

THE  
**PRESBYTERIAN PREACHER.**

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No. 7.      PITTSBURGH, DECEMBER, 1832.      Vol. I.

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**SERMON VII.**

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**THE GRACE OF GOD IN THE GIFT OF THE  
HOLY SPIRIT.**

JOHN 14:16,17. ....*He shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth.*....

To fallen man a Saviour was necessary. Polluted with sin, burdened with guilt, exposed to wrath, he could not save himself. Dead in trespasses and sins he must have died the second death without remedy and without hope, if he had been left to his own resources. How dreadful his condition! Who could make atonement, or bear his punishment! A Saviour was revealed. God laid help on a Mighty One. Jesus, who is the Christ, the Son of God, became the Redeemer. Atonement was made, pardon was bought, life eternal was secured: now God may be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift! Equally necessary was the agency of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ to Heaven, for the purpose of applying redemption. If the offer of pardon had been made to the apostate descendents of fallen Adam, and peace with God had been proposed through the blood of Jesus Christ, and men had been cast on their own determination; not one would have accepted the propitiation: then it would have seemed that, so far as the salvation of sinners was contemplated, Christ had died in vain. Such was not the purpose of God: it was his fixed design that Jesus should "see of the travail of his soul, and be satisfied;" that men, through believing in his name, should "lay hold of the hope set before them;" that a "great multitude whom

no man can number," should say, standing before the throne,— "salvation to our God that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb." And to fulfil this design, the Holy Spirit was given. It is his appointed work to illuminate the dark mind, to renew the depraved heart, to sanctify the heirs of salvation, and lead them to glory. And for this great work his power is infinitely sufficient.

This deeply interesting view of the Divine Economy our Saviour repeatedly exhibited to the faith of his disciples, in that most instructive and consolatory discourse which he addressed to them, shortly before his death. He gives a special promise of the Holy Spirit, defines his office, and describes the purposes and results of his agency. "*He (the Father) shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever: even, the Spirit of truth.*"

In the gift of the Spirit according to this promise, there is a glorious display of the wisdom and goodness of God. This will be clearly seen, if we consider attentively the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures concerning the CHARACTER, and the OPERATION of the Comforter—the Holy Spirit.

All our knowledge of the existence and nature and office of the Holy Spirit is derived from Revelation. Reason may afford some conclusions respecting the being and attributes of the Great First Cause of all existence, and of all excellence; but the sublime mysteries of the Trinity, including the nature and the office both of the Son and the Spirit; together with the whole scheme of salvation, in regard of the purposes of God, and the manner in which he accomplishes his purposes by the Gospel, cannot be discovered by her limited researches. To the Bible alone we must apply for instruction on this subject; and we should examine the sacred page with unfeigned humility, and unreserved submission to Divine teaching.

I. The character of the Holy Spirit, is fully described in the Holy Scriptures. The passages which speak of this great Agent in the work of renovation are much more numerous and explicit than a cursory reader of the Bible would suppose. In both the Old Testament and the New, and by various modes of representation, the glory of his nature and the rich grace of his influences are placed before our minds, and impressed on our hearts. All these passages cannot now be recited; it will indeed be sufficient for our purpose to embody and present to the inquirer after truth, a portion of that testimony which the Spirit of Truth bears concerning himself, in his own word.

In the Old Testament we read, "The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters. Gen. 1:2. The Spirit of God came on Balaam. Num. 24:2. The Spirit of God hath made me, the breath of the Almighty hath given me life. Job. 33:4. Take not the Spirit from me. Ps. 51:11. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence. Ps. 139:7. The Lord God, and his Spirit hath sent me. Isa. 48:16. The Spirit of the Lord God is on me. Isa. 61:1. Afterwards the Spirit took me up, and brought me in vision by the Spirit of God, into Chaldea. Ez. 11:24."

So likewise we read in the New Testament,—“Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her, is of the Holy Ghost. Matt. 1:20. At the baptism of Jesus, John saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him. Matt. 3:16. Whosoever shall speak against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him; neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Matt. 12:32. Whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him. John 14:17. The Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me. John 15:26. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:4. But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God. Acts 5:3,4. The Holy Ghost said, separate me Barnabas and Saul, for the work whereunto I have called them. Acts 13:2. Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers. Acts 20:28. Well spake the Holy Ghost by Esaias the Prophet. Acts 28:25. The Lord (Jehovah) said...Go and tell this people, hear ye indeed, but understand not. Isa. 6:9. Believers are born of the Spirit....born of God. John 1:13. 3:5,8. Now the God of peace, fill you with all joy and peace in believing; that you may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost. Rom. 15:13. Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God. Rom. 15:19. The things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. 1 Cor. 2:11. To one is given by the Spirit the word of Wisdom....But all these worketh that one and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will. 1 Cor. 12:8,11. As it is now revealed to his holy prophets and apostles by the Spirit. Eph. 3:5. Christ also hath

once suffered for sins—being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit. 1 Pet. 3:18. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith to the Churches. Rev. 2:7. The Spirit and the Bride say, Come. Rev. 22:17.”

Such is the language of the Holy Scriptures concerning the Spirit. I have quoted only some of the most definite passages which may be justly regarded as being appropriate to the subject; many more might be added: indeed, no person will be fully aware of the frequency and precision with which the inspired writers speak of the Holy Spirit, unless he shall have made the attempt to bring together in one view all that is said concerning Him. But let us now see to what distinct conclusions respecting the CHARACTER of the Holy Spirit, we shall be led by this ample testimony.

1. The testimony of the Bible concerning the Spirit is sufficient to convince every candid mind that He possesses *real existence*. Real existence is opposed to imaginary being—ideal representation—the creations of fancy. That the Holy Spirit *is*, that he possesses the attribute of substantial, essential being—that in regard of existence he is what he is represented to be, must be understood and believed by every one who receives, as divinely true, the word of God: must be *felt* by every one who cordially believes divine testimony. Poets have described the Graces, the Virtues, the Arts and Sciences, have endowed them with the attributes of existence, and clothed them with the honors of divinity, and then have sung the praises of these fancied gods in elevated and rapturous verse; but the Holy Ghost *is*—His being as no poetic creation. Priests, themselves involved in heathenish darkness, and practising on the ignorant and superstitious credulity of the besotted multitude, have invented many gods—the names of dead men, or the ideas of unreal beings, good or evil; have enshrined their inventions with gold or silver, or wood, or stone, and have proclaimed these “which be no gods” as the objects of their worship to the deluded nations: but the Holy Ghost *is*, His existence is no invention of priestcraft. Philosophizing heretics of the primitive Church gave the name of existence and the characters of agency to properties and principles and secondary causes, real or imaginary, in the heavens or in the air; by their systems of philosophical Christianity, they not only degraded the morality and perverted the doctrine of Christianity—undeifying the Son, discarding the Spirit, and dethroning in effect the Eternal Father—but they offered to the faith of their disciples an unreal God, and fictitious principles and powers as Aeons in which they might hope for salvation: but the Holy Ghost *is*, and his existence lies at the

basis of our hope of eternal life. Who that has attentively read and considered our limited quotations from the Book of God, can entertain a doubt? It is true that the proposition—the Holy Ghost is, has real existence—is no where directly affirmed, nor is an argument proposed and urged, in order to prove the truth. But neither is the existence of God directly affirmed, nor is a formal method of proving his existence at all instituted in the Bible; many of those great truths of religion which are called fundamental are merely assumed, or implied, or referred to as indubitable truths. So in this case; all that is said respecting the Holy Ghost takes for granted, and necessarily implies real being. On what other principle can we attach any meaning to these declarations:—"The Spirit of God moved on the face of the waters.—The Spirit spake—the Spirit descended"? But I forbear; it may be thought that more than is necessary has been said respecting a self-evident truth; yet I fear that much of the unbelief and error that exist in the Church, and much of the declension of which we complain, may be partly owing to the defect of right perceptions and impressions of this truth. Let us believe and feel the power of the truth, *there is a Holy Ghost.*

2. The testimony of the Bible amply proves the *distinct personality* of the Holy Spirit. This means that he has distinct existence and attributes of being, *in himself*, in relation to all other beings. It does not mean, however, that he is distinct, divided, separate from God; for the word, person, or personality, is used in this case in a limited and restrained sense. Nothing is farther from our intention than to affirm that God the Father is one being, the Son another being, and the Spirit a third being. It is only meant—when we say that the Spirit is a distinct person, that he possesses proper personality—that he is in such a sense a person, that *he is*, perceives, determines, wills, acts—is addressed directly, and is spoken of—all with real propriety. It is not human, created personality that we ascribe to him; and we use such language not to explain the mode of his existence; but simply to affirm the truth that is revealed concerning his character, in opposition to those errors which either deny his existence, or degrade his nature. In this sense, then, it is affirmed that the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is a distinct person, having in himself existence and all the attributes of existence and action. *How* he thus exists cannot be told. But of this truth we have the full proof before us.

Thus, in these and similar places, the Spirit is represented by the personal words I, and He. "The Holy Ghost said, separate *me*

Saul and Barnabas."—"The Spirit of Truth *He* shall testify of me." Now the theory which is advanced in opposition to the personality of the Holy Ghost supposes that by the names Holy Spirit, Holy Ghost, Comforter, Spirit, Spirit of God, Spirit of Truth, we are to understand an attribute or an operation of God. But will any figure of speech justify the use of such language as this—an attribute or an operation of God said, "separate me Saul and Barnabas,"—or, "shall testify of me"? Will such exposition of the Scriptures render them "profitable for doctrine" to plain unlettered men? Truly if the Bible is to be interpreted in this manner, it must have been written for "the learned," and the Romanists do not greatly err when they take it away from the common people.

Personal properties are ascribed to the Holy Ghost. He possesses "mind," "wisdom," "will," "power," "holiness," "goodness," "truth." He performs personal acts. He "speaks," "works," "determines," "gives," "moves," "makes," "divides," "descends," "testifies"—all as having mind, will, power as his own. In a word, personal relations and affections are affirmed concerning this Great Agent in the salvation of men. He is "sent by the Father," "by the Son," "proceedeth from the Father," "is present," or "is taken away." He is "blasphemed," "grieved," "quenched," treated with "despite."

Men do not use such terms and phrases concerning the properties and operations of any created visible being, a fellow man for instance; they would then be deemed unintelligible and absurd; shall we yet suppose that prophets and apostles have thus spoken concerning the infinite attributes, or the glorious operations of the uncreated Supreme God? Do they sometimes speak plainly, yet most sublimely, of the perfections and dispensations of Jehovah, in creation and providence; and at other times, and especially with regard to redemption, involve their doctrine in obscure, distorted, unnatural figure—"strange speech that is hard to be understood"? I cannot so believe. But this imputation must be made against the writers of the Scriptures, and we must deny the plain declarations of the word of God; or we must admit fully, and, without wavering, believe the distinct personality of the Holy Ghost.

3. The testimony of the Bible fully establishes the doctrine that the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is verily God. That the Holy Spirit is God, has always been the belief of the Church of Christ since the days of the apostles; and this doctrine has been justly

accounted fundamental. If indeed we admit his real existence and distinct personality, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that we admit his supreme divinity. The belief that there is such a being, and that he is a creature, could find no support "in reason or in Scripture."—There is, however, direct evidence, that is worthy of the most minute and careful attention; a very brief view of this evidence must suffice in this place.

The Spirit is called by the name of God. In the Old Testament, the different words of the descriptive names, "the Spirit of the Lord God," or "the Spirit of God," are so placed as to warrant the inference that the name God, is applicable to the Spirit as well as to the Father. "The Holy Ghost spake by Esaias the prophet;" but the "Lord, (Jehovah) said to the prophet, Go and tell this people." Ananias had lied "unto the Holy Ghost," but it was "to God," that he had lied. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" but Isaiah, from whom the interrogation is quoted, asks, "Who hath directed the Spirit of the Lord?" And we may add the affirmation of the apostle Paul,—“Now the Lord is that Spirit.” 2 Cor. 8:17. This is direct evidence that the Spirit is God. When we read that he is the "Eternal Spirit," that we "cannot go from the Spirit," that "the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God," that "mighty signs and wonders" were wrought by the "Holy Ghost," that he is the "Holy Spirit," and the "good Spirit," and the "Spirit of grace," and the "Spirit of truth," we are distinctly informed that all the perfections of Jehovah dwell in him. And, further, when it is affirmed that he "made" a man, "garnished the heavens," "wrought signs and wonders," "moved the holy men of God to speak," "quickeneth" the souls of men, shall "quicken their dead bodies," and "raised up Christ from the dead;" we are sure that the peculiar works of God were performed by him. Finally, the union of the Holy Ghost with the Father and the Son in the baptismal commission, and in the apostolic benediction, affords full proof that he is verily of the one Godhead. We have, therefore, in the scriptural exhibition of the character of the "Comforter," full and convincing evidence that he is a real, distinct person in the one God.

II. Having ascertained the character of the Holy Spirit, we next examine the testimony of the Scripture respecting his OPERATIONS as the Comforter and Spirit of Truth. It is perfectly obvious that to the Spirit a peculiar divine office is ascribed in the economy of redemption, and that he has an agency of essential importance in executing the purposes of God which are embraced in this economy. What is this agency—how does he perform it—

what are its results? These are important inquiries, and "to the law and to the testimony," let us apply for the answer.

The passages already cited afford much information on this topic; but there are many others that relate to it still more directly, and exhibit in clearer light the doctrine of the Holy Spirit's influence. Some of these shall now be placed together, without intervening remarks, that they may act with collected light on the eyes of the understanding. "The Lord said, my Spirit shall not always strive with man. Gen. 6:3. Uphold me with thy free Spirit. Ps. 51:12. I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes. Ezek. 36:27. Except a man be born....of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. John 3:5. It is the Spirit that quickeneth. John 6:63. The Spirit of Truth.... dwelleth with you, and shall be in you. John 14:17. The Comforter shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you. John 14:26. He will reprove (convince) the world of sin, of righteousness....he will guide you into all truth. John 16:8, 13. The love of God is shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you. Rom. 5:5. As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God. The Spirit helpeth our infirmities....maketh intercession for the saints. Rom. 8:14, 16, 26, 27. Ye are sanctified....by the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6:11. And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Eph. 4:30. The fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth. Eph. 5:9. He saved us by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Tit. 3:5. God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth." 2 Thess. 2:13. Full and explicit is the doctrine of the Scriptures respecting the agency, as well as the character of the Holy Spirit. And a careful inspection of these and other passages of the same import, will shew that this agency is **DISTINCT, NECESSARY, GRACIOUS, SANCTIFYING, DIVINELY POWERFUL.**

1. To the Holy Spirit is assigned a *distinct agency* in the salvation of men. As certainly as the Scriptures teach the doctrine of the Trinity—that in the one God there are three persons—or, which is the same truth, that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God; so do they teach, also, that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit act distinctly with reference to the salvation of sinners. The Eternal Father is the great First Cause, as he, being rich in mercy, for his great love with which he loved

us, has sent his Son, and given his Spirit, that we may be saved. The Son, as appointed and sent, assumed the office of Mediator, and in this character was united to the human nature in the person of Jesus the Christ, and in this nature died for us, rose from the dead, is exalted to Heaven, and reigns to give repentance and forgiveness of sins. The Spirit is now given as the Comforter, the Advocate, the Sanctifier; that he may be the efficient cause of our salvation, and may, by his special and gracious work, bring us to God, and communicate the blessings of redemption. This is the obvious meaning of the passages which we have quoted, compared with those which speak of the Father and the Son, and contemplated in the entire light of God's dispensation of mercy, as it is revealed in his word. It is, indeed, admitted that much of the language of the Bible, on this as well as other subjects, is highly figurative, and is designedly accommodated to our capacities; yet this in no degree affects the doctrine that is taught: the truth thus communicated is to be received as indubitably true, and the facts thus asserted are to be recognized as unquestionable facts. It is the reception of scriptural doctrine, whether delivered in a literal or figurative manner, as a revelation of what is, and not merely as an exhibitory representation, that shall make our faith stand, not in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. When we read, therefore, that the Spirit is given according to the divine promises, that it is his office to "teach"—to "convince"—to "lead"—to "testify"—to "seal"—to "sanctify;" we are authorized to believe that to him is assigned a special and distinct agency in the great system of man's redemption.

2. The agency of the Holy Spirit is *necessary*. Every purpose of God is firm, all the revelation of his purposes which he has made to us is true, and the ends which he designs to accomplish by his plans, are both definite and certain. Concerning his purposes he has said, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure;" and with respect to the end which he has designed, "My word shall not return unto me void, it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Now, as in the natural world God has shewn his wisdom by the establishing of a certain connection between his purpose as it exists in his own mind, and the end which is proposed, through the agency of second causes; so, also, in the dispensation of grace, he has appointed means for the purpose of effecting the design of this dispensation. But as in the natural world he preserves his own influence and exerts his own power, whatever means may be used, whatever second causes may be employed, by controlling, and moving, and governing the whole course of nature; in the

plan of redemption, also, while suitable means are selected, and fit instruments are employed, he reveals himself as accomplishing this great work by a supreme divine agency. This we see clearly in the appointment of the Son to the office of the Mediator, as an essentially necessary part of his own plan. Without shedding of blood there is no remission, and other blood than that of his own Son avails not: less than a sacrifice of infinite value, is not sufficient to procure the forgiveness of sin. I do not affirm that it was antecedently impossible for God to devise any other plan: thus to decide were presumptuous; such knowledge is too wonderful for man, that is a worm of the dust. I only affirm that on the principles of justice and mercy revealed in the Bible, applied to the case of fallen man in his relations to Jehovah, the sacrifice made by the Son of God was necessary, that God might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth. And on the same principles I conclude that the agency of the Holy Spirit was necessary, in the view of God's infinite wisdom and goodness, in order to secure the final result of the mediation of Jesus Christ. So that as the mediatory office of the Son was, according to the revealed purposes of the Most High, a dictate of his perfect wisdom and goodness; so also is the agency of the Spirit equally the result of divine wisdom and goodness. Further, on the same principles we may safely determine that this part of the divine plan is necessary to the full exhibition of the glory of God, and the honor of the Saviour, and necessary to us as sinners who are called to be partakers of eternal life. Without this divine influence what sinner would repent and believe, that he might be saved; what believer, even, would persevere, and go forward, and reach the kingdom of heaven? There is important meaning, meaning which implies the indispensable necessity of the Spirit's work, in our Lord's declaration, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come." Nor is there less meaning in Paul's solemn admonition, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God." Oh, that men would but consider—that believers would but feel as they ought, their need of this divine agency!

3. The agency of the Holy Spirit is infinitely *gracious*. The Lord reveals it as his peculiar glory that he is a gracious God. And he has made the most glorious exhibitions of grace in the great scheme of redemption. Especially does grace shine in the gift of his own Son. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Jesus Christ, who came into the world to save sinners, is a gracious Saviour, and on this account, especially, that he saves his people from their sins. Par-

don of sin through his blood, peace with God, deliverance from death, the possession of eternal life—every blessing bestowed, is of grace. Nor is grace less manifest in the gift of the Spirit, the purpose for which he is given, or the manner in which he performs his office. He is called “the Spirit of grace,” “the good Spirit.” Two attributes of grace, as it is described in the Scriptures, are worthy of particular attention, in considering the gracious character of spiritual influence: first, freeness; secondly, sovereignty.

All the operations of God’s Spirit are perfectly free. Grace cannot be deserved; where grace is given, merit is left out of view, and the grace of God to sinners consists in bestowing favor on those who deserve his displeasure. In perfect consistency with this attribute of grace, the Spirit operates in the work of salvation. No man has any claim, on the ground of deserving, to the gift of the Spirit. As the sinner is simply guilty before God, so he is only sinful, unclean in the view of this blessed and glorious Agent in salvation. Neither his desires nor his efforts can entitle him to this infinitely precious blessing. Even a saint is a subject of spiritual influence on the ground of mere favor; his faith, his love, his holiness, is the fruit of the Spirit, and cannot be a reason, in regard of merit, for continuing this dwelling of the Comforter with him. And the sovereignty of grace is equally manifest; for it is entirely of his own good pleasure, according to the will of God that the Comforter comes, and is the Spirit of grace and of truth to us. “He divides to every man severally as he will.” He gives grace, and more grace, or he withdraws from men and leaves them to their own will without respect of persons. By sovereignty is not meant arbitrariness, or that there are not adequate reasons for every difference that is made among men; but only that these reasons are not revealed to us. This sovereignty is, indeed, the exercise of infinite wisdom and goodness, and it is to his glory that while he is infinitely good, and fulfils every promise of God, he works freely, and agreeably to the dictates of his own infinite wisdom and benevolence.

4. The agency of the Comforter is *sanctifying*. His nature is infinitely holy, and it is his purpose to produce holiness by his influence. To him, sin in every form, and in every degree, is perfectly hateful; and as Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and to take away sin by the offering of himself, the agency of the Spirit is designed to remove the sinfulness of our nature, and to make us holy. This view of his office is frequently and strongly expressed in various forms of speech; in the text now

before us, and in many others. In regard of his nature and of his office, he is "the Holy Spirit," and "the Spirit of holiness." Nothing unholy can be imputed to him; nothing that is evil can be affirmed of his operations, without the highest degree of impiety.

It is, however, the purpose for which the Spirit is given, and the effects of his operation, that require our particular attention. On this account his agency is affirmed to be *sanctifying*. The restoration of the image of God in the soul, which has been effaced by sin, is the peculiar object of his work. Indeed, the whole Mediatorial system is designed, and is framed with a view to this change of the sinful character of man, so that he may be recovered to holiness, and be reinstated in the favor of God. The ultimate end is the glory of the Godhead, the immediate end is the salvation of sinners, "through the sanctification of the Spirit, and the belief of the truth." With this view, the Father formed his plan of mercy, the Son made atonement for the sins of men, and offers intercession with his own precious blood in their behalf; and the Spirit, together with all his influences and the means which he employs, is freely and abundantly given. And He, "being come," performs his entire work in perfect harmony and co-operation with the Father and the Son, and according to the character and condition of the subjects of salvation. In the performance of this agency, having anointed the beloved Son of God in his official character, and borne testimony concerning him, by the will of the Father, in the signs and mighty wonders which were wrought, he gave, by his inspiration, the knowledge of all the truth to the disciples, enabled them to preach the gospel with powerful demonstration, and indited the living Oracles by which men may become wise unto salvation. For this purpose he accompanied the first preaching of the gospel with miraculous works, and with energy which opened the hearts of multitudes to attend to the things which were spoken by the Apostles; and of this gracious influence the three thousand converts made on the day of Pentecost were the first fruits, and many myriads in Judea and other parts of the world, both Jews and Gentiles, were the early harvest: they all were "called to be holy," being renewed in their minds, that they might be new creatures in Christ Jesus. And as "he abides with the church for ever," his operation is designed for the same purpose, and is followed by similar effects. Does he reprove, accuse, convict the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment; shew to the sinner his sin, his guilt, his just condemnation; portray to his mind the solemnities of the judgment to come, and the terrors of damnation; awaken within him the pangs of remorse, produce the sorrows of repentance, and excite him to call on God, and strive to enter in

at the strait gate; it is that the sinner may cease to sin, and become holy. Does he create within him a clean heart, and renew a right spirit within him, and lead him to the Saviour by faith in his blood, that he may be forgiven, and to the throne of grace, that he may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need; he inclines the heart to believe, and raises up within him sincere and strong desire to the God of all grace, and then brings down peace with God, and the comforts of pardon and hope from on high, that the sinner may be holy. Or does he enlighten or comfort, guide or strengthen, support or bless with joys divine the renewed man; all is designed to make him more holy. All his gracious work, as he dwells in the believer, leads him by his influence, makes intercession in him with groanings that cannot be uttered, pours out a spirit of grace and supplication upon him, bears witness with his spirit that he is a son of God, and so an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, and seals him unto the day of redemption; all his agency as he guides him into all the truth, and shews him the things of Jesus Christ, and richly endows him with every gift, and bestows on him every spiritual blessing, is certainly designed to make him more holy, and more devoted, faithful and active in the service of God; and is perfectly suited to sanctify him, in his proper measure, for his station on earth, and to sanctify him completely in the end, that he may dwell with God in heaven.

5. The agency of the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, is *divinely powerful*. Paul prays that believers may "abound in hope through the *power of the Holy Ghost*;" and asserts that "the Gentiles were made obedient in word and deed, through mighty signs and wonders, *by the power of the Spirit of God*." Speaking of the operation of God in quickening those who were dead in trespasses and sins, which is obviously the operation of God the Spirit, he teaches that this is "the exceeding greatness of his *power* to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his *mighty power*, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead." And a full and fair comparison of those passages of scripture which describe the operations of God on man as the subject of salvation, with those which exhibit the agency of the Spirit, will satisfy us that we do not mistake the meaning of the Apos le, when we suppose him to teach distinctly and designedly, as an important truth, that the Spirit operates with a Divine omnipotence. Besides, the terms which are used to express the effects of his influence, such as regeneration, renovation, new creation, quickening the dead, strongly favor the position which has been stated; we may therefore receive it as a correct description of the agency of the Spirit of God in the salvation of sinners.

Shall we then admit that the agency of the Spirit is physical, as it is termed, according to the objection of those who find difficulty in ascribing omnipotence to the Spirit in his official character? By no means; for it is impossible for us to understand the mode of his operation so as to define it, as it is in itself, in this manner, or in any other; and we should thus seem to ascribe the limitation of the creature to the uncreated and infinite God. And, moreover, if we conceive of the power by its effects, we cannot admit the language to be correct, for these are not physical changes which are accomplished by the blessed Comforter. Nor can we at all concede, on the other hand, that the Spirit operates in sanctification by a merely moral influence. It is true that means are used in producing and perfecting the great change in man from sin to holiness; means, in all their variety, and in the most full and suitable manner are appointed to us, and recognized by this holy agency in their proper character and efficacy; and it is true, also, that in one sense, and that too a very important sense, the whole change made in man is a moral change: but I affirm that all this gives us no ground on which we can determine the nature, or the mode of the agency of the Holy Spirit. Philosophy is utterly at fault, when she attempts to reason, by analogy from man to God.

But I willingly dismiss such speculations, and return to the plain doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, as I believe it to be, that the sanctifying Spirit exerts a holy, divine power in the work of salvation. And I resume the subject merely for the purpose of saying, that, in this view of the Spirit's operation, it is obvious to conclude, that his influence in accomplishing the work of grace is special and immediate; not that the use of appropriate means is at all excluded, or that the efficacy of truth as the means of sanctification is in any degree diminished by the special influence of the Spirit: and, further, his agency is always divinely effectual, and certainly produces every effect which it is intended to produce, yet in a way that is perfectly consistent with his own glorious nature and holy wise and benevolent purposes, and with the liberty and accountability of man. The renovation of the sinner is a work that is wrought, truly and effectually, not by created might nor by created power, but by the Spirit of God.

I close with remarking that the doctrine of the word of God concerning the character and agency of the Holy Spirit, distinctly teaches how the Christian shall persevere and grow in grace, and how the Church of the Lord shall be revived and increased, until it shall extend over the whole earth. We live under a dispensation of grace in which the Son of God is the Mediatorial

**Head, and the Spirit of God is the sanctifying Agent. As we believe in Jesus the Saviour for justification and the gift of eternal life; we must also receive the Holy Ghost, walk in the Spirit, and live by the Spirit, if we will perform the work assigned us, and be prepared to reside in the new Heavens wherein dwelleth righteousness. It is not sufficient to contemplate the doctrine of the Spirit's influence as a subject of intellectual perception, or to receive it with a speculative faith; we must so believe the truth concerning the blessed Comforter, that we shall ask this good gift of the Father, and live by his gracious power. Would the Christian but desire, and seek, and cherish the indwelling and operation of the Spirit of truth, and abide in his fellowship; how brightly would His light shine upon his heart and be reflected on all around! How much would he be able to do for God, for his Redeemer or his fellow men, while his own progress in his preparation to receive the prize, and wear the crown of victory would be rapidly accelerated! Were the Church, having received the whole truth of God in the love of it, and leaning with a strong faith on her Divine Redeemer, fully aware of the strength and blessing provided for her in the gift of the Holy Ghost, according to the Saviour's promise in its full import, how soon would she appear in the view of the whole world, "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners!" I am persuaded that one great reason, perhaps the chief reason of the infrequency, the rapid declension, and even corruption of revivals in the Churches, is to be sought in their disregard of divine influence. But a day will come in which the errors of the church shall be corrected, her pride humbled, and her faith in God by the Spirit strengthened; and then, in answer to united, believing prayer, the Spirit shall be poured out from on high, and by his mighty and gracious energy the world shall be converted to God.**

[It may not always be possible for writers to adapt their manuscript copy to the precise limits allotted for each number of this work. In instances where there may be space to spare, the editor will feel at liberty to occupy it with extracts from works of eminent writers, illustrative of the doctrine under discussion. The following, from Dr. Owen's work "On the Spirit," is selected as appropriate in the present number.]

#### THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT, AS A COMFORTER.

WHEN our Saviour left this world, he was very far from laying aside his care of his disciples. He has given us the highest assurance that he continues the same care, love, and grace towards us as when he laid down his life for us:—but as there was a double work yet to be performed in our behalf, one toward God, and the other in us, he has taken a twofold way of performing it. That toward God, he was to discharge himself, in his human nature, in Heaven; the other, of which believers are the immediate object, is committed to the Holy Spirit; and the peculiar name whereby he is distinguished in this work is, The PARACLETE, which we translate the COMFORTER. It was with respect to the sorrows of the disciples, that he was promised under this name; and his work is still to support, cherish, relieve, and comfort the church, in all trials and distresses; and herein he manifests,

1. His infinite condescension.—He is by nature over all, God blessed for ever. It is a condescension in the divine excellency to concern himself in any creature whatever. God humbleth himself to behold the things that are done in heaven; how much more in submitting to the discharge of the office of Comforter in the behalf of poor worms on earth!

2. His unspeakable love.—The apostle prays for the presence of the Spirit with the Corinthians, under the name of the "God of love and peace;"—and the communication of the whole love of God to us is committed to the Spirit; for "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;"—and hence the same apostle distinctly mentions the "love of the Spirit," joining it with all the effects of the mediation of Christ; "I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit." Rom. 15:30:—all that love which he exercises and communicates to you. It is of great use to us to consider, that there was infinite love in the susception of this office by the Spirit; and it is evident from the nature of the work itself; for the consolation of the afflicted is an immediate effect of love. There is not one drop of comfort or spiritual refreshment administered by the Holy Ghost, but what proceeds from his infinite love.

3. His almighty power.—The apostle proposes this for the support of weak believers:—"Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." That Holy Spirit who dwells in them, is greater and more powerful than Satan, who attempts their ruin. Who can declare the dejections, fears, and discouragements that believers are obnoxious to! nothing but Omnipotence itself is suited to obviate them. If we take a view of the condition of the Church in itself, and in the world, how weak is the faith of most believers! How great their fears! How many their discouragements! How many are the temptations, calamities, and persecutions with which they are exercised! It is evident then how necessary it was that their consolation should be entrusted with him who possesses infinite power.