laid.

Whereas, offers of grace add nothing towards building upon the foundation that grace has laid. Therefore, to offer grace is not to instruct in grace, nor in truth. It is not to build up in grace, nor to build upon grace, yet, according to Paul, the building is made up all of free grace, from the first stone laid, and the first true stroke of work done. (1 Cor. 3:9) And we should do it in the same way, if we expect the same success.

As to what men call offers of Christ to sinners, it is neither laying the foundation of the soul's view, nor Christ in the soul, nor yet building gold, silver, or precious stones. It neither instructs them to propose to them, nor does it raise them upon the corner stone, to tender Christ to them. The tendering of Christ is a treating poor sinners that hear, as if they had a will and power of their own to choose God; and it is a sort of preaching that is nothing but Arminianism. They freely tell us, man has a will and power for compliance with the tenders of salvation; otherwise, we render him a mere machine, and cast a reflection on his noble reason.

Indeed, you may rationally propose natural duties to a natural man, duties of several sorts, while at the same time the man has so much reason and power of action, as that a proposal of these duties may, in a common way, work upon his thoughts, and persuade his mind to it. But I must not go and propose the mysteries of the Gospel to men in that way, making them tenders of salvation, as if it were a mere creature's business that rested only between them and me! For proposals imply in a manner, equal terms on both sides: But in effectual grace God can and doth bestow Himself by the Gospel on his own; and yet in that bestowing they are made a willing people.

He puts His own commands on them first, afterwards Christ's yoke, but He puts not on them another Gospel, nor confounds the Law with the Gospel, but keeps them both distinct. He puts the power of his Gospel in them before they have any clear evangelical views, or serve in any evangelical duty. The image is before the work, and Christ is formed in them before the will of God is done by them.

Now an offer agrees not with God's sovereign act upon sinners in raising the building of His grace; for in effectual grace this is the tenor of God's covenant promise, I will and they shall. Therefore our preaching to sinners must not be a preaching of propositions, to urge proposals of grace, but the irresistible operations and power of God's grace.

A proposal is what stands for the courtesy of men to entertain or reject: At least, it is what approaches in all outward view towards it, though men wipe it off with their obligatory offer. But by preaching, the Gospel grace is set home ministerially, it stands with the good pleasure of God to reveal, give, and work in us efficiently, touching His love unto the elect in Christ, that hereby we may go and preach, having received it in good earnest. Well, Ye are God's building, says Paul; that is, Ye are made up of free grace, and are not made what you are made by free offers. For is any building raised up by

proposing to free-stone, brick, and timber, to accept of the offer -to come together into a building? No; building is a passive work, not done by proposals.

How can natural men accept of being a spiritual house, before a change be made? can it be? any more than brick, stone, timber, mortal, glass, and lead, etc. can be persuaded to present the form of a house, upon proposals made to the said materials, to come together into an architectural structure? Now, as a building is raised by laying the proper materials in their proper places, fitted and framed together, workman-like, and by erecting one thing upon another: So in preaching, which has been effectual to the conversion of sinners, and raising them into God's building, there has been a laying-in proper materials, and an instructing or building up the elect upon God's free grace in Christ Jesus: Effectual preaching has fitted them and framed them together, to their use without offers.

Offers to sinners to turn and build themselves, never accomplish the desire of the offerer. But it is preaching breaks in upon a sinner, turns him and builds him up.

Having beaten down the dream of an effectual offer, by setting against it the effectual operation of God, in producing the new creature, in effecting God's husbandry, and in raising God's building, I now come to –

Fourth Resolution

TO EXALT GOD AND DEBASE THE CREATURE

The Fourth resolution of the question. Do you ask, How must we preach, if we do not offer Christ to sinners? I answer, We must preach the Gospel evangelically, so as, if possible, to stain the pride of all glory in the creature, we are to preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants, for Jesus' sake, (1 Cor. 4:5) and if you preach not yourselves, then down with your offers. These are your own creature-gloryings, for when you should be evangelizing, how God is rich in mercy, and how full in grace and power through the Lord our righteousness, you begin proposing some creature-act. And so Christ is now and then brought in, by the bye, to the courtesy of your offers. Here His name is made to stoop to your wickedness, and to serve with your sins.

Offers are fitted to exalt the creature. For when you should be preaching all that exalts God, in contriving, preparing, sending, and revealing salvation by Christ, also in bestowing and conveying these truths into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, men instead of it depart from the truth, give heed to seducing spirits, speak lies in hypocrisy, till they are carried away to glory in offers; and when offers come to town, what do they do? Alas! they evidently lessen God and His truth to exalt a lie.

I never saw an offer exalt fallen man, and establish a lie, defended in any book, or by any man, but therein is an evident debasing of God, even below the character of the creature. And I believe an experimental, enlightened Christian, led into the mystery of God, and having a living communion with God in his soul, never hears the offer drop in a sermon, but it is in a certain frame and spirit of the minister which lessens all he has said before.

Tenders of salvation, i. e. offers of grace are not calculated to exalt God in His Person, His covenant of grace, or His operation of grace. And is this good news? No. Then never preach thus, to follow the multitude into their offer-language. Offers give God the lie by bringing glory to the creature, and so

make the creature boast against the Creator. The new creature is to reign over the old one; grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life.

Whereas we are to glory in the grace of God, as the apostles did, and in the operations of God's grace. (2 Thess. 1:3) We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly. So Col. 1:3, 4. We give thanks to God, and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus. And Rom. 1:8, I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world. How was this faith wrought? By power not proffers. Then which is to be exalted, power, or offers? Thanks were rendered for operations of the Spirit, whereby the faith that was spoken of, came. Then preach operations, and down with your offers. But now there would be more thanks due to offers, than to the Spirit in his operations, supposing a person could be converted truly to Christ under such offers.

For offers are a bait to natural reason, to stir up a man to thank the preacher for his offer, rather than to thank the grace of God for a gift. But, says Paul, I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1:4)

Besides, if the offer takes with the outer court, to let in some notion of Christ by a rational eye, (there being something in Christ fitted to the reasonable nature,) yet that soul still rebels; but if Christ be let into the soul by a renewed eye, the eye of faith, the soul is humbled and receives Him, as He is fitted to its wants, Luke 2:25, this is glorying in the Holy Spirit, in a possession of grace, and not in an offer, a mere phantom.

When Simeon was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him, there was nothing ascribed to his accepting of the offer, as the reason of his waiting for the consolation of Israel, but to this, that the Holy Spirit was upon him. When men preach offers, their praise is not of God, nor will God help them; but their praise is of a creature's act, in accepting the offers made them. But, says Christ of God, and says a faithful minister of Christ, My praise shall be of thee in the great congregation. And, Whom have I in Heaven but Thee? And, There is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee.

Now suppose a man could be converted in revealed religion, by means which owed more to reason than it did to revelation; would not that way of conversion, if there were such a way, bring more glory to the creature and the reason of the creature, than it could bring to Jehovah the Spirit, by and according to the supernatural means of revelation? True faith gives all the glory to God in passive work. Offers insist but upon the open part of the man's labor, but not upon the glory and hiding of God's power, which is wrought by an irresistible agent, so that none can turn it back, let, or hinder it, working in such secrecy, that none can behold it.

The way to convert the elect is not to offer the doctrine, but to exalt the power in the doctrine. What a power went forth upon the heart of Matthew, when Christ said unto him, Follow Me; and he arose and followed Him! It is the folly of ministers to insist upon a form of command, in their preaching, (which command was peculiar in the supernatural energy of it), to none but the Son of God, and His apostles, while, at the same time, they shun to declare His power.

Whereas it is our duty to preach the power, and declare the way: We must do this if we are faithful servants, leaving the command in our Master's hand, to speak it within men, while we are exalting the power of his arm, put in the Command by His own Spirit. It is our duty always to exalt and preach the

power, because that conveys the command from our powerful Lord, but it is not our duty to preach the mere form of the command, for that alone carries no power with it.

If I preach faithfully, my duty, where men have a general faith already, (which they had not in the apostle's days) is not to insist on a form of words to such as believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; but to open the pure Gospel, with which the power of God descends, and works faith that is saving.

Men would be far more successful than they are, if God the Spirit led them more into the mystery of His own operations. For the Lord the Spirit will have the glory of the power in an applicatory way ascribed to Himself, or He will not operate. You think to bring sinners to the faith of the operation of God by commanding them, saying, Believe. But I say, No; you will not do it; for you are neither Christ nor His apostles. Whereas, with them when they said Believe, the power to effect it went along with open miracles, which it does not now. The power of Christ, and the power of His calls, we should exalt; instead of which you may call to dead shiners it is true, but not as Christ Called James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who immediately left the ship and their father, and followed Him.

The arm of the Lord is revealed, where a sinner is wrought on to the saving of the soul. This should be insisted on, not the offer of Christ. Nevertheless, when the offer-speech is charged, men think to come off with an ascent, or consent to the orthodox notion, by saying, I believe it. Whereas the tree is known by Its fruit, and the Insisting so much upon offers openly declare they have no reliance on God's power: Else, all that a man has said of offers, would be turned into an exalting of the power, in the promise of the Father.

Fifth Resolution

TO BEAT DOWN THE PRACTICAL ARMINIANISM OF OUR NATURE

The Fifth resolution of the question. Do you ask, How we must preach, if we do not offer Christ?

I answer, We must preach the Gospel dependent on the operations of the Spirit, to beat down the practical Arminianism of our natures. We are ready to think Arminianism lies only in prayer-books, altars, and Roman-Catholic churches; and that if we protest against the Canons of the Synod of Dort, all is well. This is another mistake.

Arminianism is the universal nature of mankind. It is by nature everybody's principle, and there is no more religion in it than what springs from reasonable nature, under corruption. It is our own case by nature, and I find it as natural in me to be an Armenian, as it is to breathe. I will own it, that every man before the power of grace changes him, has free will, or rather a slavish will to be an Arminian by nature. We were all born so, and without the power of grace we must die so. Now we that are ministers under Christ's power, must preach the Gospel so as to beat down Arminianism. Offers of grace uphold Arminianism, forty times more than they are suited to the free gift of effectual grace to the elect of God.

This appears, 1. By Van Harmine, or Arminius himself, who makes preaching to be proposing the Law and Gospel. Arminius, too near akin to Pelagius, makes use of the offer to uphold the doctrine of general redemption, urging, that "None can reasonably be blamed for rejecting the offer of redemption, unless redemption be obtained for all." (Armin. Opera, p. 580, col. 2.) Who then could have thought that after the Spirit had been discovered in the Armenians some hundred years ago, yet now, under the

Gospel, after so long a time, it should have come to the turn of professional Calvinists to find fault that we strike at offers of grace, while yet we show unto them a more excellent way? And yet so it is. I will produce one instance more of this last follower of Arminius; “The price of redemption is offered to be accepted by the reprobate, says he, if they will accept it.” (Grevinch. against Ames, p. 87.) You see now who an offer of grace is most suited to.

But if we lay down the Gospel in a Gospel way, we are delivered from all the abominations of these Arminians; neither is there room for their subtilities to bring men into such labyrinths as they do.

I must here profess my sorrow for some of our present ministers, who have lost so much ground, while they profess to serve the Gospel in their learning, and in their zeal for orthodoxy, that they seem at this day, in their plea for offers, to be mere strangers to everything in the Arminian controversy, except the bare name of it. Otherwise, they would see that some of the Armenians have covered what ours render bare-faced, without the covering; I mean their natural reasons have cast a veil over effectual offers of grace.

But it further appears, that offers and proffers suit Arminianism, in that they do secretly tend to support universal redemption, because they are general, and to all, without making any distinction: And this is just as the Arminians do. Perhaps it is for fear people should have hard thoughts of our doctrine. Thus are men ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; and why? Because they do not feel it to be the power of God unto salvation in their own souls. Paul had been ashamed of it among the Jews, as ministers now-a-days are ashamed of it, if he had not known the power of it. The truth is, men are ashamed of the cross of Christ. They will therefore frame a plausible way of preaching, easy to nature, that agrees with the Armenians. If you take them up in a corner, and talk with them where the Armenians cannot hear, they will deny universal redemption: But bring them forth upon the house-tops among the mixed auditors, and see if they do not preach after that fashion, which cherisheth a secret belief of, and regard to the universal doctrine of a general redemption. And what mean these general offers, if there be no general foundation, neither in universal grace, nor in general redemption to support them?

Offers are suited to old Adam in the Arminian way, not to the new Adam; though men are loath this should be known, because it disturbs them in their craft.

1. Offers are fitted to a supposed creature-power, to self strength, as it were partly, if not purely, (or rather Impurely), our own. Offers do not argue the necessity of a new birth, that except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God, but they argue a necessity of closing with Christ and accepting Him, whether a man be born, or born from above. What then is the offer fitted to but Arminianism? Offers to men in the flesh to accept of Christ unto salvation, argue that they who are in the flesh can please God; they do not argue that they who are in the flesh cannot please God. Is not this Arminianism then? While men remain under such large piece of the veil of Arminianism, they cannot see Armenianism in their principles nor propositions! How can men receive these offers spiritually, since sinners who have the benefits of Christ tendered to them, are not only without the Spirit, but are such as cannot receive the Spirit? John 14:17. If you will set sinners to work without the Spirit, set them to fulfill the whole Law. But never let preachers set such as cannot receive the Spirit to believe spiritually.

Let them set an Infidel or a Jew to believe in Christ naturally, and they are right. There is ground enough to do so; and it is a condemnation not to believe so, since men have not only a natural ground for the faculty of natural faith but they have all the common assistance of arguments. But to believe

with the heart unto righteousness, men have no power; they shall have no power. The lack of natural faith will condemn men under the means of the Gospel, and yet the having a natural faith will not save men. Still I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; I can preach it through grace among proud shiners, and triumph over their insults against that electing love and sovereign grace, which is denied them. For the promise runs thus. Their hearts shall meditate terror, but thou shalt not be afraid. Thou shalt be neither afraid that the terror shall be thy portion, says God, nor afraid when the world cries out, away with him! away with him! Where is the creature-power that makes any approaches to your offers. Where are your soft offers; your charming offers, your free offers, Gospel offers, effectual offers, obligatory offers? How many sorts and sizes have you of them? Can a poor crippled sinner make his approaches and come half-way to meet any of these? A saint that has been tinder a work of grace says, I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.

How does your preaching relieve such a soul! you stand raving and offering, and Christ Himself does not help you to preach effectually because you despise His grace? Behold He breaketh down, and it cannot be built again; He shuts up a man, and there can be no opening. No opening indeed by creature power, no opening by serious proposals to the will! Go to a man under the sense of the wrath of God, and see if this will do.

Whose understanding was ever opened by offers of grace? Whose conscience washed? Whose will was ever unlocked by this rusty key that never fitted one word in God's book? God will be honored; the reserve of power is in His own hands. I am lie that openeth, and none can shut, says Jesus. You must preach Christ alone for strength to the will, not Christ for offers. For when He hideth His face, who then can behold Him?

You offer Christ, but the sinner sees Him not through the dark veil of your offer. Where is the creature-power which these biased offers lean towards? No man can even say that Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit, even saying it will cost him dear, except the Holy Spirit strengthen him. He cannot say it, and stand to it if the times will not bear it, but he will eat his own words; presently shake and tremble like an aspen-leaf, in times of persecution, if he is called to account before scarlet coats and great wigs, except the Holy Spirit work in him mightily.

What is it takes your hearts now; offers of effectual grace? Keep your offers to yourselves; and the Lord give me effectual grace! It is God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure. No man can come unto Me, except the Father which hath sent Me draw him. Men have not strength to direct their way to God by Christ; and when God does give them one heart and one way, it is done by such preaching as agrees with the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and not preaching offers of grace, suited to nurse the haughty pride of Arminians.

You may talk what you will of God's working by effectual grace under the offer, nevertheless, when you take up your offer-bowl, you lay the stress towards the side of the creature; and so, in the very act of delivering it, you run upon Arminian ground. Nevertheless, God's dispensation of His grace carries in it no dependence on the creature's reception. He does not convey His grace which then would be no grace, by any dependence on the creature.

2. Offers are fitted to creature-prevention, for if the motion-part of grace in closing with Christ were all to depend on a discourse of doctrine, or taught a use of exhortation, for there the offer begins to show itself, it plainly supposes, that God, by his grace, has not superceded the use of exhortation by the power of His Spirit and presence through the fore-part of the discourse; but the offer which comes in at

the latter end is as if the motion part of grace in the heart were there to begin, and the work of joining the heart to Christ were now to be done; whereas by grace in the fore-part God prevents the offer which would prevent Him in the latter part.

Preach so as to exalt God's preventing grace; for we see He is the God of peace by preventing grace, before He is the Spirit of sanctification by promoting grace. He is found of them that sought Him not, He is made manifest unto them that asked not after Him. This is purely preventing grace. But offers of grace are not so suited to this, as they are to Arminianism. Therefore, preach them down, and when an offer comes moist upon the tip of your tongues, ready to fly out, pull it in again, and in the room of it say, When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.

It is nature's pride by offers to think to step in and prevent the blessings of goodness that are to be freely bestowed. It may be, that has been conveyed unto the sealed upon heart of a sinner, in a discourse, three quarters of an hour before the preacher came to his offers, which by and by is so knocked on the head with the offer phrases, that the poor sinner is presently thrust down from his faith to his former doubts, querying whether he has any thing to do with Christ or no. The moment before he found strength to believe Christ, but now the offer comes, and he thinks he is all wrong in an instant!

Grace is of God, and to God. (Rom. 11:36) But offers are neither of him, nor through him, nor to him. They are not of him, for they are not appointed. They are not through him, for they are not influenced by him. They are not to him, for they run away to creature acceptance, by the arm of flesh, instead of exalting the strength of the Lord and fountain of life.

3. Offers of Christ to unregenerate sinners are suited to creature-cooperation, and creature-concurrence, which is rank Arminianism. They tend to mold up the preacher's counsel, exhortations and persuasions into a con-cause (as Arminians call it) with the Spirit of God. Thus the creation-work upon the soul which has no concurrence is tacitly denied, and all that is spoken suits Arminianism to a hair's breadth.

Where do we hear the effectual operation of irresistible grace, as managed by God the Spirit, insisted on among men that offer Christ? I do not find it. Are offers more fitted to exalt God that worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure, than they are fitted to exalt the concurrence of the creature with God's grace to accept offers? The Scripture speaks thus, Be Thou exalted, Lord, in Thy own strength. Here is no cooperation of strength; it is all God's own, that He will be exalted. But are offers purely cut out to exalt God in His own strength? No; but to represent God, standing proposing His grace, and principally to exalt free will of the creature and his power; or rather some broken fragments of imaginary power to accept offers.

Here lies the pride of all flesh which shall be stained when He comes to rain down righteousness, mercy, or judgment, then the Lord alone shall be exalted! Man's rotten righteousness that he has made such a stir about, is stained, when God rains down His own righteousness. And man's wisdom is stained as soon as he comes to see it in the light of God's Spirit through His Son.

But now, wherein is God exalted by your offers? Is it in a display of His own strength in Christ, wherein He has been pleased to engage Himself in an everlasting covenant to work grace in the sinner independent of creature-concurrence? Blessed be God, that cuts down all your fleshly offers.

4. Offers are more fitted to creature casualty than to the Creator's own unerring grace, as the sole and only cause and means of turning the will to Christ. Offers are more suited to contradict the Holy Spirit by the apostles. Ye are saved by grace, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. (Eph. 2:8) Who

maketh thee to differ; and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? Offers -are most suited to the doctrine of Grevinchovius, who said, I have made myself to differ, than they suit with discriminating grace that causeth all the difference by operations, of grace. Alas! what a shame to hear men talk as they do.

Sixth Resolution

TO BE PREACHED ACCOUNTABLY AND DISCRIMINATELY

The sixth resolution of the question. How must we preach the Gospel to sinners, if we do not offer the Gospel to them? I answer, We ought to preach the Gospel discriminately, so as in the light of the Lord to define when Christ and salvation are effectually given, where, and in whose hands the gift of salvation lies. But tenders are unaccountable in the light of the Gospel, in any of these respects.

They who defend offers cannot tell me consistently, Whether the tender is to be made before the Holy Spirit is given or after. Therefore they cannot make out fit time for their proposals. Neither can they accountably resolve it, whether the offer is to be made after the Holy Spirit is given, for if it be, then the main thing of all that is put within me, is put there by grace, without any tender at all; and if the main work be done without offers, then sure all the rest that is subordinate may be done through preaching the Gospel.

Again, if the offer of grace to a sinner is to be made before the Holy Spirit is given, then God the Spirit has no right to the glory of preventing grace, as God the Father and God the Son in Christ have: And if after, then it is proposed in vain, because the thing is already bestowed: Christ is given, and by the Spirit formed in the heart, and the heart and will are wound up to Christ before the offer comes. But as a practical acceptance grows out of the ploughed up ground or fit soil, therefore proposals are unmeet.

The Gospel ought to be preached accountably, so as to be able fairly to give an account, Whether the offer be God's act, or the minister's. But they who defend offers of Christ cannot fairly account for them, whether they be God's act, or the minister's.

They cannot be put to God's account, because God nowhere says He offers Christ, nor offers salvation. So the dispensation of grace can be no offer of God's. Besides, to proffer a thing shows the matter is doubtful, therefore no means to open the heart to God in the certainty of His covenant: No; God is toward His people. It cannot therefore be ascribed to God to proffer, but to give, because of the certainty of His covenant. God's sending and giving Christ to His own are certain and unalterable acts of love in God; God does so act towards His own, that they shall know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. Therefore the offer can be none of God's act. He acts altogether above it.

Again, it is not God's act, for God's act is within the heart, but the offer is an act without the heart, and before the man, and visible at a distance. in God's work the object and the heart meet at one point within, and here is the first practical close with Christ.

Offers of grace and salvation surely cannot be put to the minister's account, because he brings but the doctrine, not the salvation with him. Grace and salvation descend from Heaven by a higher operation than ministerial offers. Ministers indeed are laborers together at the time when God works grace, because God works grace in their hearts, while He helps His ministers to bring the doctrine from their hearts to their mouths. But the salvation is a secret power that comes from Heaven, working itself into

the doctrine, and is quite distinct from the trumpet, or open sound of words, which fall from the minister's mouth.

The Gospel ought to be preached accountably, or so as to give some consistent account of the quality and properties of our preaching. But now if our preaching runs into the offer-speech, the quality and property of these offers are very unaccountable.

For, 1. An evangelical offer is unaccountable. Evangelical is that which belongs to good news. But an offer is a device, and a device carries a sinner no farther than he is already; where is the good news then? An offer talks much, but shows nothing; it comes with no evidence; and where is the good news of that? No offer can be made of absolute grace that turns the heart and secures acceptance. Then where is the good news? And is it not a very unaccountable thing for men to talk of an evangelical offer?

2. A free offer is unaccountable. How can that be free that is lame, halts by the way, and cannot come home? How can that be free, as grace is free, that can do nothing where the will is bound? A free offer has no other freedom in it than a resolute preacher's natural free will to stand by it. And when lie is most serious, it is but his good word and fair speech to deceive the hearts of the simple, and make them believe it is free grace and free gift. There can be no free offer in the sense of free grace.

3. An effectual offer (for the same reasons) must be very unaccountable. The truth of God is effectual, and makes free indeed; but the free offer, though it flows never so freely out of men's mouths, makes no sinner free thereby; therefore it has no Gospel efficacy.

4. An obligatory offer is very unaccountable. Obligatory is what obliges, ties, and binds a man. But no offer can oblige a sinner, except what is contrary to the loosening of a sinner, that he may take hold of Christ. Now a sinner is tied and bound with the cords of sin, and an obligatory offer, the nature of which still is to pretend to tie him, can do him no good. Why? The sinner is under bonds already; and do you think to bring him off with new obligations?

Besides, if all men are bound to close with the salvation of the Gospel, the report and witness of the Gospel, or the doctrine of the Gospel, then your obligatory offer is another Arminian device that plainly points to universal redemption: unless men will pretend that sinners may be saved who were never redeemed.

5. A ministerial offer is very unaccountable. Ministerial is that which lies at the will and pleasure of the matter in his minister or servant. Every minister of Christ is a steward of the mysteries of God, moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. He must act according to his commission and no farther. But when ministers come to offers, they take upon them to act unwarrantably and of their own heads. The commission runs no further than to preach, teach, and show glad tidings: What business have they than to run and offer what they have no right or authority to dispose of? They have no sufficiency of their own to think a good thought as of themselves, though it runs within their commission; then what sufficiency can they have for that which was never put within their warrant?

An offer or a proffer argues some right of disposal in one's self, or some authority to dispose of the thing offered from another. But ministers cannot dispose of Christ, nor of the Spirit, nor of salvation, nor of any one saving benefit of the Gospel. He is a thief that would dispose of his goods without his Lord's consent. Where then is your ministerial offer? A minister's work lies quite another way, than to

offer his Master's grace without his Master's authority; he is to wait upon his Master, while his master Himself, even Jesus Christ, who is God's householder, dispenses God's grace to the household.

Jesus Christ is the Father's servant to communicate the benefit, not to propound the offer. And He never sends servants to rob Him of His own high office. God's gift of salvation, through Christ by the Spirit, is so high a piece of grace, that it will not stand with the arrogance of the creature, in telling sinners, Come, here I offer you Christ: Here, take Him. This does not advance Christ, but self offers. Nor does it advance God, but man. I offer you Christ! is your I so big? Then get thee down to thy place, and lie in the dust, thou great, thou base, thou God-dishonoring I!

6. An offer of grace to a sinner, and not an offer of grace to a saint (my meaning is, an offer of Christ to the unconverted, and yet no offer of Christ for increase of grace to the converted) is an unaccountable thing indeed. While men's talk is of offering Christ to sinners, they never insist on offering Him to saints. Now if I preach Christ, thereby to fulfill my ministry, I must preach Him as He is, all in all to build up saints, as well as all in all to bring in sinners. I am to preach to saints and sinners in one invariable branch of free grace. I do not know two branches of grace that differ, so as to say one is free, and the other is not free. Then why do you not offer Christ to saints as well as you do to sinners? And why do you offer Christ for life and justification to sinners, when you do not offer Christ for nourishment of life and evidences of justification to saints? This is a very unaccountable thing.

Seventh Resolution

TO DISTINGUISH THE SPIRITS WORK FROM THE CREATURE'S ACTS

The seventh resolution of the question. We must so preach the Gospel as to take a special care that we distinguish the Spirit work from the creature's acts, in the practical truths we preach. Men have a general notion in the church Of God, that regeneration is to be ascribed to the Spirit; but they do not feel as new born souls, under the sensible stirrings of corruption, that the Holy Spirit must perform all the new creature-acts. There the Spirit's work wants to be distinguished, instead of spending time by intruding offers. For it is there commonly, when men come to use applications, that they break the second commandment, and bow down to other gods before Him.

Offers nod towards the creature, as a superstitious ceremony monger bows toward his altar. Offers entangle and confound the Spirit's work, in those parts of a discourse especially which they call application. Now you should preach the Gospel just as the Spirit delights to do all the work within us himself, even in bringing us to our duty.

Away then with your offers in putting men to repent, while you conceal the loving kindness of the Lord, and how the Holy Spirit delights to work this repentance from an exalted Jesus, making repentance sweet by operations of Gospel grace, and not bitter by offers.

So again, offers put such a slight and neglect upon the delightful work of the Spirit, that you can scarcely imagine by offer-preaching, that the Spirit ever took delight to create faith in you, or took any delight to work repentance in you: But as if He only would delight in you after you are holy, provided you be but holy, though you don't know which way you are to be so. Thus do too many of our brethren by their offers eclipse and injure the Spirit's work.

Eighth Resolution

TO PREACH IN THE ORDER OF CHRIST'S COMMANDS

The Eighth resolution of the question. We ought to preach the Gospel in the way of Christ's institution [order or command]. The command runs thus, Preach the word, be instant in season, out of season, etc. (2 Tim. 4:2) But there is no command for offers. Offers are no institution of Christ, but debase an institution of Christ into the invention of the creature. Preaching is an appointed proclamation, not an uncommanded proposal. Now proclamations come forth in the name of the sovereign, with authority, but proposals creep forth like frogs, without any due advancements of the Son of God, the royalty of his grace or sceptre.

Is not that preacher like to do a great deal of service by Christ, who, in matters of salvation, professes to come forth to sinners in the name of the Lord, what to do? To propose to them the acceptance of Christ for eternal life? No; but in Christ's name, preaching the Gospel so as to exalt the power of Christ to conquer sinners, not beating parleys in an offer of Christ to sinners.

What commandment have I received from the Lord to propose Christ to a dead sinner? I have an express word to preach Him, as a proper means of conversion. But to propose Christ to a sinner is too low a means to quicken him. It is of mere human invention, and a means of the wrong kind, being nowhere instituted of God to that end. The ordinance is to preach Christ to dead sinners, and if they be elect objects, they shall be quickened in the ordinance.

Whereas, though a man be an elect object, if you go and propose Christ to him never so much, it shall never convert him, because offers and proposals are but man's devices. Though men are resolute and still bent upon their own way, yet the elect shall not miscarry. For God will call His elect from under man's device, to His own ordinance. I therefore must not offer Christ to the elect of God, but I must preach HIM!

Ninth Resolution

PREACH IN VIEW OF THE PROMISE

The Ninth resolution of the question. We ought to preach the Gospel, as it has a special promise of success. Success of the Gospel is one thing, a promise of success is another thing.

Then we should not preach so as to blast our own labors, and afterwards complain our labors are not prospered. Offers blast our labors, we see it by experience; It makes a very discontented ministry, and full of complaints in the church, both as to preachers and hearers. As to preachers, their complaints arise from this way of departing from the effectual grace of the Gospel, though they see it not. For while they should be keeping close to the Gospel, and blessing of God for the grace of the Gospel, they are complaining conversion-work stops. But alas; it is their dead, formal, heavy preaching in a way of offering Christ has stopped it.

Men are angry at those parts of the Gospel which have been most experienced upon the souls of His, own people; they strike most at those parts of the Gospel where Christ gets most glory, and souls get most comfort. And then because the Lord does not prosper them in their opposite, dead, heavy, and mixed way of preaching by offers of Christ, they are offended and complain of the want of success.

Ministers stick closely to some things that take off the edge of the Gospel, at the same time look for a great deal of success, under a very little of God's truth and their own faithfulness, running wide off the bounds of special grace in preaching, and are then discontented; the success answers not, and the people are ready to leave them and go off to neighboring ministers, whereas they bring these things upon themselves. If you would succeed, magnify the Spirit's work, and show how the Gospel is hid to some, while it is freely given to others to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, and to believe on Christ's name.

That gifts of grace are only to some, offers of grace are promiscuous, but bestowments of grace are discriminate. It must be the Gospel exalted in the Spirit's hand, not offers and proposals in the ministry, that can benefit the souls of hearers; without this the people will complain.

And why must not I hear the cries which God has put into the mouths of poor souls, who have a work of grace on them, and whose souls are as dear to Christ, as ours are as ministers, who ought to be able to judge of, and try their food declaring what does and what does not edify them under men. It is not enough that people hear us once or twice a week, but as they have opportunity they should converse about their soul's concern, blessing of God for what they get, and bewailing of what they lose: And if ministers, by deviating from the truth, are the cause of their losing, and not thriving in their souls, however they ought not to take it amiss that they hear of it. Neither should we call it caviling, or bitterness, or narrowness of Spirit, neither should we deal with men in proud wrath and being faithful.

As to the promise of success, our preaching should not be in a way with which the promise has nothing to do. For as to this way of promiseless of feting, it is what all men by nature will put off, and what they shall be all left to put off, and to get no saving good by. But all things that the promises of God are made towards, are of a quite contrary kind, for the elect of God shall not be left to an inclination of their own, to put off the promises. (Psa. 110:3) Thy people shall be willing in the day of Thy power. Wherefore the Gospel does not come to them in proffers, but in the declaration of the promises of God.

Why then are not ministers of Christ more faithful to keep to God's promises of grace? What need they to go and try their unscriptural experiments upon what is liable to be slighted, and disregarded by creature put-offs?

Why then are men found to sink in their preaching of the grace of God, as if His grace might be a naturalized grace, the sinners might accept it from some innate ability, whereas this shows them to be blind, as to things pertaining to God? Nevertheless, if they do accept, God brings them to accept His grace. And whomsoever God brings to accept thereof, it is in God's own way and not in nature's paths which the new creature, who professeth to go on God's errands, has cut out for him. The promises made to preaching, are as absolute as the first promise was. (Gen. 3:15) Because they are made upon the same foundation, and are in the hands of Christ to accomplish the same purposes; so that they point as much to the Spirit and His work, as that first promise did to Christ and His seed. Hence offers being without the promise, are dry and barren notions! They run from the promised way of the blessing limited to the Gospel way of preaching; it is therefore just in the Lord to leave them.

Tenth Resolution

TO PREACH A GOSPEL THAT JUSTIFIES ITSELF

The Tenth resolution of the question. We should preach the Gospel so that the Gospel may justify itself. For the Gospel being but of one piece of grace, through all the parts of it, is fitted so to do. But offers are self-condemned, and self-contradictory, are used to palliate and excuse themselves with what is not their own, as appears by the vain jangling of some of the men who use them. Offers borrow from the truth and from the name of grace, grace-offers, to color over their uncomely looks with excuses, as a specious varnish, that they might not be thought what they really are, thieves and robbers.

Their palliating language is, that “They do not mean as the Arminians mean.” This is commonly tittered by them in their offer pleas. As an harlot would fain be thought a virtuous woman, while she seeks to conceal her shame, as a strumpet, so it is with them. But I hope from the face of these and many other arguments, that the mask will be taken off. For I know their cry; they vehemently urge it, oh! they are gifts, they are preaching Christ, that these are the invitations and exhortations of God’s word, that they are well founded, and, as a thief cries, he is an honest man; who has anything to lay to his charge? So these offer-mongers would fain be heard to speak for themselves, as if they were very honest, Innocent, harmless things, yet, the very Gospel itself; but all is false. Let offers be plain, let them pull the sheepskin off, and tell us, in the language of God’s word, what they are, and not what they are not.

Eleventh Resolution

A GOSPEL THAT IS SURE TO PERSONS AND PARTICULAR INTERESTS

The eleventh resolution of the question. We should preach the Gospel, because it is sure as to individual persons, or particular Interests, me or thee. But offers are all indeterminate as to anybody, and so indeed are fixed upon nobody, which must argue their uncertainty to me or thee. And it is plain they are so, because of their personal inefficacy. For whatsoever of the things of God are constantly ineffectual within one, they must be constantly uncertain in an application to one. Nevertheless, the gift by grace argues a certainty to you or me, discriminated from ten thousand. The reason is, there is an effectual will in the donor which makes his grant effectual in the operation to and upon me. The gift works at certainty, but the offer evaporates in an uncertainty.

The donation of Christ is from the love of the Father to certain Individuals, but the offer of Christ is neither from the love of the Father, nor from the life of the Son, nor from the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus. Offer-preaching runs all Its dependencies, on the fool’s feast of windy expectations, and gets nothing but proffers, made only by creatures to creatures, liable to be frustrated, and being made in things that are above human reach, they must be so.

It is certain, God, who does nothing in vain, offers not when He sends the Gospel to them whom He knows will not accept either of the salvation, or special doctrine of it. Because the end of sending it is not simply their acceptance, but (?)’s glory, as a means to judge the world of sinners where the Gospel comes; and that upon a higher footing than the light of nature or the law of works. For God will be more glorified when He comes to judge men by Christ’s Gospel, for all their ill-will to the Gospel, or their enmity to what is above nature, than if He judged them as mere heathens for sins against the light of nature.

To Instance one thing, which God will most certainly contend against, when He comes to judge in righteousness; that is, men's corrupting the doctrine of God and Christ by their school-divinity. What strange notions of eternity, and of God's conduct towards His creatures, are divers ministers tinctured with, the vain philosophy of Cartes, and school-divinity of the contrary parties of Aquinas and Scotus, are at this day ready to be taken up? Yea, it descends from one to another, upon men who scarce ever heard their names.

Are not some of the notions such as tend to make God's being in Himself, His acts, thoughts, and His decrees, and those of the creature, co-eternal, and so co-equal? Not One word of which notion can be ever proved from the Bible. How many are there without examining it, that make the beginning of God's way most corruptly to mean some act of God within Himself, as eternal and necessary to His own being? As if God's own infinite self-sufficiency and all-sufficiency within Himself could not have been enough for and in the glory of enjoying Himself, and conversing with himself in all His persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, according to God's own self-sufficiency, millions and millions of ages (as we may conceive, according to creature-capacity,) but ever He willed, purposed, or decreed anything of the works of His hands; especially, since all that is made in Heaven and earth, of the six days work, is not yet 'Of six thousand years standing. Whereas, the schools have for certain purposes expounded those phrases of Scripture, before the foundation of the world, and before the world began, and from everlasting, to be as eternal as God's own being.[1]

Here is now the mischief-making wisdom of man, that has not learned of the Lord the Spirit to take God at His word. But to acknowledge God, contrary to the scheme of Popish schoolmen, they think is to make God changeable; whereas, it no more argues a change in God to purpose in Himself, to settle respecting Christ and creatures, than it argues a change in God to begin to create what He had afore purposed, yea, afore prepared unto glory: Since in creation nothing could be made where God's immensity in creation as well as in purpose of creation within Himself did not reach.

Twelfth Resolution

AS AN APT AN APPOINTED MEANS OF CONVERSION OF BELIEVERS

The Twelfth resolution of the question. We should preach the Gospel as it is discovered to be an admirable contrivance of way and means to effect conversion. In that contrivance there is an aptness for conversion, a most sweet harmony between the remedy for corrupt nature and the disease thereof: The remedy in Christ and the disease in sinners.

Also there is an admirable harmony between the principle of conversion in the Holy Spirit at the bottom of His own work, and the act of conversion in the heart of a sinner. But offers have no aptitude, no fitness in the means they propose for conversion. They are unapt means, (to speak of them according to what men say of them that count them means). For, man is a stubborn creature. To whom He said, This is the rest, and this is the refreshing, yet they would not hear. He has a strong tide of corrupt nature, strong corruption's to be subdued. An old man to be crucified with Him, and the body of sin to be destroyed.

Corruption has not only an in-being, but a strong and active motion to carry sinners off from God and against God. This tide and mass of the waters of wickedness will be too hard for all your offers; and, therefore, in the room of offers, you should preach operations of the Spirit through the sinner's relation

to God in Christ. For whatever false prophets, or errors, may be in the world, observe it is because you are of God, little children, that you shall overcome them.

But what meetness is there between an uncircumcised heart and the proposal of spiritual things, such as salvation, eternal life, etc. What meetness is there between an uncircumcised heart, and any good action from such an heart, so as to close with offers, and to delight in them? There is no meetness between a proposal of spiritual things in the mystery and life, and an uncircumcised heart. But there is a meetness between an operation of grace and the uncircumcised heart of man, though it be enmity against God at the time.

The natural mind can go no further than the history of a fact, and the letter of the precept, just to the outward form of doctrine; and not always to that, without a gift. The way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps. The sinner under a law work may reach the notion; but then so long as the sinner is uncircumcised in the heart, he cannot attain the spirituality of the truth, veiled under that notion.

He may understand a proposal of the form, but can never know the way of acceptance to receive the mystery and true glory of the word, till sanctified by the Holy Ghost. Man's goings unto Christ are not of himself, Prov. 20:4, nor is he able to delight in the beauty of holiness, or believe the mystery of sanctification in Christ Jesus. What can you propose then to the uncircumcision of the flesh? Can you offer a circumcision in the Spirit under any conceptions of meetness in the way of effecting a change? There is no meetness for proposals here, but rather a meetness to go and preach the conveyances of Christ into poor sinner's souls by operations of grace.

Man is a captive in unbelief, a slave to himself, to sin and Satan. He has a chain of bondage, yea, many bonds, gates, and bars to be broken in pieces, which the grace of God in the conveyance of grace effects. But what will your offers do? Can you bring the man off? No; but go preach the effectual ransom, and tell him it is for such sinners as he, and see if the Holy Spirit will prove you a liar.

When you see sinners perishing, will you propose in the pulpit to stand by and see it. And when you see it, do you carry it loftily? Still insist upon offers, and conceal the efficacy of God? Do you hide the strength of His almighty arm, the covenant and oath of God that cannot lie; the two immutable things by which it is impossible for God to lie? And instead of this, do you preach God's willingness if the sinner be willing? I tell you, God is willing when the sinner is unwilling.

Away with such an offer of grace, as never did, nor ever can do good to souls, for it brings a dishonor upon Jehovah! Ah! troubled souls, I pity you! my bowels yearn for you! I could sometimes wish that you and your hard-hearted preachers were separated! but are any preachers willing to alter the uncertain sounds of the pulpit, that troubled souls may find relief? Then I say, to such, preach election and non-election, and do not call it harsh doctrine. It is the way to bring sinners into a right trouble by a right work, and to bring them out of that trouble by a higher work, effectually, by preaching the efficacy of grace in the Spirit's hand, to back what is begun by the Father, and what is carried on by the Son.

It is not to be done by offers; but by an emptying the soul of that conceit it had been filled with in common religion, touching Its own righteousness, duties, and notions of acceptance of Christ, which the soul had taken up under your offers, by legal strivings. A soul must be relieved from this burden and bondage to which it is staked down under your proffers. It was consistent enough for people under natural infirmities to come to Christ, but under spiritual infirmities Christ must come to them.

It is true, we who have believed, have clouds return after the rain, and burdens renew again. Gospel preachers have their self-loads, as Paul had, Rom. 7:14:15. But I know offers of grace do never take off burdens, neither at first nor at last. Believers groan, being burdened in this tabernacle of flesh (2 Cor. 5:4), but offers never ease or alter one groan. How then will they do to relieve such as have not passed from death unto life?

I know therefore, through grace, how to preach to sinners. I preach to them as Christ preached to me, and as He still continues to preach the Gospel to my soul. For my part, I wonder not that men are so much at a loss to preach! They preach and preach, but the people justly complain they do not hear the preaching. My meaning is, they do not hear Christ preached to their souls; the only Preacher in the world.

Alas! what can old Adam say in the pulpit? He stints with his offered Christ presently! He sets his bounds, limits, and his “ne plus ultra” round about the mercy-seat, if he thinks sinners come too near, and too soon! He puts on their shackles, where yet without them they must have stuck in the miry clay. He clogs them with terms, awes them with conditions, holds them in from Christ by the law, and he thinks after this fashion he has made sure work of it, he salves it up with a smooth pretence, (what sinner means to convert a sinner, or to raise the dead,) “Come, soul, come to Christ, I have been preaching of Christ, here, I offer thee Christ; I will tell thee He is a free offer; come, come, and close with Him.”

Oh! how fit a means is this to convert an ungodly man, a means that damps a godly man’s heart, till he feels the very strengthening comforts of God by this means running off his heart! it may work affection indeed in some ignorant hearers, who never had their understandings opened about sin or Christ, nor their hearts burdened with the weight of sin; but it has produced, and will certainly produce burdens in godly hearts; not being attended with the seal and impression of the Holy Spirit.

God is always so tender of the Spirit’s glory, that such perverse ways never did, nor ever shall be blessed (as the Gospel is) to do good in the knitting of sinner’s hearts to Jesus. Oh! but let Christ be exalted as the gift of God to sinners, according to the word, and He will make His own way, (under such preaching,) through the head, heart, and bowels of old Adam; yea, through all the devil’s stumbling blocks which Satan has put in the way by old Adam, in good men and bad men; and Christ will set up His throne in the heart sweetly, in spite of all the corruption’s of nature.

The power, the inner part, the glory part of the Gospel conveyed, that is, which exalts it. The Gospel of Jesus runs like the lightning, searching the deep things of God, dives into the mystical union, and apprehends Christ Jesus the given, and giver.

That is Gospel, which is by special gift conveyed, set foot upon electing-grace, and immediately finds out who, and who have not, their names written in Heaven. God sends His Spirit secretly in election and redemption-unions, beginning regeneration-union of mere free grace by the Spirit, sent into their hearts, because they are sons. Thus the Spirit works and waits to show the free salvation settled on the elect in the person of Christ; he waits on the ministry to receive it as the word of salvation dropped from the mouths of Gospel preachers, whose hearts the Holy Spirit hath filled therewith from Christ.

On further operation, He points the soul unto it, by elevating the faculty, and making room in the soul for this glorious Gospel to enter. Whosoever among you fears God, to you is the word of this salvation sent. (Acts 13:46) It is a sending of salvation to them that fear God which salvation in the fear of God, is wrought in the soul by the Holy Spirit; and arises out of no such low things as offers of Christ. But

from a free, thorough, and home-bestowing of the Spirit in peace, joy, and consolation, according to the fitness of the Spirit's own work, begun and preparatorily managed, before clear discoveries are wrought. Fear is that in the soul which the Holy Spirit stirs up under a legal work. So that sending salvation to them that fear God, is not a promiscuous offer, but by a discriminate bestowment of Jesus Christ in salvation upon the elect of God alone.

Thirteenth Resolution

TO EXALT THE GOSPEL TO THE HIGHER REALM OF GRACE AND BEYOND THE REACH OF UNREGENERATE MAN

The Thirteenth resolution of the question. How must we preach the Gospel if we do not offer the Gospel? We ought to preach the Gospel so as to exalt it higher than any unconverted man in the world can by his fleshly arm receive it, or carry it in the pulpit to offer it to others in such a way.

Offers rise no higher than the light of nature, or old Adam's notion of preaching. Revealed truths may be very agreeable to the light of an unconverted man; they may grow in our apprehensions out of the very form of education and can very well agree with the scheme of Christian religion naturalized. And this appears obvious as to preachers, who discover by these offers that they rise no higher than the light of nature can attain to.

For, they cannot own the success of their ministry, (if they have any,) to be of mere grace and righteousness; but lay a stress upon human proposals, which are neither the grace of God, nor the righteousness of Christ.

They cannot commit the success of their ministry to grace and righteousness, in the hands of Father, Son, and Spirit, through the Man Jesus. They cannot wait for success on the mere grace and righteousness of another, but do please and buoy up themselves with their offers, their pains, their frequent proposals, their free tenders, their studying hard, and their preaching much in the ministry; on these sandy bottoms they generally build their expectations.

I know all these things by experience: For it was long ere I was brought off, (so far as through grace I am brought off from creature-wisdom, creature confidences, and creature expectations,) to an entire dependence upon Christ, and his fullness from the Father, to fill and bless me in all! But to argue this particular further still, above the light of nature.

Others are either to sinners promiscuously, exclusive of regeneration-union, or to sinners discriminately, in consequence of the said union in Christ. If to sinners out of that union, then what springs of life can you find out of the union to enable them to comply? Can old carnal Adam's life close in with Christ's spiritual life? No; it is Christ's life must break in upon Adam's, and mortify it, by discovering how our old man is crucified with Christ; discovering it after the Spirit's act, in begetting the new nature.

Moreover, in closing with Christ, it is the new creature closing the soul with the new Adam, who has begotten it by the Holy Spirit; if God the Spirit regenerates sinners, (we will suppose you do this, you have offered Christ, yet there is no such thing as regeneration by offers, according to what you suppose of operation). It is a deed of gift and efficacy. Then why do you talk of offering or proffering Christ? He is a gift of God to the conversion of the will in a union to His person.

Therefore why do not you rather look to bring up the form of preaching to God's work, than to bring down the power of God's work to your form of preaching?

If we believe God's way and method, we are not to fall in with a way, that upon strict and clear examination plainly thwarts it. Suppose special grace be proffered to dead nature, as it is when proffered out of the regeneration-union, what can dead nature do with such a proffer? But let special grace be exalted in preaching Christ, as a gift, to honor God the Spirit in His way of working the gift into the nature of a sinner, the Spirit then according to His own covenant-obligation with Father and Son, strikes in with the truth, in which act He both quickens and supplies the quickened with the benefit of Christ at once. And if so, it will not be long ere this new life feeds on Christ, and sweetly shows itself to be the fruit of such preaching.

Men pretend to defend one truth, while they injure another. That God is sovereign is true, and converts whom He will. But still let men know God is also just when He comes to the work of it, in bowing the soul to Christ. This is certain; though His immediate justice be founded upon His original sovereignty, yet His sovereignty never thwarts His justice, but reconciles it according to His own appointed way.

Now is it a righteous thing with God, in a Gospel-day of discriminating light, to convert the elect to Christ, by means which do exalt the creature more than Christ, or the Father, and the Spirit, as the common way offers do? No. But it is a righteous thing of God to convert the elect by that very means which has bought them: Because it is the strain of preaching which the covenant of God and the promise of effectual grace agree with.

Soul! precious soul! I tell thee in Christ's name, when special grace is wrought in thee by a work of Jehovah the Spirit, and grace by Him is put within thee, (which is God's free and gracious way,) then thou hast it directly and effectually, and perhaps much sooner than some preachers that offer Christ are willing.

Blessed be God, others again are helped to preach thus, without trying experiments in the common practice of proposals, proffers, tenders, and offers.

Let us now suppose that common grace was offered to the common nature of man, and that sinners accepted of this common grace, still, when accepted, this common grace would work no change, nor can it do so. For instance, it is possible some of the non-elect may accept of the notion of Christ's imputed righteousness, who are not under that imputation, in the saving virtue of it, so as to believe by a work of God the Spirit unto the saving of the soul. Therefore, we have distinguished between the outer part of the Gospel to maintain profession, and the inner part of the Gospel to beget life, and maintain communion with God.

The inner part of the Gospel does the main work. Preachers too generally stand aloof from the concerns of souls, and walk at a distance from the golden candlesticks in the outward court. Such labor of theirs may do good to some for a time, but upon none for eternity. It may serve the passage, but assure yourselves it will never reach the port. The form of the Gospel may be displayed, and it will serve some temporal end which the Lord hath ordained in the out-works. It may increase sobriety, restrain nature, shame the wicked, train up moral, sober, and virtuous professors, that join in supporting external Gospel ordinances, carrying on a ministry, and providing for the benefit of common hearers. All which are useful in their season, and desirable mercies belonging to the out-works, and carry with them an ornamental excellency. But still all these are not foundation to build on for eternity.

Preachers and people too will be deceived at last, and go to hell if they have nothing more. Such are no buildings, no coverings, no hiding places from the storm; these will not keep out judgments, wrath, fire, and brimstone from the conscience, nor have they power to spiritualize one performance. What can offers do for me here? Nothing. Then let the Gospel be faithfully preached.

Fourteenth Resolution

PREACHING IN THE SINGULAR POWER OF THE GOSPEL WITHOUT OFFERS AND APPEALS TO NATURE

The Fourteenth resolution of the question. We should preach the Gospel singularly; so the greatest part of professing ministers do not preach it. When God pours down more of His Spirit, it will be our glory. Notwithstanding, offers are at present universally espoused by men, so as to render them suspicious to those who hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. And the general combination of preachers and hearers it present, are enough to make good men suspect them. For if we had nothing else to judge of them by, but the baseness of their conduct, we might conclude these offers can never be right. Nevertheless, preaching is suited to the light of the Gospel, the Kingdom of God, and the authority of Jesus Christ; though I believe there be few that see it.

The words which the Holy Spirit has used in the New Testament, for preaching, are quite of another import from offers, and do not at all agree with the way of dispensing the word by offers, but by glad tidings, or crying of glad tidings, or a solemn publishing of what is to be sold without money and without price, according to the radical signification of the verb from whence the noun is derived, so that the minister is to cry, or publish his message from the Lord. This speaks the authority of God in our messages from Christ. And this honor seems to be given but unto a very few men. Whereas, multitudes take in hand to sermonize or predicate, (with which way of preaching offers and proposals very well agree), as it seems to be done on their own heads, and not of Christ's ordering. His is an absolute way of office-publishing, but not offering, proposal-wise, for that is a base compromise with flesh and blood.

Hence we see it comes to pass that preachers in this day artfully stick at the pleasing way of preaching to fallen nature, and which more universally obtains, because it comes not up to the mysteries of the Gospel.

Therefore it is we have so few evangelists; they predicate as logicians in the school, and orators in the desk. But as to what the Holy Spirit calls preaching, there is generally little of it through the world. Men call preaching by a name that cuts off all its relation to the Gospel, viz., proposing a matter to the people: And so you may see in the dictionary and the concordance how the term used for preaching came to be spoiled. For proposing is fitted to an oration to the people. But it is not fitted to an opening the mysteries of the kingdom, and opening the oracles of God, and therein bringing glad tidings.

The general way of perverted preaching is proposing, or that which is similar to it. Why? Because the general way is to preach beneath, or beside the mystery: So that the depravity of the times have suited the apostasy, with a word they have for preaching, which shuts out all the mysteries of the Gospel, that is, proposing.

If you come to propose glad tidings, it argues the tidings you bring are not so good as they appear to be. But preaching discovers them to be the very same good things which is pronounced of them. Therefore, cry the Gospel; it is a singular way of preaching, but it is a sure one, and it is all done without offers. It is a message above the light of nature. John the Baptist was “The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make His paths straight.”

The meaning of the voice is literally this: Come out you Citizens, that dwell at ease in Zion; come out into the wilderness, leave the temple and its ceremonial worship at Jerusalem; it will quickly be put down; come away to find and follow Christ in a wilderness, as you now come out into the wilderness to hear and see me. I come to prepare a little beforehand, by some outward tokens. Leave the great temple at Jerusalem; come with Christ into the cottages, and do not tie up yourselves to yonder structure; for Christ when He comes will be found in the wilderness, and will desert yon stately fabric, and then down it must quickly come. I prepare His way now, He will come into the wilderness, and bring His cross hither, which will lay quite cross-ways to the easy times: Come, therefore, under John’s ministry, who is the forerunner; and while his followers do the same, in preaching they shall prepare the way, and make His paths straight to poor sinners, that poor sinners may find Him. This is a way which leads poor sinners to close with Christ, which all your offers never did.

Fifteenth Resolution

PREACH THE GOSPEL IN SINCERITY AND TRUTH

The Fifteenth resolution of the question. Do you ask how you must preach the Gospel, if you are driven from your offers? I answer, you ought to preach the Gospel in sincerity and in truth, which if you do, it will not give that open offence to such as are taught by God the Spirit respecting His own work, which offers do.

Offers are contrary to the preaching of the Gospel; therefore they offend such as are most led into the Spirit’s work. We must preach the Gospel so as its reputation may be advanced more and more, agreeable to and consistent with itself, so that the glory of the Gospel may visibly have the preeminence about the light of nature in the eyes of them that are taught of God.

They who have got farthest in Christ’s school, can at any time see that when you preach the Gospel, you are honorably exalted beyond all vain flourishes, whereas learned arguments, borrowed from the schools, with offers and operations, have no small part in making a fair show in the flesh, and yet when examined, are full of rottenness, dead men’s bones, and all uncleanness. Therefore preach the Gospel, which is honorable, but offers are scandalous.

For, they are thievish, stealing the children’s bread to cast it unto dogs. They steal from God’s grace given only unto the elect, to go and proffer it all within the sound. They rob God’s grace to set up man’s proud nature, with a notion of his acceptance of that grace which is not theirs to offer. Whereas man’s nature cannot cordially accept the proposition, the saying worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.[2]

What have these thievish offers to do but to rob the treasurers of wisdom, and tender salvation Itself to the universal acceptance and contempt of fallen rebellious human nature?

Offers are dangerous, because they are stumbling blocks to the godly and judicious. And why will not you do that with your offers, which you would have others do with their ceremonies? That is, throw them away, and let there be no more heard of them in your sermons than there is in God's word? For while these things are maintained, many stumble at the word of the Lord; because instead of a message, they hear them offer it, and propose offensively what they ought to preach honorably and freely.

The truth is, offences will come; but still we ought so to preach as to give offence to none, whether ministers or people, except those who are rebels, not led by the word of God, and the Spirit's work in their way of preaching or professing.

Such who, when they come to the use of a doctrine, make practicals to shut out experimentals, and build upon creature acts where they ought to build upon creating operations; they tell sinners they must get up to Christ, instead of telling them He comes down like showers upon the mown grass into the very hearts and natures of them. They insist upon the act of a sinner's acceptance, where they should magnify the Spirit's operation, in working up their hearts to an acceptance; such as these should be withstood to the face and resisted; such as these shall and must be offended.

Sixteenth Resolution

FOR ENCOURAGEMENT IN THE HEART TO CONVERSION

The Sixteenth resolution of the question. Do you again ask how? I answer again, if you are commissioned of Christ to the work and office of a minister, you ought to preach the Gospel in the encouragement's of it, unto conversion. But offers are not encouragement's to conversion. Encouragements are what enlarges the heart. I will run the way of thy commandments, when, thou hast enlarged my heart. A man feels when he gets courage. Encouragement's are qualities, and these must have a proper subject. Courage is for the soul; argument is for the head. It is to be the man, not in the book. In living epistles as saints, not in dead letters of offers. Offers lie without my hearts, but encouragement's come and lodge within my heart, or they are not encouragements. The offer is the preacher's sound, but the encouragement is the Holy Spirit's work. An offer is a man's notion, but encouragement is a man's experience. Encouragement's are God's operations of His grace, but offers are none.

Seventeenth Resolution

PREACH SPIRITUALLY AND DISCERNINGLY

The Seventeenth resolution of the question. We should preach the Gospel spiritually and discerningly, that the more our preaching is examined, cavilled at, despised, struck at, and hated, the more it should discover (both from the pulpit and the press), how sweetly it accords with the Spirit's work. But offers, the more they are examined, struck at, opposed, and argued on, the more confused and unscriptural they will appear.

We must preach the Gospel spiritually, exalting spiritual life in the soul. But offers are dead preaching. Is it good news to come to the sinner with a heavy, dead offer? If this then be no good news, where is the evangelical offer? Preaching the Gospel is a lively ordinance of Jesus Christ, it stirs up the gifts;

whereas offers are dead, and proffers of Christ do argue a dead faith in the preacher. The offer part is the dead part of the sermon, a mere carcass in grave-clothes, and not the glorified Christ of an exhortation. Let us maintain and stand up for a lively preaching of grace to sinners, to overthrow dead offers.

What are dead works? Are they fit for the living God, or to be found within the ranges of His living temple? When the apostle argued against dead works, (Heb. 9:14) he means dead works, (Heb. 9:14) he meant dead performances, which the consciences of Gospel-worshippers are purged from, never to use them in their worship more; though some would fain have returned to them again. But we need not these dead works in the slain beasts of the house of Israel. Dead sacrifices are gone, since we have a lively spirit and a living Advocate in heaven, who is a living Fountain.

So I may say of your offers, as he of the dead bodies in abolished sacrifices, they are but dead works of the pulpit, as the others were dead works of the altar. Lively preachers of the power do exalt the Spirit's work in their worst times, more than dead preachers of the offer do in their best. We may be sure of this, that while we are offering Christ to sinners, Christ is not operating upon us as sinners of the pulpit. If He were, we should feel ourselves as earthen vessels in Christ's hand, to carry the treasure further than offers. It must be very low water in our own souls, when the conduits of grace, that should flow out from a sanctified treasure of the heart, stop at offers in our mouths!

Again, to preach so as to exalt the Spirit's work we ought to preach experimentally. Ministers, by harping on their offers, drop all experience; whereas, if the preacher saw clearly, and was affected deeply, to see how himself came by Christ, through the great power of God, he would be a lively preacher of that power, which attends the small still voice of Christ in the heart, he would no longer be a preacher of the offer. For if he viewed Christ through all preaching, and he ought not to preach without he would preach sights of Christ in all preaching too. If he had tasted Christ, he would preach tastes of Christ.

I should be starved for my own part, in the pulpit, If I were to preach these offers, and not to preach just as I find and feel Christ. And it is such a riddle to me, how the people can feed upon that which would starve the preacher; let Oedipus resolve it in a treatise of the problems of the offer, for I cannot. Alas! if we are Christ's ministers, we do not only see for ourselves, handle for ourselves, and taste for ourselves, when we are in the pulpit; but for poor sinners also, who are brought in, under the true sights and tastes, to see and feel with us. Let us not run then to offer-forms, that kill all sound experience both in ourselves and others.

The more I see and taste in my own experience that the Lord is gracious in my opening of the word, the more have I a proof of Christ speaking in me; the true interpretations of every text are written in the very spirit of the text on my own, soul. We ought to preach the Gospel clearly, discerningly, and understandingly. But offers are blind and dark; no evidences are in them, whereby we can discern the Spirit's work experimentally on our own souls.

We must preach to sinners according to the discoveries that God has made of Christ to ourselves, holding forth that glorious operation of the Spirit, which lay in the discovery of Christ as ours. We are Christ's, if we can see that His desire is towards us, and ours towards Him. (S. S. 7: 10)

We should preach the discoveries of the Gospel so as to clear it up to poor sinners respecting self-experience. Preach up operations of the Holy Spirit, which make discoveries; laboring to open the object of faith, clearly, as the Spirit has opened the object of faith to you. This is the way the Lord has

used me to do, in the conversion of sinners, in all the seals of my ministry. But offers of Christ are blind; they only darken the Spirit's work. And can they be good news? Then never preach offers more, which run upon proposals, but forget the discoveries of a soul's interest, by a close with Christ, which is far above all proposals of compliance with Him. A man complies in his thoughts, upon the discovery of an object which his nature is suited to. In fact, he complies with his interest wherever he sees it. So the soul that has supernatural discoveries of a supernatural interest, in his thoughts complies with a supernatural interests, when discovered, because supernatural discoveries are attended with supernatural power put forth for discovery.

Exalt, therefore, the power that discovers darkness by the manifestation of light. Offers, I can confidently say, are blind. The offer-preaching leaves men altogether in the dark, as to the Spirit's work. When offers of Christ are made, why do they not openly say, "Here, we offer you Christ; sinner, come; how do you like Him? Here we propose Him for your acceptance, pray do not slight Him; take Him for your salvation, now or never." By which it appears all the stress is laid upon the creature in his conversion, as appears by the very form of this offer.

Is it not an evidence of men's blindness, when they make such offers, whereas, the way lies open in object and operations? How blind is it in offers to expect the Spirit should be given to convert a sinner in the very way that robs the Spirit of His glory! How blindly do men run against the Holy Spirit, not considering His glory is equal in the work of salvation, with the glory of the Father and the Son, especially in the work of regeneration, by the efficacy of His applicatory work in the soul.

It is inconsistent and blindness to think the Spirit and the creature can be advanced together, in a sinner's acceptance of Christ. I am sure, that if the Spirit was duly honored by us under a lively faith, and walked in by the light of Christ, the proposal would never be 'talked of, but God the Holy Spirit working in us from the Father and Christ, of God's own good pleasure would be our theme. If we walked in the light, as He is in the light, we should be preserved from such blindness; and have fellowship one with another. That is, God with us, by virtue of Imputed righteousness, and we with God, under the same righteousness of God, in a holy delighting in God, setting up the glory of His grace; then the small rain of His blessing and the dew of His Spirit, would lay the dust which proud flesh has raised before our eyes, by using men's mouths for the offers of Christ, which should be filled with the praises of Christ's operations.

I am certain it is not a carnal judgment, a dead opinion, but living experience, (God's word and God's work meeting together in the soul,) or mighty operations of God, renewing the faculty, elevating the understanding, strengthening the will, purifying the conscience with the blood of Christ, with which the heart is sanctified; a gracious touch of the object, as the object breaks in upon it, and draws out the heart towards it in the person of Christ; it is these things, and nothing short of them that can show us the vanity of offering Christ to sinners.

Why should we not employ all our light, influence, and clearest experience to speak of the things of God, as we have found them upon our own souls under the Spirit's work? And if I do go forth upon my Master's work, under the operations of his glorious Spirit, and in His work do experimentally find that Christ's Spirit is with me, (having both His word and work meeting in my heart,) to what purpose should I then seek to reach the souls of the elect, by using such means to convert them as offers?

Should I stand to argue so low and darkly, blundering so upon nature, as to talk of offers of Christ if I could come forth and preach Christ crucified, in the light and operations of the ever-exalting Gospel,

from my own experience, and thereby, through this effectual grace, work to win souls? I must pitch and anchor my hope in God's power, that I may prevail, and see the elect from the Spirit's work begun in the new birth, converted believingly, and their hearts drawn to Christ savingly.

But offers are blind, they stand in the way between the heart and the object, but cannot see it. They keep up a wall of separation which cuts off all prospects between the sinner's receiving Christ, and the preacher's proposing Him. O, blindness! as if the Spirit which reaches the heart by gifts, was less than the offer, than can only stand before the heart with an empty call.

Well, we see that an offer of grace is but the good will of a poor dark preacher, who is at a loss to manage the experimental part of divinity. I shall therefore give one instance more of the blindness of offering Christ to sinners, and that is, it tends to make natural men, who are under no trouble about their souls, readily reply within themselves, "Aye, I have accepted Christ, God forbid I should reject Him. What! put away the grace of God! No, no."

This is the case with the majority of professors, in most of the mixed congregations in England (and elsewhere). They generally conclude they have accepted the offer, though, in general they are as ignorant of Christ as the wood of their preacher's pulpit! They are prodigiously zealous. But the worst of it all is, when you ask them if they know what it is about, they will tell you they dare not withstand the offer of Christ. Oh no; God forbid.

On the other hand, new-born souls who want to be led into the mystery of Christ, that desire the sincere milk of the word; these under such dark preaching, are starving for lack of knowledge; they find they want something, but they do not know what to call it, poor hearts. They hear and hear, but they are not refreshed; they come in the dark, and go in the dark, and are ready to conclude all is dark under your, dark offers.

"Well," says the poor drooping soul, "the preacher has done his part faithfully; he offers me Christ, and bids me come and get an interest in Him. Oh! That is what I want! But the Lord knows I have not done my part therein; I cannot do mine! He has been tendering me Christ bravely," says the soul. "Oh! but still how shall I come at Him, and how shall I come at faith? Oh! I am hardened, and I cannot believe. I cannot venture. I cannot depend. Oh! What will become of me for ever! He has been offering me Christ, but I have not once accepted Him all this time. Oh! I have slighted Him. I have sinned against His love, and against all these free offers. I have sinned away my day of grace. It is all over with me."

Thus the best of God's children, used to such dark preaching, go away in dark unbelief, sadness, and despondings. Whereas, some of the worst of the congregation, who have got a few head-notions, never digested in a new-born heart, are the religious talkatives of the age (not understanding the meaning of what they talk of). They are flushed, buoyed up, maintain the party-form, rely upon their accepting of the offer; and do count all is well, if the Antinomians (as they call them) would be quiet, and did not come and spoil their pride, disturb their quiet, and tear their nest to pieces.

We must preach the Gospel in a Gospel way. Offers are legal; and is legal preaching good news? No! Then preach Christ, and do not offer Christ. Preach the object evangelically. Preach Christ's interest, as the glass in which the soul may behold its own interest. Drive not into offers of Christ, they are legal, not evangelical; then where is your evangelical offer?

How are offers legal, you will say? Why they press sinners who never felt a work of grace, to serve or accept of Christ in the oldness of the letter (which old letter is a command to the old man, not to the

new; this is a trick of Satan to propose the Gospel as the law was proposed at Mount Sinai, and promiscuously to command every man alike), while they instruct not sinners to serve in the newness of the Spirit.

It is legal to preach the Gospel to sinners as proposed; it is evangelical to preach it as imposed or poured forth upon them, put upon them by grace, irresistibly, in defiance of corruption, with an experience of freeness and spontaneousness in the faculty, under the operation of grace, to the destruction of sin, so as to have no more dominion over them, to hold them in bondage to the law, to any overtures, or legal piece of service.

So long as you are offer-men, you are not able ministers of the New Testament. Your proposals are legal in the form, though you think them evangelical in the matter. Whereas, you should be ministers not of the letter, but of the spirit. For the letter killeth, (and you may see, as I have instanced before, what a killing stroke your offer carries with it to the new-born soul), whereas the Spirit gives life.

Offers run in the form of ministration, which is called the ministration of death. Do this and live, neglect this and die: Accept the proposal and be saved, refuse the offer and perish. This is legal stuff [3]; for take a man that is thoroughly convinced of sin and moral impotency, to fit under this, and there will not be one word of good news in it to his soul. Where then is your evangelical offer? How have you shut out the ministration of the, Spirit? And by mere shifts of proposals turned from the Gospel, into the very ministration of death and condemnation.

What is an offer of grace to a saint under trouble, then pray what is it to a sinner under terror, one that never saw his interest? The Gospel shows a sinner as in a glass, that by God's operations of grace all his bolts can be taken off, and under the power of the Gospel feel he is free. But your offer is a mere legal bar in the way.

Again, we must preach the Gospel substantially. But offers are noisy and empty. And is this good news? Then you ought to be ashamed of your free offers. Sinners want to receive of Christ's fullness, and you starve them with empty tenders for acceptance. You lead them to rest on external signs, and neglect the advancement of Internal operations, making no distinction between the children and dogs, under your common offers. And, indeed, when I consider that men will extend the noisy offer, and the empty proffer-preaching, to all within the sound, I must confess, such bare bones may be held forth to dogs, but it is a pity the children of the kingdom should be starved, because unto these Christ has given His flesh to be meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed.

We must, in exalting the Spirit's work, preach the Gospel as to its own points. But offers being wholly destitute of the Spirit's guidance, wander into blind paths so far, to reach all souls, that they never effectually reach the lost sheep of the house of Israel. They occasion man's thoughts to roam up and down till his heart is kept close to nothing. Whereas, when God the Spirit helps to preach home to the case of one soul, the Lord thereby reaches the case of many individuals, with the same efficacy of power. The man does not keep close to the foundation of God, when he holds forth his offers. The offer will not lay one elect stone on the foundation, but wood, hay, and stubble.

We must in exalting the Spirit's work preach the Gospel faithfully. But offers are deceitful. They speak much from the minister's lips, but they perform nothing in the sinner's heart.

Offers could not help Paul after conversion: For the good that I would, says he, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. How then can offers help a sinner to conversion? It was a communication

of the Spirit which Paul wanted. He found no relief by proposals. How then do we think that poor sinners should be relieved and brought to Christ by them?

Men in the very act of offering, pretend to reach out the golden sceptre of mercy to a poor sinner, (nothing less); this is spiritual wickedness in high places. Whereas, it is God's prerogative and none other's, an act of the kings, not of the minister's. It is to be done by Jehovah Himself, through Jehovah our Righteousness, and by Jehovah the Spirit, not by God's servants. So that it is deceitful to put these offers in the place of God's operations of His grace. Besides, coming to the golden sceptre as Esther did, is no fit parallel for proposing Christ to sinners, who have not so much as the life of grace to move, nor the light of grace to discern, nor Indeed any eye of faith, to behold their marriage relation, as Esther saw it, and in which she stood toward Ahasuerus.

We must, in exalting the Spirit's work, preach the Gospel powerfully. But offers are weak and Impotent. They strengthen not the soul. A poor sinner must have the power of God unto salvation. Offers are not powerful, because they can never close with the man; the man must, (that is, if he can), first close with the offer, and indeed when he does close with the offer, it is but a natural close, a rational choice; and the offer closed with, being nothing more than letter-doctrine, forms, and words, can neither strengthen his soul, nor supply his wants. The man is but where he was, and what he was, as to his state; you have brought him to change His opinion, and somebody else may change it again for him. He is of another judgment, but the same creature that ever he was.

Now what mighty things have your proposals done towards the conversion of this man, who is a natural man still, and still to be converted to Christ? If ever saved, he will be saved by power, from your bastard (both false and illegitimate) conversion and forms of reformation.

Eighteenth Resolution

A GOSPEL, TO THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST

The Eighteenth resolution of the question. Do you still ask how must we preach the Gospel, if we do not offer the Gospel? Or how must we preach Christ, if we do not offer Him? I answer, Preach the Gospel so as Christ may see in it the travel of His soul, and be satisfied. Men with a show of offers do thereby exclude the Gospel-satisfaction, or seem to forget what they profess, and have undertaken to preach, even Christ and Him crucified. For as upon the cross there was a pouring out of His blood, so in our preaching of the cross, we preach the certain pouring out and communication of it to the soul. Are we to say, Here, soul, you may have it if you can accept the offer?

Does Christ see of the travel of His soul by such language? No. And I am abundantly persuaded, that because men preach so little of the fruitfulness of the blood of Christ, and that He shall see of the travel of His soul and be satisfied. That therefore the Lord in His justice does not honor those individual instruments with more seals to their ministry; and from His justice towards them on this account, they find so little success. His justice, I say, is the Immediate cause of executing the decree, because ministers in the preaching part have left God, and have refused to exalt His grace to the utmost. They exchange preaching for proposing, and offering Christ for opening Christ. So God's justice executes His wise retaliation in their unprofitable ministry.

Nineteenth Resolution

TO EXALT FREE OPERATIONS – AS MINISTERS OF SATAN CANNOT

The Nineteenth resolution of the question. We should preach the Gospel so as the ministers of Satan do not, nay, cannot. That is, we should exalt free operations, which have from God an irresistible influence to overpower our corruptions, and free our wills of slavery and bondage to sin. Offers are Satan's road to pleasure, profit, and worldly friendship; they are means to ensnare the non-elect, therefore they can be none of God's ways of saving the elect, though you sugar the lure with the name of Gospel-offers. No, no; God carries on His work by Gospel operations. Offers and proposals are Satan's way to damn sinners. Therefore, offers and proposals of truth are none of God's ways to save the elect among sinners. And as God is using of truth, He will not take the devil's way in using a temptation, so the devil shall not, cannot take God's way to approach the heart.

Twentieth Resolution

NOT TO USURP CHRIST'S AUTHORITY AND PREROGATIVE

The Twentieth and last resolution of the question. We are to preach the Gospel with confidence in Christ, and fear as to ourselves, that we do not lay any stress upon the creature. But offers are presumptuous. They rob the Gospel of its properties, privileges, and glory; they usurp Christ's authority and prerogative, affecting to say to dead Lazarus, Come forth. Whereas, we have no authority from the word to say this to any, except we really believe it shall be done. Our work is to sow the seed of good doctrine, and leave it in Christ's hands to bring it forth in His time.

Further, it is a presumptuous thing to alter an ordinance into an offer. This is to turn God's institution into man's invention. Their invention is a proposal, His is a gift, theirs is but a tender; His is effectual, theirs altered into a weak device that can effect nothing.

It is, therefore, presumption to propose a less means of conversion to sinners, than what would become effectual, to edification and increase of faith in saints. For saints stand, grow, and increase, and sin is trodden down, by power, and not by proposals. Saints are acted on by one that is able to keep them from falling. Saints have to do with Christ, who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that they ask or think, according to the power that worketh in them. How then can sinners be converted to Christ by offers; whereas, saints are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

There can be no grace when there is no sovereignty. Deny God's right to choose whom He will and you deny His right to save whom He will. Deny His right to save whom He will, and you deny that salvation is of grace. If salvation is made to hinge upon any desert or fitness in man, seen or foreseen, grace is at an end.

Horatius Bonar

NOTES:

1. Apparently the author means to show that the Infinite being of God cannot be defined in relation to created, finite man. – W.J.B.
2. That is the declarative truth – that Christ came into the world “to save sinners”: and not the perverted meaning by A. Fuller and all Arminians, that Christ is only an “offered Savior to be accepted by lost sinners. – W. J. B.
3. Really a distortion of the law, for the law never promised eternal life, nor was it given for that purpose. – W. J. B.

CHAPTER EIGHT

SOME TEXTS MISAPPLIED IN OFFER-PREACHING

Certain texts of Scripture that are misapplied to uphold offer-preaching, set right to refute the offer-way.

The first text mistaken is Rev. 22:17. “And the Spirit and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come. And whosoever will let him come, and take of the water of life freely.”

This text is of another tendency than that in John 7:37. Let him that is athirst, come. Athirst for what? It is plain, for the pure river of the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, verse 1. Athirst, when? Why, when that pure river of the water of life runs. Nothing is said of it so as to make the children of God suppose that dogs thirst for it. NO. Such drink under muddy preachers, and are satisfied with mingled streams. But, when the day spoken of comes, it will be otherwise. Then men will find all sermons and waters they have hitherto had, did not satisfy their thirst. And the reason is, old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new. Because this same pure river of the water of life in the paradise of God, is ever new; but there is a time coming when the church of God will drink more largely of the waters of life without mixture, than ever she has done yet.

John was here shown such a pure river as had never yet flowed. No; not in the days of the apostles themselves. It is therefore no offer of grace, but an invitation of the glorious church at the later day, to the members of the gracious church; and so is spoken of glorified saints with the Holy Spirit, inviting believers to come and drink of the waters they thirst after, which will then flow forth. The arguments for this interpretation are these:

The tree of life, verse 2, shows us that it must be in the midst of the paradise of God. Rev. 2:7 is a parallel text that clears it. This paradise can be no other than the second Adam’s paradise, in the new land of promise, or in the new earth, wherein dwells righteousness, when the church will be brought to Christ and married to him, as Eve was to Adam and joined to him in marriage, which was done in old Adam’s paradise, a type thereof. The elect of God had their death there, by eating the fruit of the tree of good and evil; but they shall have life and immortality in their bodies from Christ, in his new paradise, limited to the glorious church for a thousand years on earth [and forever]. Do men pretend to justify their offers from the word of the Spirit; then hear what He says in the same chapter, “He that is unjust, let him be unjust still. He that is filthy, let him be filthy still.” If these Scriptures are taken in the gross literal sense, they contradict the other. Neither offers nor invitations can be justified from the one, any more than an encouragement to sin can be inferred from the other.

Do ministers tell sinners they must come to Christ weary and heavy laden (Matt. 11:28), believing the church will be in her old clothes, with dust and worldly business, and bare burdens on her wedding-day? No, no; Jesus Christ’s bride when she says, Come; in the sense of that text in Revelation, will not be up to the ears in muck, nor cumbered as she is now, with much serving. For burdens, toil, trade, worldly business, such as produces the weariness spoken of in Matt. 11:28, which is a part of the cause, will be ended, shall be no more, when her Lord comes to take her home into the nuptial joy and

marriage-glory of His kingdom! It is plain then to me, that Rev. 22:17 cannot justify men in their offers of grace to sinners.

Some henchmen run to a second text, Ho; every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters. (Isa.55: 1) To justify their offers and proposals of grace to sinners. But the answer is plain. On the contrary, the text falls under two branches of matter, according to the distinct time and way of revealing a divine message.

A prophecy, and so it concerned Isaiah's time, and is lodged as a prophecy upon record, throughout the remainder of the Old Testament dispensation, till Christ came. An accomplishment of the prophecy, or waiting Gospel-means, by Christ's coming into the ministry of the Gospel in person, and His continuing to be with Gospel ministers by the Holy Spirit, to the end of the world.

Now in the accomplishment, three things more are to be considered, which take in the whole meaning of the text; all which are evidently against their exposition who labor to justify offers and proposals. For I look upon this to be a text that fully disproves them.

The first is proclamation, Ho! every one that thirsteth. The second is invitation, Come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat, yea, come buy wine and milk without money, and without price. The third thing is, ministration of the commodities, called selling them to the heavenly merchant-men without money and without price. Now there is not one of these things can justify an offer of grace.

For, 1) A proclamation of grace can be no offer, because that is only a voice crying and declaring the will of the superior, by some person in authority under him. So John the Baptist cried or proclaimed the ministry of Christ, by giving notice that he was to come after him into the wilderness. 2) The invitation can be no offer: For an invitation is of persons that are absent from an entertainment, and spoken to in order to a treating them with provisions made ready in another place, killed and prepared to entertain them: For it not only says, Come to the waters, but Come and eat. The invitation of them to the Gospel treat is not to entertain them on the spot where invited, but elsewhere.

Of this nature is that common invitation to hear the preaching of the Gospel, when notice is given that the Gospel will be preached at such a time, and in such a place, to which any that are desirous, may repair and find the means freely. The invitation is to them that are scattered about to come locally, to the place where Christ is to be found occasionally, and come often, to the place where He dwells constantly, after present refreshment In the means and ordinances of His own appointment. These means are ordinances and Gospel-doctrines, through which are communications of spiritual life, set forth by waters, wine, milk, etc.

Men comply with the Invitation, and come, when they have been absent from the means, and now, come to the means. Whereas, an offer can be no invitation. An offer (where offers take place) is where the person is come, and spoken with upon the spot. But an Invitation is by a message sent forth, where Christ in the Gospel is absent, or a call to go where he is not yet present.

3) There is a ministration to be understood in this text which is beyond the invitation. For when sinners come to the waters, and are present at them as the means of grace, are they still to be invited to the means of grace, or to be entertained in the means of grace? Our work therefore, when men are come together, is to open the mysteries of salvation, that these living waters may flow forth.

Proclamation and invitation having found out the thirsty, and the thirsty are come, what do you now? Do you minister the provisions Jesus Christ has prepared, the fatted calf and the paschal lamb; or do you stand Inviting yet?

O foolish generation! O foolish people and unwise! The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light. For when men are thirsty and ready to perish for drink, and they are invited where it is, and stand round the vessel, doth the drawer instead of broaching the vessel and giving to every one drink, stand impertinently and invite them to the vessel of water, to which they are come already? No; he that ministers draws it out, he gives it round to the company.

So should we, in such case, minister it, not offer it. For the ministration can be no offer. Because a ministration is the Lord's communication of the benefit by His servant, in conveyance of the grace by the minister he employs and blesses. For the ordinances of Christ are vessels of water; Scriptures are vessels of water; promises are vessels of water, wine, and milk; so are experiences of God's ministers themselves who have believed, and they should tell their experiences in the pulpit, because they have believed. That out of the abundance of the heart the mouth may speak, and out of their belly may flow rivers of living water.

All these should be broached, that souls who are come to drink may be refreshed with the waters, the wine and milk of the Gospel. Milk is drawn out of the breasts; the mother feels it before she parts with it to the infant; so the church of Christ that gives her breasts to poor sinners, and to young converts by the ministers of Christ, must have ministers that can speak from experience; and these ministers of Christ in the churches must Impart their experiences, by setting inward truths open, that poor sinners may see how God's word and His work meet.

Our ministration must lie in opening Scriptures, pouring forth the water of life from them, and preaching the grace of God freely, giving the cup into every thirsty man's hand. For the hand and the thirst do radically go together.

The hand I am speaking of is the new creature's faith formed by the Holy Spirit. We should not offer Christ, thinking under the offer He will work grace; but we should minister Christ, knowing by what we feel in our ministry upon our own souls, that the hand is formed and prepared of the Holy Spirit, and that He doth work grace.

Therefore, let us put the cup, the water, the wine, and milk, into the hand of faith created, and tell the elect roundly, it is for thee, for thee, and thee! The thirsty groan and, complain; you hear their cries and their calls, and may know their election of God by their spiritual appetites.

I shall only further note, that this text, Isa. 55:1, is a restricted invitation to the whosoever that thirst by grace, for grace. But offers are made to men, whether they thirst, or thirst not. Otherwise, why are they made to all within the sound? Now if souls do thirst, give them drink, do not offer them drink that you cannot give: And if they do not thirst, why do you offer them the waters? What though great and learned men on this text may speak so much in the language of the offers, unless they can give scriptural proof in defense of their offer, they establish nothing. How then can men confound the offer with the invitation! Because their silver is become dross, and their wine is mixed with water.

3. The third text is 2 Cor. 5:20. "Now then are we ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you, in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God." It is plain, by the first verse of the next chapter, how we are to understand this, and by this text how we must understand the same, 2 Cor.

6:1. We, then, as workers together (not workers together with Him, as is corruptly added to the original. But workers together, i. e., I (Paul with Timothy, and Timothy with Paul) beseech you also, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. It is plainly means, that you honor not Christ's blood, if you despise His government.

We should expose the Gospel to grievous reproaches, making men question whether we have the truth of faith, if we are not reconciled to God's government.

The text, 2 Cor. 5:20, speaks evidently of the new creature's act, in reference to Christ as King in Zion, the absolute matter of His Church, requiring good order in His house, which (it is known) the Corinthians, when Paul wrote to them, needed enough.

To be reconciled to God in this sense, is to submit to His ordinances and doctrines. There is a great deal of Christ suited to believers as Christ is King and priest in Zion. In this mystery lays much of the true church order, and working together with God, which may contend for, who know not what it means, therefore are not in this sense reconciled.

Faith and order must not parted; if souls are under the blood of Christ, and yet do not honor the sceptre, we must speak to these as new-born babes, after another manner than we speak to such as are rebels. Paul and Timothy must be considered as dealing in the message of the sceptre, and so are pleading for church-order among the saints, which they were not so reconciled to, as they were to Gospel-faith and Gospel-gifts. Whence they (Paul and timothy) are called ambassadors, as coming from Christ, their King, with His positive order, how He would have things through the external parts of profession, worship, and ordinances among the saints. But what has this to do with the offers of grace to sinners? It was unto the church of God at Corinth, with all the saints in all Achaia, and of these church-members, still as a new creation, so putting in himself and Timothy, and these saints, and altogether brings in an US. All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, 2 Cor. 5:18. Whereas, if this had been an offer of grace to sinners, and had meant their first coming to Christ, it had been utterly beside the apostle's commission. No. But positively God has made Christ to be sin for us, and has reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ; and shall we not, then, as the saints of God, be reconciled to God in His government also by Jesus Christ? Here is the plain force of the argument.

4. The fourth text of Scripture is Isaiah 27:5. "Or let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me, and he shall make peace with Me." This also has been brought to uphold offers of grace. But there is no hold in it. The truth of this text will appear by seeing more into the foundation of all peace with God, and of that peace brought in to the soul in the strength of God.

The words Inserted in other characters and put into the translation are superfluous, and trouble the text. For as "or" may be changed into "oh," so "that" and "and" have nothing to do in the verse; it being spoken divisively and separately of two persons, not of one alone. The one is a sinner who wants peace, the other is spoken of Christ the strength of God who makes His peace. Therefore the words ought to be read thus, Oh, let Him take hold of my strength. He may make peace with me, He shall make peace with me.

Thus the former part of the verse is an instruction to a sinner, (by the ministry of the Gospel, not an offer of grace), the latter part of the verse is a covenant declaration of the undertaking of Christ, the Days-man and the Surety-man, who makes up the controversy between God and the sinner, and agreeable to what goes before and what follows after.

This engagement of My Son, who is My strength, My Christ, and that even as, He lay under the legal imputation of sin unto Him, is something indeed, that shall stop the outgoings of My wrath in the sinner's conscience; for upon the account of that atonement made, fury is not in Me. He shall make peace by the efficacy of His blood, because, My covenant, from everlasting He is My strength. He, says the Father, My Christ, the strength of God, engaged His heart, as God-man, to approach unto Me, and so He shall make peace. Accordingly, He ever lives, being God's strength, to make intercession to the uttermost, for all that come unto God by Him.

The Old Testament language was thus, He may make peace, He shall make peace. For having received a special commandment of the Father to go and lay down His life, He stands engaged, says God, as surety of the better covenant in My strength that cannot lie, to do so, and confirm the everlasting compact. And it shall become unto all intents and purposes, through the laying down of this life in the greatness of My strength, a full, a clear, and a most effectual ransom in the very face of all people.

He shall make peace. Oh! precious language to stay the heart of a mad and desperate sinner, whom, nevertheless God eyes as His own, being among the election of His grace Neither the world nor sin shall hold God's chosen; they shall go from faith to faith, till, by a supernatural power they have a feeling sight of armed justice in the conscience, and then, on a view of Christ, engaging, that justice for them, till they feel effectual grace, that turns in upon this strength of God.

From hence it has come to pass, that instead of the true Gospel in the text, many a poor sinner has thought, under some natural convictions, to clap in believing and repenting as their own mediators between God and them, so to make peace.

From hence, likewise, hath sprung that ignorant and common question out of the natural Popery and Arminianism of men's hearts, Have you made your peace with God? By which the Mediator is thrown out and made to stand for a mere cypher.

The fifth text of Scripture they may be beaten out of is, What they pretend can warrant them to think, that if men have not grace offered them, they cannot be justly condemned for unbelief. The text is 2 Thes. 2:10. "And with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish: Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Here you see, say they, there are some that perish who might have been saved if they had had a love to the truth. And this they look upon to be unanswerable. Others will make this to comport with it, that if an offer of grace be not made to a sinner, that sinner cannot be guilty of, nor condemned for unbelief; as if grace could be no otherwise affronted, opposed and abused, but where it was rejected under the offer, a notion that has been confuted enough in this treatise already.

I shall only take notice further upon this erroneous notion of theirs, that it is to be found in Arminianism Calvinistically dressed up, but not in the Holy Scriptures. I will make good my assertion by this proof out of the Arminians who use the like plea. Say they, "where no grace is, there no contempt of grace can follow." The Arminians mean, where no grace is given, there no grace is offered, for they all along in that book erroneously make a gift of grace and an offer of grace both one.

But to open this text in the Thessalonians: Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. Here was a, possibility, say they, of the salvation of these sinners that perished, if they had accepted the offer of grace, and had not refused the tender of salvation. For salvation at the 10th verse is set in opposition to damnation at the 12th verse. 1) God never intended to bestow eternal

salvation on them; for, if He had, He would have revealed to them that salvation through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth, as He did to those in the 10th verse But the answer is plain, 2) It is evident then that the saving there spoken of is a temporal salvation from the plague of judgment which the apostle there specifies. And what that was he tells you; the mystery of iniquity's coming after the working of Satan, with all power and signs, and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.

These were to be the agents and factors of that wicked one to be revealed, as a punishment of the Roman empire after Constantine's time, for men's not receiving the truth in the letter of it, in which was revealed the mystery of the object of faith, but loved a lie rather. The truth they received not, was the doctrine of God's everlasting love; which is the top and quintessence of the truth of Christ.

The love of that truth (in which Christ in the whole revelation of the Gospel is manifested, is love itself, and the image of the invisible God), thus they throw off, and would not hear, the doctrine of election and sovereign grace. For as election is the great article of God's love, and the test of our obedience therefore to receive the doctrine of election is to receive the love of the truth.

This very point steadfastly believed among them, would have been a security of their other principles from the common inundation of Popery, which strikes at election, or the love of the truth objectively, in all deceiveableness of unrighteousness. Now to be saved from this deceiveableness of unrighteousness which was to run in the stream of Popery was the salvation meant, though not the great salvation in Heb. 2:3. It plainly appears, because it is a diverse salvation from that spoken of in the 13th verse.

Which is quite another thing than their not receiving the love of the truth, in the power of God's Spirit, in special favor towards them, as His own chosen in Christ. But their not receiving the love of the truth, in the orthodoxy and soundness of that doctrine of the love of God, is the cause and reason of God's sending them strong delusions to believe lies: Which appeared in the plague and judgment of Popery from which the elect were saved.

God was righteously provoked to send the strong delusions, as a punishment for their entertaining the truth by halves; the truth in some superficial branches, yet apostatizing from the truth in the fundamental doctrines of it; so that the only things to be gathered out of the 10th verse set in the face of the light, are,

- (1) That His own elect shall never come short of the love of the truth experimentally distinct from the doctrine of love, or God's everlasting love to the persons of His elect chosen in Christ Jesus.
- (2) That many men professing the out-parts of truth, and receiving the notion of some parts of it, have never yet received the love of it, which is the foundation of all; which is evident by their still shutting out the love of the Father, towards the elect in Christ Jesus.
- (3) That a sound orthodox notion of the love of the truth is God's appointed fence against error and deceit; and particularly against Popish or Arminian cheats, though they come to us with signs and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish.
- (4) That the believing of a lie and the having pleasure in unrighteousness, is a higher degree of sinning, and another kind of unrighteousness, than a not receiving the love of the truth which made way for it.
- (5) That the supreme cause of men's further sinning in their believing of a lie, and having pleasure in unrighteousness, than they had first sinned in their not receiving the truth in the love of it, is, God's

sending strong delusions towards this latter sin, as a just judgment to punish, the commission of their former sin. Thus saith the Lord, Behold I will lay stumbling block before this people, and the fathers and sons together shall fall upon them, Jeremiah 7:21.

(6) That the decree of damnation is not executed till sin be finished which bringeth forth death, and the measure of iniquity be filled up. Wherein now doth this text appear to propose the notion concerning offers of grace?

6. The last text I shall mention as an objection against what I have written, and as brought in defense of offers, is that noted place, Rom. 3:25: "Whom God hath set forth, a propitiation through faith in His blood." If upon this text I have at any time used the word proposed, it is because my thoughts were not directed to consult the Bible. For we are prone to bring in abundance of errors into our work through laziness, in not consulting the Scriptures. There the word is fore-ordained or fore-appointed, and not proposed. Indeed, the original word which is proetheto in that text, as much as to say fore-appointed, is not to be read "set forth." Much less is it setting forth in the nature of an offer or proposal. Besides, supposing it was the sense of the original, yet setting forth here could even then be nothing else but God's demonstration of Christ to the soul.

What has this to do with the common way of your offers? for instance, "Come, poor sinner, I have been setting forth Christ; come and take Him," etc. Whereas, suppose the form of translation was right in the text, it should have run after this manner: "Well, poor sinner, how hath God been setting forth Christ in the eye of thy soul? How has God struck in and quickened, encouraged, raised thy poor soul by his own arm, the Holy Spirit of the Lord." Nevertheless, as the original word signifies fore-appointed, we are not to alter the efficacy of the word, since the Holy Spirit's own work upon the soul absolutely depends upon what is signified thereby unto us: Sanctification of the Spirit unto belief of the truth, being wholly built upon the fore-appointments of the Father. Not, that all other texts, which are by men brought to uphold grace-offers, are misunderstood, when they are not opened in the same Gospel-way.

Publisher's Notice:

Chapters 10 to 12 continue "Replies to Pleas" and arguments for a universal offer, etc. These chapters have been omitted from this edition because most of the arguments have been well covered in body of the work.

JOSEPH HUSSEY, who is best known by his works, entitled "God's Operations of Grace, But No Offers of Grace," and his "Glory of Christ Unveiled," was, in the latter part of his life, a most zealous opponent of Arminianism in all its branches. In his dying moments, though in extreme pain, he was honored to bear some precious testimonies to the truths of discriminating grace, of which the following are a few. "One of the church asking him how his faith was exercised with regard to those doctrines he used to preach, he answered, 'I am in the firm and full persuasion of all those truths I have preached, and die in the firm belief of them all.' Many of the church being in his chamber, he often dropped some spiritual observations that expressed the feelings of his mind on the occasion. A person asking him how he did, 'I am,' said he, waiting for my happy change, to be dissolved, and to be with Christ.' 'What do you take, sir?' 'I have no palate for any thing here, but my spiritual one is as good as ever to relish the doctrines of the gospel.' Being asked how he found it in his soul as to those doctrines he had delivered, he answered, 'O bravely! They are my main supports under my trials and pains. I find now the truth of what I have preached. They are not my notions or fancy, but the power of Christ to my soul.'

"Dozing at times, when he awaked, he would drop such words as follow. 'I have often sung the praises of God in the low lands, but oh! how long will it be before I come to the height of Zion, to sing to God and the Lamb upon the throne? Oh blessed death! It is a sweet thing to die, for Christ will then be all in all O Lord, gather thine elect out of this sinful world unto Thyself.' He would occasionally break forth with many short sentences, such as these: 'Blessing, glory, honor, and praise be to God and the Lamb, for ever and ever. Sin is dreadful, but grace triumphs through Jesus Christ. Lord, be with me in my last conflicts, and leave me not. O let me have an abundant entrance into glory, to sing Thy praise.' Thus he continued testifying of Jesus Christ, and praising Him, until Tuesday, November 15, 1726, when he slept in the Lord, in the 67th year of his age."

(From Defense of Particular Redemption by William Rushton)