

ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΟΛΟΓΙΑ

OR,

A DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

WHEREIN

AN ACCOUNT IS GIVEN OF HIS NAME, NATURE, PERSONALITY, OPERATIONS, AND EFFECTS; HIS WHOLE WORK IN THE OLD AND NEW CREATION IS EXPLAINED; THE DOCTRINE CONCERNING IT VINDICATED FROM OPPOSITIONS AND REPROACHES.

THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF GOSPEL HOLINESS; THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN GRACE AND MORALITY, OR A SPIRITUAL LIFE UNTO GOD IN EVANGELICAL OBEDIENCE AND A COURSE OF MORAL VIRTUES, ARE STATED AND DECLARED.

Search the Scriptures, etc. — John v. 39.

Ἐκ τῶν θείων γραφῶν θεολογοῦμεν, καὶ θέλωσιν οἱ ἔχθροί, καὶ μή. — Chrysostom.

London: 1674.

Prefatory note.

The year 1674 saw issuing from the press some of the most elaborate productions of our author. Besides his own share in the Communion controversy, he published in the course of that year the second volume of his Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and another folio of equal extent and importance, the first part of his work on the Holy Spirit; for what is generally known under the title of “Owen on the Holy Spirit,” is but the first half of a treatise on that subject. The treatise was completed in successive publications:— “The Reason of Faith,” in 1677; “The Causes, Ways, and Means of Understanding the Mind of God,” etc., in 1678; “The Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer,” in 1682; and, in 1693, two posthumous discourses appeared, “On the Work of the Spirit as a Comforter, and as he is the Author of Spiritual Gifts.” From the statements of Owen himself, in various parts of these works, as well as on the authority of Nathaniel Mather, who wrote the preface to the last of them, we learn that they were all included in one design, and must be regarded as one entire and uniform work. In Owen’s preface to the “Reason of Faith,” he expressly states, “About three years since I published a book about the dispensation and operations of the Spirit of God. That book was one part only of what I designed on that subject. The consideration of the work of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of illumination, of supplication, of consolation, and as the immediate

author of all spiritual offices and gifts, extraordinary and ordinary, is designed unto the second part of it." Uncertain, as he advanced in years, whether he should be spared to finish it, Owen was induced to issue separately the treatises belonging to the second part, according as he was able, under the pressure of other duties, to overtake the preparation and completion of them. They are now for the first time collected, and arranged into the order which, it is believed, the author would have made them assume, had he lived to publish an edition comprehending all his treatises on the Holy Spirit in the form and under the title of one work. No other liberty, however, is taken with the treatises than simply to number the four of them which were published separately, and which are contained in the next volume, as so many additional books, continuing and completing the discussion of the subject which had been begun and so far prosecuted in the five previous books embraced in this volume. To all of them the general designation πνευματολογία is equally applicable. Thus arranged and seen in its full proportions, the work amply vindicates the commendation bestowed on it, as the most complete exhibition of the doctrine of Scripture on the person and agency of the Spirit "to be found in any language." As no author had previously attempted to treat "of the whole economy of the Holy Spirit, with all his adjuncts, operations, and effects," Owen urges the circumstance in extenuation of any want of system and lucid order in his work. If such an attempt had never previously been made, it is equally true that no successor has been found in this walk of theology who has ventured to compete with Owen in the full and systematic discussion of this great theme. Treatises of eminent ability and value have appeared on separate departments of it; but in the wide range embraced in this work of Owen, as well as in the power, depth, and resources conspicuous in every chapter, it is not merely first, but single and alone in all our religious literature.

The work, as we may gather from various allusions in it, was written in opposition to the rationalism of the early Socinians, especially as represented by Crellius; to the mysticism of the Quakers, a sect which had grown into notoriety within thirty years before the publication of this work; and to the irreligion of a time when the derision of all true piety was the passport to royal favour. That, during the religious fervours of the commonwealth, fanaticism of various kinds should appear, is no more strange than that when genuine coin is in circulation, attempts should be made to utter what is counterfeit and base. Against such fanaticism it was natural that a reaction should ensue, and certain divines pandered to the blind prejudice of the times succeeding the Restoration, by sarcastic invective against all that was evangelical in the creed of the Puritans and vital in personal godliness. Samuel Parker, in his infamous subserviency to the malice of the Court against dissent, and even against the common interests of Protestantism, distinguished himself in this assault upon the doctrines of grace and the distinctive principles of the Christian faith. Owen accordingly administers to him a rebuke in terms as severe as the calm dignity of his temper ever allowed him to employ in controversy; but the prominent aim in his whole work is to discriminate the gracious operations of the Spirit in the hearts of believers from the excesses of fanaticism on the one hand, whether as it appeared in the ruder sects of the age, or in the more genial mysticism of the Quaker, elevating his subjective experience of a spiritual light to co-ordinate authority with the objective revelation of God in the word; and, on the other hand, from the morality which, springing from no gracious principle, scarcely brooked an appeal to the only divine code for the regulation of human conduct.

This comprehensive treatise abounds in more than Owen's usual prolixity; — a feature of the work which may, perhaps, be explained by the consciousness under which the author seems always

false, the latter useless. Neither have any of the operations of the Spirit pleaded for the least respect unto them; for he having finished the whole work of external revelation, and closed it in the Scripture, his whole internal spiritual work is suited and commensurate thereunto. By subjective revelations, nothing is intended but that work of spiritual illumination whereby we are enabled to discern and understand the mind of God in the Scripture; which the apostle prays for in the behalf of all believers, Eph. i. 16–19, and whose nature, God assisting, shall be fully explained hereafter. So little pretence, therefore, there is for this charge on them by whom the efficacious operations of the Spirit of God are asserted, as that without them we have no absolute security that we shall be preserved from being imposed on by them or some of them.

But, it may be, it will be said at last that our whole labour, in declaring the work of the Spirit of God in us and towards us, as well as what we have now briefly spoken in the vindication of it from these or the like imputations, is altogether vain, seeing all we do or say herein is nothing but canting with unintelligible expressions. So some affirm, indeed, before they have produced their charter wherein they are constituted the sole judges of what words, what expressions, what way of teaching, are proper in things of this nature. But, by any thing that yet appears, they seem to be as unmeet for the exercise of that dictatorship herein which they pretend unto, as any sort of men that ever undertook the declaration of things sacred and spiritual. Wherefore, unless they come with better authority than as yet they can pretend unto, and give a better example of their own way and manner of teaching such things than as yet they have done, we shall continue to make Scripture phraseology our rule and pattern in the declaration of spiritual things, and endeavour an accommodation of all our expressions thereunto, whether to them intelligible or not, and that for reasons so easy to be conceived as that they need not here be pleaded.

DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE HOLY SPIRIT

Book I.

Chapter I. General principles concerning the Holy Spirit and his work.

1 Cor. xii. 1 opened — Πνευματικά, spiritual gifts — Their grant unto, use and abuse in, that church — Jesus, how called “anathema” — Impiety of the Jews — How called “Lord” — The foundation of church order and worship — In what sense we are enabled by the Spirit to call Jesus “Lord” — The Holy Spirit the author of all gifts — why called “God,” and “The Lord” — General distribution of spiritual gifts — Proper end of their communication — Nine sorts of gifts — Abuse of them in the church — Their tendency unto peace and order — General design of the ensuing discourse concerning the Spirit and his dispensation — Importance of the doctrine concerning the Spirit of God and his operations — Reasons hereof — Promise of the Spirit to supply the absence of Christ,

as to his human nature — Concernment thereof — Work of the Spirit in the ministration of the gospel — All saving good communicated unto us and wrought in us by him — Sin against the Holy Ghost irremissible — False pretences unto the Spirit dangerous — Pretences unto the spirit of prophecy under the Old Testament — Two sorts of false prophets: the first; the second sort — Pretenders under the New Testament — The rule for the trial of such pretenders, 1 John iv. 1–3 — Rules to this purpose under the Old and New Testaments compared — A false spirit, set up against the Spirit of God, examined — False and noxious opinions concerning the Spirit, and how to be obviated — Reproaches of the Spirit and his work — Principles and occasions of the apostasy of churches under the law and gospel — Dispensation of the Spirit not confined to the first ages of the church — The great necessity of a diligent inquiry into the things taught concerning the Spirit of God and his work.

The apostle Paul, in the 12th chapter of his First Epistle to the Corinthians, directs their exercise of spiritual gifts, concerning which, amongst other things and emergencies, they had made inquiry of him. This the fast words wherewith he prefaceth his whole discourse declare: Verse 1, “Now, concerning spiritual gifts,” — Περὶ δὲ τῶν πνευματικῶν· that is χαρισμάτων as his ensuing declaration doth evince. And the imagination of some, concerning spiritual persons to be here intended, contrary to the sense of all the ancients, is inconsistent with the context:¹ for as it was about spiritual gifts and their exercise that the church had consulted with him, so the whole series of his ensuing discourse is directive therein; and, therefore, in the close of it, contracting the design of the whole, he doth it in that advice, Ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ χαρίσματα τὰ κρείττονα, — “Covet earnestly the best gifts,” — namely, among those which he proposed to treat of, and had done so accordingly, verse 31. The τὰ πνευματικά of verse 1 are the τὰ χαρίσματα of verse 31; as it is expressed, chap. xiv. 1, Ζηλοῦτε δὲ τὰ πνευματικά — that is, χαρίσματα, — “‘Desire spiritual gifts,’ whose nature and use you are now instructed in, as it first was proposed.” Of these that church had received an abundant measure, especially of those that were *extraordinary*, and tended to the conviction of unbelievers: for the Lord having “much people in that city,” whom he intended to call to the faith, Acts xviii. 9, 10, not only encouraged our apostle, against all fears and dangers, to begin and carry on the work of preaching there, wherein he continued “a year and six months,” verse 11, but also furnished the first converts with such eminent, and some of them such miraculous gifts, as might be a prevalent means to the conversion of many others; for he will never be wanting to provide instruments and suitable means for the effectual attaining of any end that he aimeth at. In the use, exercise, and management of these “spiritual gifts,” that church, or sundry of the principal members of it, had fallen into manifold disorders, and abused them unto the matter of emulation and ambition, whereon other evils did ensue;² as the best of God’s gifts may be abused by the lusts of men, and the purest water may be tainted by the earthen vessels whereinto it is poured. Upon the information of some who, loving truth, peace, and order, were troubled at these miscarriages, 1 Cor. i. 11, and in answer unto a letter of the whole church, written unto him about these and other occurrences, chap. vii. 1, he gives them counsel and advice for the rectifying of these abuses. And, first, to

¹ Πνευματικά τὰ σημεῖα καλῶν, ὅτι ταῦτα ἔργα τοῦ πνεύματος μόνου, οὐδὲν ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπισηφερούσης σπουδῆς, εἰς τὸ τὰ τοιαῦτα θαυματουργεῖν. — Chrysost. in loc. So also Ambros. and Theophylact. in loc.

² Χαρίσματα δὲ εἶχον, οἱ μὲν ἐλάττονα, οἱ δὲ πλείω· καὶ τοῦτο αἴτιον σχίσματος αὐτοῖς ἐγένετο, οὐ παρὰ τὴν οἰκείαν φύσιν, ἀλλὰ παρὰ ἀγνωμοσύνην τῶν εἰληφότων· οἷτε γὰρ τὰ μείζονα ἔχοντες ἐπήρνοντο κατὰ τῶν τὰ ἐλάττονα κεκτημένων· οὗτοι δὲ αὐτὸ πάλιν ἤλθον, καὶ τοῖς τὰ μείζονα ἔχουσιν ἐφθόουν. — Chrysost. in loc.

prepare them aright with humility and thankfulness, becoming them who were intrusted with such excellent privileges as they had abused, and without which they could not receive the instruction which he intended them, he mindeth them of their former state and condition before their calling and conversion to Christ, chap. xii. 2, “Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away with dumb idols, even as ye were led;” ὡς ἂν ἤγεσθε ἀπαγόμενοι, — hurried with violent impressions from the devil into the service of idols. This he mentions not to reproach them, but to let them know what frame of mind and what fruit of life might be justly expected from them who had received such an alteration in their condition.³ Particularly, as he elsewhere tells them, if they had not made themselves to differ from others, if they had nothing but what they had received, — they should not boast nor exalt themselves above others, as though they had not received, chap. iv. 7; for it is a vain thing for a man to boast in himself of what he hath freely received of another, and never deserved so to receive it, as it is with all who have received either gifts or grace from God.

This alteration of their state and condition he farther declares unto them by the effects and author of it: chap. xii. 3, “Wherefore I give you to understand, that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed: and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.” The great difference which was then in the world was concerning Jesus, who was preached unto them all. Unbelievers, who were still carried with an *impetus* of mind and affections after “dumb idols,” being led and acted therein by the spirit of the devil, blasphemed, and said *Jesus was anathema*, or one accursed. They looked on him as a person to be detested and abominated as the common odium of their gods and men. Hence, on the mention of him they used to say, “Jesus anathema,” “He is,” or, “Let him be, accursed,” detested, destroyed. And in this blasphemy do the Jews continue to this day, hiding their cursed sentiments under a corrupt pronounciation of his name: for instead of יֵשׁוּעַ, they write and call him יֵשׁוּ, the initial letters of יִמְחַ שְׁמוֹ וְזִכְרוֹ, — that is, “Let his name and memory be blotted out;” the same with “Jesus anathema” And this blasphemy of pronouncing Jesus accursed was that wherewith the first persecutors of the church tried the faith of Christians, as Pliny in his *epistle to Trajan*, and Justin Martyr, with other apologists, agree; and as the apostle says, those who did thus did not so “by the Spirit of God,” so he intends that they did it by the acting and instigation of the devil, the unclean spirit, which ruled in those children of disobedience. And this was the condition of those Corinthians themselves to whom he wrote, whilst they also were carried away after “dumb idols” On the other side, those that believed called Jesus “Lord,” or professed that he was the Lord; and thereby avowed their faith in him and obedience unto him. Principally, they owned him to be Jehovah, the Lord over all, God blessed forever; for the name יְהוָה is everywhere in the New Testament expressed by Κύριος, here used. He who thus professeth Jesus to be the Lord, in the first place acknowledgeth him to be the true God. And then they professed him therewithal to be their Lord, the Lord of their souls and consciences, unto whom they owed all subjection and performed all obedience; as Thomas did in his great confession, “My Lord and my God,” John xx. 28. Now, as he had before intimated that those who disowned him and called him “accursed” did speak by the instinct and instigation of the devil, by whom they were acted, so he lets them know, on the other hand, that no man can thus own and confess Jesus to be the “Lord” but by the Holy Ghost. But it may be said that some acted by the unclean spirit confessed

³ “Spiritualia illis traditurus, exemplum prioris conversationis memorat; ut sicut simulacrorum fuerunt formâ colentes idola, et ducebantur duce voluntate dæmoniorum; ita et colentes deum sint formâ legis dominicæ.” — Ambros. in loc.

Christ to be the Lord. So did the man in the synagogue, who cried out, “I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God,” Mark i. 23, 24; and verse 34, he “suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.” And the damsel possessed with a spirit of divination cried after the apostle and his companions, saying, “These men are the servants of the most high God,” Acts xvi. 17. So also did the man who abode in the tombs, possessed with an unclean spirit, who cried out unto him, “What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God,” Mark v. 7. And other testimonies to the like purpose among the heathen, and from their oracles, might be produced. *Ans.* 1. Our apostle speaks of such a saying of Jesus to be Lord as is accompanied with faith in him and subjection of soul unto him; which is from the Holy Ghost alone. Thus none acted by the unclean spirit can call him Lord. 2. These acknowledgments were either (1.) wrested from the devil, and were no small part of his punishment and torment; or (2.) were designed by him with an intention to prejudice the glory of Christ by his testimony, who was a liar from the beginning; and

“Malus bonum cum simulat, tunc est pessimus.”

These things, therefore, can have here no place.⁴ Hereby, then, the apostle informs them wherein the foundation of all church relation, order, and worship, did consist: for whereas they had all respect unto the Lordship of Christ and their acknowledgment thereof, this was not from themselves, but was a pure effect of the operation of the Holy Ghost in them and towards them. And any thing of the like kind which doth not proceed from the same cause and fountain is of no use to the glory of God, nor of any advantage unto the souls of men.

Some think that this saying of Jesus to be the Lord is to be restrained unto the manner of speaking afterward insisted on;⁵ for the apostle in the following verses treateth of those extraordinary gifts which many in that church were then endowed withal. None can,” saith he, “say ‘Jesus is the Lord,’ in an extraordinary manner, with divers tongues, and in prophecy, but by the Holy Ghost;” — without his especial assistance, none can eminently and miraculously declare him so to be. And if this be so, it is likely that those before intended, who said Jesus was accursed, were some persons pretending to be acted, or really acted, by an extraordinary spirit, which the apostle declares not to be the Spirit of God; and so Chrysostom interprets those words of them who were visibly and violently acted by the devil. Many such instruments of his malice did Satan stir up in those days, to preserve, if it were possible, his tottering kingdom from ruin. But there is no necessity thus to restrain the words, or to affix this sense unto them; yea, it seems to me to be inconsistent with the design of the apostle and scope of the place: for intending to instruct the Corinthians, as was said, in the nature, use, and exercise of spiritual gifts, he first lays down the spring and fountain of all saving profession of the gospel, which those gifts were designed to the furtherance and improvement of. Hereupon, having minded them of their heathen state and condition before, he lets them know by what means they were brought into the profession of the gospel, and owning of Jesus to be the Lord, in opposition unto the dumb idols whom they had served; and this was by the Author of those gifts, unto whose consideration he was now addressing himself. The great change wrought in them, as to their religion and profession, was by the Holy Ghost; for no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, which is the sum and substance of our Christian profession, but by him, though some think

⁴ Τί οὖν οὐδεὶς δαίμων ὀνομάζει τὸν Θεόν; οὐχὶ οἱ δαιμονιζόμενοι ἔλεγον οἶδαμέν σε τίς εἶ ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ; οὐχὶ Παῦλος ἔλεγον, οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν; ἀλλὰ μαστιζόμενοι, ἀλλ’ ἀναγκαζόμενοι, ἐκόντες δὲ καὶ μὴ μαστιγούμενοι, οὐδαμνοῦ. — Chrysost. in loc.

⁵ Crel. *de Spir. Sanc., Prolegom.*, pp. 29–31.

he hath little or no concern at all in this matter. But to say Christ is the Lord includes two things:— First, *Faith* in him as Lord and Saviour. So was he declared and preached by the angels, Luke ii. 11, “A Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.” And this word “Lord” includes, as the dignity of his person, so his investiture with those offices which for our good this Lord did exercise and discharge. Secondly, The *profession* of that faith. Which two, where they are sincere, do always accompany each other, Rom. x. 10; for as the saying of Jesus to be anathema did comprise an open disclaimer and abrenunciation of him, so the calling of him Lord expresseth the profession of our faith in him, and subjection unto him. And both these are here intended to be sincere and saving: for that faith and profession are intended whereby the church is built upon the rock; the same with that of Peter, “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,” Matt. xvi. 16. And that these are the works of the Holy Ghost, which none of themselves are sufficient for, shall, God assisting, be afterward abundantly declared.

Having thus stated the original and foundation of the church, in its faith, profession, order, and worship, he farther acquaints them that the same Spirit is likewise the author of all those gifts whereby it was to be built up and established, and whereby the profession of it might be enlarged: 1 Cor. xii. 4, “Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” These are the things which he intendeth to discourse upon, wherein he enlargeth himself in the whole ensuing chapter. Now, because the particulars here insisted on by him in the beginning of his discourse will all of them occur unto us and be called over again in their proper places, I shall only point unto the heads of the discourse in the verses preceding the 11th, which we principally aim at.

Treating, therefore, περὶ τῶν πνευματικῶν, of these spiritual things or gifts in the church, he first declares their *author*, from whom they come, and by whom they are wrought and bestowed. Him he calls the “Spirit,” verse 4; the “Lord,” verse 5; “God,” verse 6; and to denote the *oneness* of their author, notwithstanding the diversify of the things themselves, he calls him the *same Spirit*, the *same Lord*, the *same God*. The words may be understood two ways: First, That the whole Trinity, and each person distinctly, should be intended in them; — for consider the immediate *operator* of these gifts, and it is the “Spirit” or the Holy Ghost, verse 4; consider them as to their *procurement* and immediate authoritative collation, and so they are from Christ, the Son, the “Lord,” verse 5; but as to their *first original* and fountain, they are from “God,” even the Father, verse 6: and all these are one and the same. But rather the Spirit alone is intended, and hath this threefold denomination given unto him; for as he is particularly denoted by the name of the “Spirit,” which he useth that we may know whom it is that eminently he intendeth, so he calls him both “Lord” and “God,” as to manifest his *sovereign authority* in all his works and administrations, so to ingenerate a due reverence in their hearts towards him with whom they had to do in this matter. And no more is intended in these three verses but what is summed up, verse 11, “But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

Secondly, With respect unto their *general nature*, the apostle distributes them into “gift,” χάρισματᾶ, verse 4; “administrations,” διακόνια, verse 5; “operations,” ἐνεργήματα, verse 6; — which division, with the reasons of it, will in our progress be farther cleared.

Thirdly, He declares the *general end* of the Spirit of God in the communication of them, and the use of them in the church: Verse 7, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” Φανέρωσις τοῦ Πνεύματος: Syr., גְּלִינָא דְרִוּחָה, — “the revelation of the Spirit;” that is, the gifts whereby and in whose exercise he manifests and reveals his own presence, power,

and effectual operation. And the Spirit of God hath no other aim in granting these his enlightening gifts, wherein he manifests his care of the church, and declares the things of the gospel unto any man, but that they should be used to the profit, advantage, and edification of others. They are not bestowed on men to make their secular gain or advantage by them, in riches, honour, or reputation, — for which ends Simon the magician would have purchased them with his money, Acts viii. 18, 19, — no, nor yet merely for the good and benefit of the souls of them that do receive them; but for the edification of the church, and the furtherance of faith and profession in others: Πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον· “Ad id quod expedit, prodest;” “For that which is expedient, useful, profitable,” — namely, to the church, 1 Cor. vi. 12, x. 23; 2 Cor. viii. 10. Thus was the foundation of the first churches of the gospel laid by the Holy Ghost, and thus was the work of their building unto perfection carried on by him. How far *present churches* do or ought to stand on the same bottom, how far they are carried on upon the same principles, is worth our inquiry, and will in its proper place fall under our consideration.

Fourthly, The apostle *distributes* the spiritual gifts then bestowed on the church, or some members of it, into *nine particular heads* or instances: as, — 1. Wisdom; 2. Knowledge, 1 Cor. xii. 8, or the word of wisdom and the word of knowledge; 3. Faith; 4. Healing, verse 9; 5. Working of miracles; 6. Prophecy; 7. Discerning of spirits; 8. Kinds of tongues; 9. Interpretation of tongues, verse 10. And all these were extraordinary gifts, in the manner of the communication and exercise, which related unto the then present state of the church. What is yet continued analogous unto them, or holding proportion with them, must be farther inquired into, when also their especial nature will be unfolded. But now if there be that great diversity of gifts in the church,⁶ if so much difference in their administrations, how can it possibly be prevented but that differences and divisions will arise amongst them on whom they are bestowed and those amongst whom they are exercised? It is true, this may so fall out, and sometimes doth so; and, *de facto*, it did so in this church of Corinth. One admired one gift, a second another of a different kind, and so the third. Accordingly, among those who had received them, one boasted of this or that particular gift and ability, and would be continually in its exercise, to the exclusion and contempt of others, bestowed no less for the edification of the church than his own. And so far were they transported with vain-glory and a desire of self-advancement, as that they preferred the use of those gifts in the church which tended principally to beget astonishment and admiration in them which heard or beheld them, before those which were peculiarly useful unto the edification of the church itself; which evil, in particular, the apostle rebukes at large, chap. 14. By this means the church came to be divided in itself, and almost to be broken in pieces, chap. i. 11, 12. So foolish oftentimes are the minds of men, so liable to be imposed upon, so common is it for their lusts, seduced and principled by the craft of Satan, to turn judgment into wormwood, and to abuse the most useful effects of divine grace and bounty! To prevent all these evils for the future, and to manifest how perfect a harmony there is in all these divers gifts and different administrations, at what an agreement they are among themselves in their tendency unto the same ends of the union and edification of the church, from what fountain of wisdom they do proceed, and with what care they ought to be used and improved, the apostle

⁶ “Ex hoc capite et proximo licet conjicere quæ fuerint dotes illius veteris ecclesiæ Christianæ, priusquam tot ceremoniis, opibus, imperiis, copiis, bellis aliisque id genus esset onerata. Nunc fere tot præclara munia ad unam Potestatem redacta sunt: h. e., Christi titulo palliatam Tyrannidem. Quid enim aliud est potestas nisi adsit animus apostolicus?” — Erasm. *Annot. ad v.* 4.

declares unto them both the author of them and the rule he proceedeth by in their dispensation, chap. xii. 11. “All these,” saith he,⁷ “worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.”

I shall not at present farther open or insist upon these words. Frequent recourse must be had unto them in our progress, wherein they will be fully explicated as to what concerns the person of the Spirit, his will, and his operations, which are all asserted in them; for my purpose is, through the permission and assistance of God, to treat from hence of the *name, nature, existence*, and whole *work* of the Holy Spirit, with the grace of God through Jesus Christ in the communication of him unto the sons of men: a work in itself too great and difficult for me to undertake, and beyond my ability to manage unto the glory of God or the edification of the souls of them that do believe, for “who is sufficient for these things?” but yet I dare not utterly faint in it nor under it, whilst I look unto Him whose work it is, who giveth wisdom to them that lack it, and upbraideth them not, James i. 5. Our eyes, therefore, are unto him alone, who both supplieth seed to the sower, and when he hath done, blesseth it with an increase. The present necessity, importance, and usefulness of this work, are the things which alone have engaged me into the undertaking of it. These, therefore, I shall briefly represent in some general considerations, before I insist on the things themselves whose especial explanation is designed.

First, then, we may consider, That the doctrine of the Spirit of God, his work and grace, is the *second great head* or principle of those gospel truths wherein the glory of God and the good of the souls of men are most eminently concerned. And such also it is, that without it, — without the knowledge of it in its truth, and the improvement of it in its power, — the other will be useless unto those ends. For when God designed the great and glorious work of recovering fallen man and the saving of sinners, to the praise of the glory of his grace, he appointed, in his infinite wisdom, two great means thereof. The one was *the giving of his Son for them*, and the other was *the giving of his Spirit unto them*. And hereby was way made for the manifestation of the glory of the whole blessed Trinity; which is the utmost end of all the works of God. Hereby were the love, grace, and wisdom of the Father, in the design and projection of the whole; the love, grace, and condescension of the Son, in the execution, purchase, and procurement of grace and salvation for sinners; with the love, grace, and power of the Holy Spirit, in the effectual application of all unto the souls of men, — made gloriously conspicuous. Hence, from the first entrance of sin, there were two general heads of the promise of God unto men, concerning the means of their recovery and salvation. The one was that concerning the sending of his Son to be incarnate, to take our nature upon him, and to suffer for us therein; the other, concerning the giving of his Spirit, to make the effects and fruits of the incarnation, obedience, and suffering of his Son, effectual in us and towards us. To these heads may all the promises of God be reduced. Now, because the former was to be the foundation of the latter, that was first to be laid down and most insisted on until it was actually accomplished. Hence, the great promise of the Old Testament, the principal object of the faith, hope, and expectation of believers, was that concerning the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, and the work which he was to perform. Yet was this also, as we shall see in our progress, accompanied with a great intermixture of promises concerning the Holy Spirit, to render his coming and work effectual unto us. But when once that first work was fully accomplished, when the Son of God was come, and had destroyed the works of the devil, the principal remaining promise of the New Testament, the

spring of all the rest, concerneth the sending of the Holy Spirit unto the accomplishment of his part of that great work which God had designed. Hence, the Holy Ghost, the doctrine concerning his person, his work, his grace, is the most peculiar and principal subject of the Scriptures of the New Testament, and a most eminent immediate object of the faith of them that do believe; and this must be farther cleared, seeing we have to deal with some who will scarce allow him to be of any consideration in these matters at all. But I shall be brief in these previous testimonies hereunto, because the whole ensuing discourse is designed to the demonstration of the truth of this assertion.

1. It is of great moment, and sufficient of itself to maintain the cause as proposed, that when our Lord Jesus Christ was to leave the world, *he promised to send his Holy Spirit unto his disciples to supply his absence*. Of what use the presence of Christ was unto his disciples we may in some measure conceive. They knew full well whose hearts were filled with sorrow upon the mention of his leaving of them, John xvi. 5, 6. Designing to relieve them in this great distress, — which drew out the highest expressions of love, tenderness, compassion, and care towards them, — he doth it principally by this promise; which he assures them shall be to their greater advantage than any they could receive by the continuance of his bodily presence amongst them. And to secure them hereof, as also to inform them of its great importance, he repeats it frequently unto them, and inculcates it upon them. Consider somewhat of what he says to this purpose in his last discourse with them: John xiv. 16–18, “I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you;” that is, in and by this Holy Spirit. And verses 25–27, “These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. Peace I leave with you,” etc. And chap. xv. 26, “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me.” And chap. xvi. 5–15, “Now I go my way to him that sent me; and none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou? But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart. Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you.”⁸ This was the great

⁸ “Spiritus Sanctus ad hoc missus a Christo, ad hoc postulatus de Patre ut esset doctor veritatis, Christi vicarius.” — Tertul. *advers. Hæret. cap. xxviii.*

“Quoniam Dominus in cælos esset abiturus, Paracletum discipulis necessario dabat, ne illos quodammodo pupillos, quod minimè decebat, relinqueret; et sine advocato et quodam tutore desereret. Hic est enim qui ipsorum animos mentesque firmavit, qui in ipsis illuminator rerum divinarum fuit; quo confirmati, pro nomine Domini nec carceres nec vincula timuerunt: quin imo ipsas seculi potestates et tormenta calcaverunt, armati jam scilicet per ipsum atque firmati, habentes in se dona quæ hic idem Spiritus ecclesiæ Christi sponsæ, quasi quædam ornamenta distribuit et dirigit.” — Novat. *de Trinitat.*

legacy which our Lord Jesus Christ, departing out of this world, bequeathed unto his sorrowful disciples. This he promiseth unto them as a sufficient relief against all their troubles, and a faithful guide in all their ways. And because of the importance of it unto them, he frequently *repeats* it, and enlargeth upon the benefits that they should receive thereby, giving them a particular account why it would be more advantageous unto them than his own *bodily presence*; and, therefore, after his resurrection he minds them again of this promise, commanding them to act nothing towards the building of the church until it was accomplished towards them, Acts i. 4, 5, 8. They would have been again embracing his human nature, and rejoicing in it; but as he said unto Mary, “Touch me not,” John xx. 17, to wean her from any carnal consideration of him, so he instructs them all now to look after and trust unto the promise of the Holy Ghost. Hence is that of our apostle, “Though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more,” 2 Cor. v. 16; for although it was a great privilege to have known Christ in this world after the flesh, yet it was much greater to enjoy him in the dispensation of the Spirit. And this was spoken by the apostle, as the ancients judge, to rebuke the boasting of some about their seeing the Lord in the flesh, who were thereon called *θεσπύσσοι*, whom he directs unto a more excellent knowledge of him. It is in vain pretended that it was the apostles only, and it may be some of the primitive Christians, who were concerned in this promise, for although the Holy Ghost was bestowed on them in a peculiar manner and for especial ends, yet the promise in general belongs unto all believers unto the end of the world;⁹ for as to what concerns his gracious operations, whatever the Lord Christ prayed for them, and so promised unto them (as the Spirit was procured for them on his prayer, John xiv. 16, 17), he “prayed not for it for them alone, but for them also which should believe on him through their word,” chap. xvii. 20. And his promise is, to be “with his alway, even unto the end of the world,” Matt. xxviii. 20; as also, that “wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, there he would be in the midst of them,” chap. xviii. 20; — which he is no otherwise but by his Spirit; for as for his human nature, “the heaven must receive him until the times of restitution of all things, Acts iii. 21. And this one consideration is sufficient to evince the importance of the doctrine and things which concern the Holy Spirit; for is it possible that any Christian should be so supinely negligent and careless, so unconcerned in the things whereon his present comforts and future happiness do absolutely depend, as not to think it his duty to inquire with the greatest care and diligence into what our Lord Jesus Christ hath left unto us, to supply his absence, and at length to bring us unto himself? He by whom these things are despised hath neither part nor lot in Christ himself; for “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his,” Rom. viii. 9.

“Totum ex Spiritus Sancti constat ducatu, quod devii diriguntur, quod impii convertuntur, quod debiles confirmantur. Spiritus rectus, Spiritus Sanctus, Spiritus principalis regit, componit, consummat et perficit, nostras inhabitat mentes, et corda quæ possidet; nec errare patitur, nec corrumpi, nec vinci quos docuerit, quos possederit, quos gladio potentissimæ veritatis accinxerit.” — Cypr. *de Spir. Sanc.*

⁹ “Præsentia spirituali cum eis erat ubique futurus post ascensionem suam, et cum tota ecclesia sua in hoc mundo usque in consummationem seculi: neque enim de solis apostolis potest intelligi, ‘sicut dedisti ei potestatem omnis carnis, ut onme quod dedisti ei det eis vitam æternam;’ sed ubique de omnibus quibus in eum credentibus vita æterna datur.” — Aug. *Tractat. 106, in Evangel. Johan.*

“Munus hoc quod in Christo est, — in consummationem seculi nobiscum; hoc expectationis nostræ solatium, hoc in donorum operationibus futuræ spei pignus est; hoc mentium lumen, hic splendour animorum est.” — Hilar, *lib. ii. 35, de Trinitat.*

2. The great work of the Holy Ghost in the dispensation and *ministration of the gospel*, unto all the ends of it, is another evidence unto the same purpose.¹⁰ Hence, the gospel itself is called “The ministration of the Spirit,” 2 Cor. iii. 8, in opposition to that of the law, which is called the ministration of the letter and of condemnation. Διακονία τοῦ Πνεύματος, the “ministry of the Spirit,” is either that ministry which the Spirit makes effectual, or that ministry whereby the Spirit in his gifts and graces is communicated unto men. And this is that which gives unto the ministry of the gospel both its glory and its efficacy. Take away the Spirit from the gospel and you render it a dead letter, and leave the New Testament of no more use unto Christians than the Old Testament is of unto the Jews. It is therefore a mischievous imagination, proceeding from ignorance, blindness, and unbelief, that there is no more in the gospel but what is contained under any other doctrine or declaration of truth, — that it is nothing but a book for men to exercise their reason in and upon, and to improve the things of it by the same faculty: for this is to separate the Spirit, or the dispensation of the Spirit, from it, which is in truth to destroy it; and therewith is the covenant of God rejected, which is, that his word and Spirit shall go together, Isa. lix. 21. We shall, therefore, God assisting, manifest in our progress that the whole ministry of the gospel, the whole use and efficacy of it, do depend on that ministration of the Spirit wherewith, according to the promise of God, it is accompanied. If, therefore, we have any concernment in, or have ever received any benefit by, the gospel, or the ministration of it, we have a signal duty lying before us in the matter in hand.

3. There is not any spiritual or *saving good* from first to last communicated unto us, or that we are from and by the grace of God made partakers of, but it is revealed to us and bestowed on us by the Holy Ghost. He who hath not an immediate and especial work of the Spirit of God upon him and towards him did never receive any especial love, grace, or mercy, from God. For how should he do so? Whatever God works in us and upon us, he doth it by his Spirit; he, therefore, who hath no work of the Spirit of God upon his heart did never receive either mercy or grace from God, for God giveth them not but by his Spirit. A disclaimer, therefore, of any work of the Spirit of God in us or upon us is a disclaimer of all interest in his grace and mercy; and they may do well to consider it with whom the work of the Spirit of God is a reproach. When they can tell us of any other way whereby a man may be made partaker of mercy and grace, we will attend unto it; in the meantime we shall prove from the Scripture this to be the way of God.

4. There is not any thing done in us or by us that is *holy and acceptable unto God*, but it is an effect of the Holy Spirit; it is of his operation in us and by us. Without him we can do nothing; for without Christ we cannot, John xv. 5, and by him alone is the grace of Christ communicated unto us and wrought in us. By him we are *regenerated*;¹¹ by him we are *sanctified*; by him we are *cleansed*; by him are we *assisted* in and unto every good work. Particular instances to this purpose will be afterward insisted on and proved. And it is our unquestionable concernment to inquire into the cause and spring of all that is good in us, wherein also we shall have a true discovery of the

¹⁰ “Hic est qui prophetas in ecclesia constituit, magistros erudit, linguas dirigit, vertutes et sanctitates facit, opera mirabilia gerit, discretionem spirituum porrigit, gubernationes contribuit, consilia suggerit, quæque alia sunt charismatum dona componit et digerit; et ideo ecclesiam Domino undique et in omnibus consummatam et perfectam facit.” — Tertul.

¹¹ “Hic est qui operatur ex aquis secundam nativitatem, semen quoddam divini generis, et consecrator cælestis nativitatis; pignus promissæ hæreditatis et quasi chirographum quoddam æternæ salutis; qui nos Dei faciat templum et nos efficiat domum, qui interpellat divinas aures pro nobis gemitibus ineloquacibus, advocacionis officia, et defensionis exhibens munera, inhabitator corporibus nostris ductus, et sanctitatis effector; hic est qui inexplebiles cupiditates coerct,” etc. — Novat. *de Trinitat.*

spring and cause of all that is evil, without a competent knowledge of both which we can do nothing as we ought.

5. God lets us know that the only peculiarly *remediless sin* and way of sinning under the gospel is *to sin in an especial manner against the Holy Ghost*. And this of itself is sufficient to convince us how needful it is for us to be well instructed in what concerns him; for there is somewhat that doth so, which is accompanied with irrecoverable and eternal ruin; and so is nothing else in the world. So Mark iii. 28, 29, “All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness.” Or, “Whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come,” Matt. xii. 32. There remains nothing for him who doth despite to the Spirit of grace but a “certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries,” Heb. x. 27, 29. This is that “sin unto death” whose remission is not to be prayed for, John v. 16: for he having taken upon him to make effectual unto us the great remedy provided in the blood of Christ for the pardon of our sins, if *he* in the prosecution of that work be despised, blasphemed, despitefully used, there neither is relief nor can there be pardon for that sin. For whence, in that case, should they arise or spring? As God hath not *another Son* to offer another sacrifice for sin, — so that he by whom his sacrifice is despised can have none remaining for him, — no more hath he *another Spirit* to make that sacrifice effectual unto us, if the Holy Ghost in his work be despised and rejected. This, therefore, is a tender place.¹² We cannot use too much holy diligence in our inquiries after what God hath revealed in his word concerning his Spirit and his work, seeing there may be so fatal a miscarriage in an opposition unto him as the nature of man is incapable of in any other instance.

And these considerations belong unto the first head of reasons of the *importance, use, and necessity*, of the doctrine proposed to be inquired into. They are enough to manifest what is the concernment of all believers herein; for on the account of these things the Scripture plainly declares, as we observed before, that “he who hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his,” — their portion is not in him, they shall have no benefit by his mediation. Men may please themselves with a profession of being Christians and owning the gospel, whilst they despise the Spirit of God, both name and thing. Their condition we shall examine and judge by the Scripture before we come to the end of this discourse. And for the Scripture itself, whoever reads the books of the New Testament, besides the great and precious promises that are given concerning him in the Old, will find and conclude, unless he be prepossessed with prejudice, that the whole of what is declared in those writings turns on this only hinge. Remove from them the consideration of the Spirit of God and his work, and it will be hard to find out what they aim at or tend unto.

Secondly, The great *deceit and abuse* that hath been, in all ages of the church, under the pretence of the *name and work of the Spirit* make the thorough consideration of what we are taught concerning

¹² “Omnibus quidem quæ divina sunt cum reverentia et vehementi cura oportet intendere, maxime autem his quæ de Spiritu Sancti divinitate dicuntur, præsertim cum blasphemia in eum sine venia sit; ita ut blasphemantis pœna tendatur non solum in omne præsens seculum, sed etiam in futurum. Ait quippe Salvator, blasphemanti in Spiritum Sanctum non esse remissionem, ‘neque in isto seculo neque in futuro:’ unde magis ac magis intendere oportet quæ Scripturarum de eo relatio sit: ne in aliquem, saltem per ignorantiam, blasphemix error obrepat.” — Didymus, *de Spir. Sanc. lib. i.*, Interpret. Hieron.

[Didymus, from whom Owen quotes so copiously in the following pages, was a professor of theology in Alexandria, and died A.D. 396 at the age of eighty-five. He became blind when only four years old, and yet contrived to acquire great distinction for his knowledge of all the sciences of the age, and especially of theology. His treatise on the Holy Spirit was translated by Jerome into Latin, and appears among the works of that father. — Ed.]