

CHAPTER III

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WITH RESPECT UNTO THE HEAD OF THE NEW CREATION—THE HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST

The especial works of the Holy Spirit in the new creation—His work on the human nature of Christ—How this work could be, considering the union of the human nature unto and in the person of the Son of God—Assumption of the human nature into union, the only act of the person of the Son towards it—Personal union the only necessary consequent of this assumption—All other actings of the person of the Son in and on the human nature voluntary—The Holy Spirit the immediate efficient cause of all divine operations—He is the Spirit of the Son or of the Father—How all the works of the Trinity are undivided—The body of Christ formed in the womb by the Holy Ghost, but of the substance of the blessed Virgin; why this was necessary—Christ not hence the Son of the Holy Ghost according to the human nature—Difference between the assumption of the human nature by the Son and the creation of it by the Holy Ghost—The conception of Christ, how ascribed to the Holy Ghost, and how to the blessed Virgin—Reasons of the espousal of the blessed Virgin to Joseph before the conception of Christ—The actual purity and holiness of the soul and body of Christ from his miraculous conception.

THE dispensation and work of the Holy Ghost in this new creation respect, first, The *Head of the church*, the Lord Jesus Christ, in his human nature, as it was to be, and was, united unto the person of the Son of God. Secondly, It concerns the members of that *mystical body* in all that belongs unto them as such. And under these two heads we shall consider them.

First, therefore, we are to inquire what are the operations of the Holy Ghost in reference unto Jesus Christ, the *Head of the church*. And these were of two sorts:—I. Such as whereof the *person of Christ* in his human nature was the immediate object. II. Such as he performs towards *others* on his behalf; that is, with direct respect unto his person and office.

I. But yet, before we enter upon the first sort of his works which we shall begin withal, an objection of seeming weight and difficulty must be removed out of our way; which I shall the rather do because our answer unto it will make the whole matter treated of the more plain and familiar unto us. It may, therefore, be, and it is objected, “That whereas the human nature of Christ is assigned as the immediate object of these operations of the Holy Ghost, and that nature was immediately, inseparably, and undividedly united unto the person of the Son of God, there doth not seem to be any need, nor indeed room, for any such operations of the Spirit; for could not the Son of God himself, in his own person, perform all things requisite both for the forming, supporting, sanctifying, and preserving of his own nature, without the especial assistance of the Holy Ghost? nor is it easy to be understood how an *immediate work* of the Holy Ghost should be interposed, in the same person, between the one nature and the other.” And this seeming difficulty is vehemently pressed by the Socinians, who think to entangle our whole doctrine of the blessed Trinity and incarnation of the Son of God thereby. But express testimonies of Scripture, with the clear and evident analogy of faith, will carry us easily and safely through this seeming difficulty. To which end we may observe, that,—

1. The only singular immediate *act* of the person of the Son on the human nature was the *assumption* of it into subsistence with himself. Herein the Father and the Spirit had no interest nor

concurrence, εἰ μὴ κατ' εὐδοκίαν καὶ βούλησιν, "but by approbation and consent," as Damascen speaks: for the Father did not assume the human nature, he was not incarnate; neither did the Holy Spirit do so; but this was the peculiar act and work of the Son. See [John. 1:14](#); [Rom. 1:3](#); [Gal. 4:4](#); [Phil. 2:6, 7](#); [Heb. 2:14, 16](#); which places, with many others to the same purpose, I have elsewhere expounded, and vindicated from the exceptions of the Socinians.

2. That the only *necessary consequent* of this assumption of the human nature, or the incarnation of the Son of God, is the *personal union of Christ*, or the inseparable subsistence of the *assumed nature* in the person of the Son. This was necessary and indissoluble, so that it was not impeached nor shaken in the least by the temporary dissolution of that nature by the separation of the soul and body: for the union of the soul and body in Christ did not constitute him a person, that the dissolution of them should destroy his personality; but he was a person by the uniting of both unto the Son of God.

3. That all other actings of God in the *person of the Son* towards the human nature were *voluntary*, and did not necessarily ensue on the union mentioned; for there was no transfusion of the properties of one nature into the other, nor real physical communication of divine essential excellencies unto the humanity. Those who seem to contend for any such thing resolve all at last into a true assignation by way of predication, as necessary on the union mentioned, but contend not for a real transfusion of the properties of one nature into the other. But these communications were voluntary. Hence were those temporary dispensations, when, under his great trial, the human nature complained of its desertion and dereliction by the divine, [Matt. 27:46](#); for this forsaking was not as to personal union, or necessary subsistence and supportment, but as to voluntary communications of light and consolation. Hence himself declares that the human nature was not the residential subject of omniscency; for so he speaks, [Mark 13:32](#), "But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father." For the exposition given by some of the ancients, that the Lord Christ speaks not this absolutely, but only "that he knew it not to declare it unto them," is unworthy of him; for no more did the Father so know it, seeing he hath not declared it. But this was the opinion only of some of them; the more advised were otherwise minded. He speaks of himself with respect unto his human nature only, and thereunto all communications were voluntary. So after his ascension, God gave him that revelation that he made to the apostle, [Rev. 1:1](#). The human nature, therefore, however inconceivably advanced, is not the subject of infinite, essentially divine properties; and the actings of the Son of God towards it, consequential unto its assumption, and that indissoluble subsistence in its union which ensued thereon, are voluntary.

4. The Holy Ghost, as we have proved before, is the *immediate, peculiar, efficient cause* of all external divine operations: for God worketh by his Spirit, or in him immediately applies the power and efficacy of the divine excellencies unto their operation; whence the same work is equally the work of each person.

5. The Holy Spirit is the *Spirit of the Son*, no less than the Spirit of the Father. He proceedeth from the Son, as from the Father. He is the "Spirit of the Son," [Gal. 4:6](#). And hence is he the immediate operator of all divine acts of the Son himself, even on his own human nature. Whatever the Son of God wrought in, by, or upon the human nature, he did it by the Holy Ghost, who is his Spirit, as he is the Spirit of the Father.

6. To clear the whole matter, it must be yet farther observed that the *immediate actings* of the Holy Ghost are not spoken of him *absolutely*, nor ascribed unto him *exclusively*, as unto the other persons John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

and their concurrence in them. It is a saying generally admitted, that *Opera Trinitatis ad extra sunt indivisa*. There is no such division in the external operations of God that any one of them should be the act of one person, without the concurrence of the others; and the reason of it is, because the nature of God, which is the principle of all divine operations, is one and the same, undivided in them all. Whereas, therefore, they are the effects of divine power, and that power is essentially the same in each person, the works themselves belong equally unto them: as, if it were possible that three men might see by the same eye, the act of seeing would be but one, and it would be equally the act of all three. But the things we insist on are ascribed eminently unto the Holy Ghost, on the account of the order of his subsistence in the holy Trinity, as he is the Spirit of the Father and the Son; whence, in every divine act, the authority of the Father, the love and wisdom of the Son, with the immediate efficacy and power of the Holy Ghost, are to be considered. Yea, and there is such a distinction in their operations, that one divine act may produce a peculiar respect and relation unto one person, and not unto another; as the assumption of the human nature did to the Son, for he only was incarnate.

And such are the especial actings of the Holy Ghost towards the head of the church, our Lord Jesus Christ, in this work of the new creation, as we shall demonstrate in sundry instances:—

First, The *framing, forming, and miraculous conception of the body of Christ in the womb of the blessed Virgin* was the peculiar and especial work of the Holy Ghost. This work, I acknowledge, in respect of *designation*, and the authoritative disposal of things, is ascribed unto the Father; for so the Lord Christ speaketh unto him: “A body hast thou prepared me,” [Heb. 10:5](#). But this preparation does not signify the actual forming and making ready of that body, but the eternal designation of it: it was prepared in the counsel and love of the Father. As to *voluntary assumption*, it is ascribed to the Son himself: chap. [2:14](#), “Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same;” he took upon him a body and soul, entire human nature, as the children, or all believers, have the same, synecdochically expressed by “flesh and blood.” Verse [16](#), “He took on him the seed of Abraham.” But the immediate divine *efficiency* in this matter was the peculiar work of the Holy Ghost: [Matt. 1:18](#), “When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.” Verse [20](#), “That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.” [Luke 1:35](#), “The angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.” 1. The person working is the Holy Ghost. He is the wonderful *operator* in this glorious work. And therein the power of the Most High was exerted; for “The power of the Highest” is neither explicatory of the former expression, “The Holy Ghost,” as though he were only the power of the Most High, nor is it the adjoining of a distinct agent or cause unto him, as though the Holy Ghost and the power of the Most High were different agents in this matter. Only the manner of his effecting this wonderful matter, concerning which the blessed Virgin had made that inquiry, verse [34](#), “How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?” is expressed. “The Holy Ghost,” saith the angel, “acting the power of the Most High,” or in the infinite power of God, “shall accomplish it”. 2. For his *access* unto his work, it is expressed by his “coming upon her.” The importance of this expression, and what is signified thereby, hath been declared before. And it is often used to declare his actings with reference unto the production of miraculous works: [Acts 1:8](#), “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you;”—“He will so come upon you as to put forth the power of the Most High in you and by you, in gifts and operations miraculous;” for he is said to come, with respect unto his beginning of any marvellous operation, where before he did not work to the like purpose. 3. The act of the Holy Ghost in

this matter was a *creating act*; not, indeed, like the first creating act, which produced the matter and substance of all things out of nothing, causing that to be which was not before, neither in matter, nor form, nor passive disposition; but like those subsequent acts of creation, whereby, out of matter before made and prepared, things were made that which before they were not, and which of themselves they had no active disposition unto nor concurrence in. So man was created or formed of the dust of the earth, and woman of a rib taken from man. There was a previous matter unto their creation, but such as gave no assistance nor had any active disposition to the production of that particular kind of creature whereinto they were formed by the creating power of God. Such was this act of the Holy Ghost in forming the body of our Lord Jesus Christ; for although it was effected by an act of infinite creating power, yet it was formed or made of the substance of the blessed Virgin. That it should be so was absolutely necessary,—(1.) For the accomplishment of the promises made unto Abraham and David, that the Messiah should be of their seed, and proceed from their loins. (2.) So was it also on the account of the first original promise, that the “seed of the woman should bruise the serpent’s head:” for the Word was to be “made flesh,” [John 1:14](#); to be “made of a woman,” [Gal. 4:4](#); or “made of the seed of David according to the flesh,” [Rom. 1:3](#); and to take upon him “the seed of Abraham,” [Heb. 2:16](#). (3.) To confirm the truth hereof is his genealogy according to the flesh given us by two of the evangelists; which were neither to the purpose nor true if he were not made of the substance or flesh of the blessed Virgin. (4.) Besides, all our cognation and alliance unto him, whence he was meet to be our Saviour, suffering in the same nature wherein we have sinned, do depend hereon, [Heb. 2:14](#); for if he had not been made like us in all things, sin only excepted, if he had not been partaker of our nature, there had been no foundation for the imputing that unto us which he did, suffered, and wrought, [Rom. 8:3, 4](#). And hence these things are accounted unto us, and cannot be so unto angels, whose nature he did not take upon him, [Heb. 2:16](#). This, therefore, was the work of the Holy Ghost in reference unto the human nature of Christ in the womb of his mother: By his omnipotent power he formed it of the substance of the body of the holy Virgin,—that is, as unto his body. And hence sundry things do ensue:—

1. That the Lord Christ could not on this account, no, not with respect unto his human nature only, be said to be the *Son of the Holy Ghost*, although he supplied the place and virtue of a *natural father* in generation; for the relation of filiation dependeth only on and ariseth from a perfect generation, and not on every effect of an efficient cause. When one fire is kindled by another, we do not say that it is the son of that other, unless it be very improperly; much less when a man builds a house do we say that it is his son. There was, therefore, no other relation between the person of the Holy Ghost and the human nature of Christ but that of a creator and a creature. And the Lord Christ is, and is called, “The Son of God” with respect only unto the Father and his eternal, ineffable generation, communicating being and subsistence unto him, as the fountain and original of the Trinity. Filiation, therefore, is a personal adjunct, and belongs unto Christ as he was a divine person, and not with respect unto his human nature. But that nature being assumed, *whole Christ* was the Son of God.

2. That this act of the Holy Ghost, in *forming of the body of Christ*, differs from the act of the Son in *assuming* the human nature into personal union with himself: for this act of the Son was not a creating act, producing a being out of nothing, or making any thing by the same power to be what in its own nature it was not; but it was an ineffable act of love and wisdom, taking the nature so formed by the Holy Ghost, so prepared for him, to be his own in the instant of its formation, and thereby preventing the singular and individual subsistence of that nature in and by itself. So, then, as the creating act of the Holy Ghost, in forming the body of our Lord Jesus Christ in the womb, doth not denominate him to be

his father, no, not according to the human nature, but he is the Son of God upon the account of his eternal generation only; so it doth not denote an assumption of that nature into union with himself, nor was he incarnate. He made the human nature of Christ, body and soul, with, in, and unto a subsistence in the second person of the Trinity, not [in] his own.

3. It hence also follows that the conception of Christ in the *womb*, being the effect of a *creating act*, was not accomplished *successively* and in process of time, but was perfected in an *instant*; for although the creating acts of infinite power, where the works effected have distinct parts, may have a process or duration of time allotted unto them, as the world was created in six days, yet every part of it that was the object of an especial creating act was instantaneously produced. So was the forming of the body of Christ, with the infusion of a rational soul to quicken it, though it increased afterwards in the womb unto the birth. And as it is probable that this conception was immediate upon the angelical salutation, so it was necessary that nothing of the human nature of Christ should exist of itself antecedently unto its union with the Son of God: for in the very instant of its formation, and therein, was the “Word made flesh,” John 1:14; and the Son of God was “made of a woman,” Gal. 4:4; so that the whole essence of his nature was created in the same instant. Thus far the Scriptures go before, and herein it is necessary to assert the forming of the body and soul of Christ by the Holy Spirit. The curious inquiries of some of the schoolmen and others are to be left unto themselves, or rather, to be condemned in them; for what was farther in this miraculous operation of the Holy Ghost, it seems purposely to be hid from us in that expression, Δύναμις Ὑψίστου ἐπισκιάσει σοι,—“The power of the Most High shall overshadow thee.” Under the secret, glorious covert hereof we may learn to adore that holy work here, which we hope to rejoice in and bless God for unto eternity. And I suppose, also, that there is in the word an allusion unto the expression of the original acting of the Holy Spirit towards the newly-produced mass of the old creation, whereof we spoke before. Then it is said of him that he was תָּרַחֵץ, as it were “hovering” and “moving” over it for the formation and production of all things living; for both the words include in them an allusion unto a covering like that of a fowl over its eggs, communicating, by its cognate warmth and heat, a principle of life unto their seminal virtue.

It remaineth only that we consider how the same work of the *conception* of Christ is assigned unto the Holy Ghost and to the blessed Virgin; for of her it is said expressly in prophecy, הָעֵלְמָה תְּהָרָה, Isa. 7:14, “A virgin shall conceive,”—the same word that is used to express the conception of any other woman, Gen. 4:1. Hence she is termed by the ancients Θεοτόκος and *Dei genetrix*; which last, at least, I wish had been forborne. Compare it with the Scripture, and there will appear an unwarrantable καινοφωνία in it. So Luke 1:31. The words of the angel to her are, Συλλήψη ἐν γαστρὶ, καὶ τέξῃ υἱόν,—“Thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son;” where her conception of him is distinguished from her bringing of him forth. And yet in the ancient creed commonly called the Apostles’, and generally received by all Christians as a summary of religion, it is said he was “conceived by the Holy Ghost,” and only “born of the Virgin Mary.” *Ans.* The same work is assigned to both as causes of a different kind,—unto the Holy Spirit as the active, efficient cause, who by his almighty power produced the effect. And the disputes managed by some of the ancients about “*de Spiritu Sancto*” and “*ex Spiritu Sancto*” were altogether needless; for it is his creating efficiency that is intended. And his conceiving is ascribed unto the holy Virgin as the passive, material cause; for his body was formed of her substance, as was before declared. And this conception of Christ was after her solemn espousals unto Joseph, and that for sundry reasons; for,—1. Under the covering of her marriage to him she was to receive a

protection of her spotless innocence. And besides, 2. God provided one that should take care of her and her child in his infancy. And, 3. Hereby, also, was our blessed Saviour freed from the imputation of an illegitimate birth, until by his own miraculous operations he should give testimony unto his miraculous conception; concerning which before his mother could not have been believed. 4. That he might have one on whose account his genealogy might be recorded, to manifest the accomplishment of the promise unto Abraham and David; for the line of a genealogy was not legally continued by the mother only. Hence Matthew gives us his genealogy by Joseph, to whom his mother was legally espoused. And although Luke gives us the true, natural line of his descent, by the progenitors of the blessed Virgin, yet he nameth her not; only mentioning her espousals, he begins with Heli, who was her father, chap. 3:23. And this is *the first thing* ascribed peculiarly to the Holy Spirit with respect unto the head of the church, Christ Jesus.

From this miraculous creation of the *body of Christ*, by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost, did it become a *meet habitation* for his holy soul, every way ready and complying with all actings of grace and virtue. We have not only the depravation of our natures in general, but the obliquity of our particular constitutions, to conflict withal. Hence it is that one is disposed to passion, wrath, and anger; another, to vanity and lightness; a third, to sensuality and fleshly pleasures; and so others to sloth and idleness. And although this disposition, so far as it is the result of our especial constitutions and complexion, is not sin in itself, yet it dwells at the next door unto it, and, as it is excited by the moral pravity of our natures, a continual occasion of it. But the body of Christ being formed pure and exact by the Holy Ghost, there was no disposition or tendency in his constitution to the least deviation from perfect holiness in any kind. The exquisite harmony of his natural temperature made love, meekness, gentleness, patience, benignity, and goodness, natural and cognate unto him, as having an incapacity of such motions as should be subservient unto or compliant with any thing different from them. Hence, secondly, also, although he took on him those infirmities which belong unto our human nature as such, and are inseparable from it until it be glorified, yet he took none of our particular infirmities which cleave unto our persons, occasioned either by the *vice* of our constitutions or irregularity in the use of our bodies. Those natural passions of our minds which are capable of being the means of affliction and trouble, as grief, sorrow, and the like, he took upon him; as also those infirmities of nature which are troublesome to the body, as hunger, thirst, weariness, and pain,—yea, the purity of his holy constitution made him more highly sensible of these things than any of the children of men;—but as to our bodily diseases and distempers, which personally adhere unto us, upon the disorder and vice of our constitutions, he was absolutely free from [them].



CHAPTER IV

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN AND ON THE HUMAN NATURE OF CHRIST

The actual sanctification of the human nature of Christ by the Holy Ghost—On what ground spotless and free from sin—Positively endowed with all grace—Original holiness and sanctification in Christ, how carried on by the Spirit—Exercise of grace in Christ by the rational faculties of his soul—Their improvement—Wisdom and knowledge, how increased objectively in the human nature of Christ—The anointing of Christ by the Holy Spirit with power and gifts—Collated eminently on him at his

baptism—[John 3:34](#) explained and vindicated—Miraculous works wrought in Christ by the Holy Ghost—Christ guided, conducted, and supported by the Spirit in his whole work—[Mark 1:12](#) opened—How the Lord Christ offered himself unto God through the eternal Spirit—His sanctification thereunto—Graces acting eminently therein—Love, zeal, submission, faith, and truth, all exercised therein—The work of the Spirit of God towards Christ whilst he was in the state of the dead; in his resurrection and glorification—The office of the Spirit to bear witness unto Christ, and its discharge—The true way and means of coming unto the knowledge of Christ, with the necessity thereof—Danger of mistakes herein—What it is to love Christ as we ought.

Secondly, THE human nature of Christ being thus formed in the womb by a *creating act* of the Holy Spirit, was in the instant of its conception *sanctified*, and filled with grace according to the measure of its receptivity. Being not begotten by natural generation, it derived no taint of original sin or corruption from Adam, that being the only way and means of its propagation; and being not in the loins of Adam morally before the fall, the promise of his incarnation being not given until afterward, the sin of Adam could on no account be imputed unto him. All sin was charged on him as our mediator and surety of the covenant; but on his own account he was obnoxious to no charge of sin, original or actual. His nature, therefore, as miraculously created in the manner described, was absolutely innocent, spotless, and free from sin, as was Adam in the day wherein he was created. But this was not all; it was by the Holy Spirit positively endowed with all grace. And hereof it was afterward only capable of farther degrees as to actual exercise, but not of any new kind of grace. And this work of sanctification, or the original infusion of all grace into the human nature of Christ, was the immediate work of the Holy Spirit; which was necessary unto him: for let the natural faculties of the soul, the mind, will, and affections, be created pure, innocent, undefiled,—as they cannot be otherwise immediately created of God,—yet there is not enough to enable any rational creature to live to God; much less was it all that was in Jesus Christ. There is, moreover, required hereunto supernatural endowments of grace, superadded unto the natural faculties of our souls. If we live unto God, there must be a principle of spiritual life in us, as well [as] of life natural. This was the image of God in Adam, and was wrought in Christ by the Holy Spirit: [Isa. 11:1–3](#), “There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and might, the Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD; and shall make him of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD.” It is granted that the following work of the Spirit in and upon the Lord Christ, in the execution of his office as the king and head of the church, is included in these words; but his first sanctifying work in the womb is principally intended: for these expressions, “A rod out of the stem of Jesse,” and “A Branch out of his roots,” with respect whereunto the Spirit is said to be communicated unto him, do plainly regard his incarnation; and the soul of Christ, from the first moment of its infusion, was a subject capable of a fulness of grace, as unto its habitual residence and in-being, though the actual exercise of it was suspended for a while, until the organs of the body were fitted for it. This, therefore, it received by this first unction of the Spirit. Hence, from his conception, he was “holy,” as well as “harmless” and “undefiled,” [Heb. 7:26](#); a “holy thing,” [Luke 1:35](#); radically filled with a perfection of grace and wisdom, inasmuch as the Father “gave him not the Spirit by measure,” [John 3:34](#). See to this purpose our commentary on [Heb. 1:1](#); see also [John 1:14–17](#).

Thirdly, The Spirit *carried on that work* whose foundation he had thus laid. And two things are to be here diligently observed:—

1. That the Lord Christ, as man, did and was to exercise all grace by the rational faculties and powers of his soul, his understanding, will, and affections; for he acted grace as a man, “made of a woman, made under the law.” His divine nature was not unto him in the place of a soul, nor did immediately operate the things which he performed, as some of old vainly imagined; but being a perfect man, his rational soul was in him the immediate principle of all his moral operations, even as ours are in us. Now, in the improvement and exercise of these faculties and powers of his soul, he had and made a progress after the manner of other men; for he was made like unto us “in all things,” yet without sin. In their increase, enlargement, and exercise, there was required a progression in grace also; and this he had continually by the Holy Ghost: Luke 2:40, “The child grew, and waxed strong in spirit.” The first clause refers to his body, which grew and increased after the manner of other men; as verse 52, he “increased in stature” The other respects the confirmation of the faculties of his mind,—he “waxed strong in spirit,” So, verse 52, he is said to “increase in wisdom and stature.” He was πληρούμενος σοφίας, continually “filling and filled” with new degrees “of wisdom,” as to its exercise, according as the rational faculties of his mind were capable thereof; an increase in these things accompanied his years, verse 52. And what is here recorded by the evangelist contains a description of the accomplishment of the prophecy before mentioned, Isa. 11:1–3. And this growth in grace and wisdom was the peculiar work of the Holy Spirit; for as the faculties of his mind were enlarged by degrees and strengthened, so the Holy Spirit filled them up with grace for actual obedience.

2. The human nature of Christ was capable of having *new objects* proposed to its mind and understanding, whereof before it had a *simple nescience*. And this is an inseparable adjunct of human nature as such, as it is to be weary or hungry, and no vice or blamable defect. Some have made a great outcry about the ascribing of ignorance by some protestant divines unto the human soul of Christ: Bellarm. de Anim. Christi. Take “ignorance” for that which is a *moral defect* in any kind, or an unacquaintedness with that which any one *ought to know*, or is necessary unto him as to the perfection of his condition or his duty, and it is false that ever any of them ascribed it unto him. Take it merely for a nescience of some things, and there is no more in it but a denial of infinite omniscience,—nothing inconsistent with the highest holiness and purity of human nature. So the Lord Christ says of himself that he knew not the day and hour of the end of all things, [Mark 13:32]; and our apostle of him, that he “learned obedience by the things that he suffered,” Heb. 5:8. In the representation, then, of things anew to the human nature of Christ, the wisdom and knowledge of it was *objectively* increased, and in new trials and temptations he *experimentally* learned the new exercise of grace. And this was the constant work of the Holy Spirit in the human nature of Christ. He dwelt in him in fulness; for he received him not by measure. And continually, upon all occasions, he gave out of his unsearchable treasures grace for exercise in all duties and instances of it. From hence was he habitually holy, and from hence did he exercise holiness entirely and universally in all things.

Fourthly, The Holy Spirit, in a peculiar manner, anointed him with all those *extraordinary powers and gifts* which were necessary for the exercise and discharging of his office on the earth: Isa. 61:1, “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.” It is the prophetic office of Christ, and his discharge thereof in his ministry on the earth, which is intended. And he applies these words unto himself with respect unto his preaching of the gospel, Luke 4:18, 19; for this was that office which he principally attended unto here in the world, as that whereby he instructed men in the nature and use of his other

offices. For his *kingly power*, in his human nature on the earth, he exercised it but sparingly. Thereunto, indeed, belonged his sending forth of apostles and evangelists to preach with authority. And towards the end of his ministry he instituted ordinances of gospel-worship, and appointed the order of his church in the foundation and building of it up; which were acts of kingly power. Nor did he perform any act of his *sacerdotal office* but only at his death, when he “gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour,” Eph. 5:2; wherein God “smelled a savour of rest,” and was appeased towards us. But the whole course of his life and ministry was the discharge of his *prophetical office* unto the Jews, Rom. 15:8; which he was to do according to the great promise, Deut. 18:18, 19: and on the acceptance or refusal of him herein depended the life and death of the church of Israel, verse 19; Acts 3:23; Heb. 2:3; John 8:24. Hereunto was he fitted by this unction of the Spirit. And here, also, is a distinction between the “Spirit that was upon him,” and his being “anointed to preach,” which contains the communication of the gifts of that Spirit unto him; as it is said, Isa. 11:2, 3, “The Spirit rested upon him as a Spirit of wisdom,” to make him “of quick understanding in the fear of the LORD.” Now, this was in a singular manner and in a measure inexpressible, whence he is said to be “anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows,” or those who were partakers of the same Spirit with him, Ps. 45:7; Heb. 1:8, 9; although I acknowledge that there was in that expression a peculiar respect unto his glorious exaltation, which afterward ensued, as hath been declared on that place. And this collation of extraordinary gifts for the discharge of his prophetical office was at his baptism, Matt. 3:17. They were not bestowed on the Head of the church, nor are any gifts of the same nature in general bestowed on any of his members, but for use, exercise, and improvement. And that they were then collated appears; for,—

1. Then did he receive the *visible pledge* which confirmed him in, and testified unto others his calling of God to, the exercise of his *office*; for then “the Spirit of God descended like a dove, and lighted upon him: and lo a voice came from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased,” Matt. 3:16, 17. Hereby was he “sealed of God the Father,” John 6:27, in that visible pledge of his vocation, setting the great seal of heaven to his commission. And this also was to be a testimony unto others, that they might own him in his office, now he had undertaken to discharge it, chap. 1:33.

2. He now entered on his public ministry, and wholly *gave himself up* unto his work; for before, he did only occasionally manifest the presence of God with him, somewhat to prepare the minds of men to attend unto his ministry, as when he filled them with astonishment at his discourses with the doctors in the temple, Luke 2:46, 47. And although it is probable that he might be acted by the Spirit in and unto many such extraordinary actions during his course of a private life, yet the fulness of gifts for his work he received not until the time of his baptism, and, therefore, before that he gave not himself up wholly unto his public ministry.

3. Immediately hereon it is said that *he was “full of the Holy Ghost,”* Luke 4:1. Before, he was said to “wax strong in spirit,” πληρούμενος σοφίας, chap. 2:40, “continually filling;” but now he is πλήρης Πνεύματος Ἁγίου, “full of the Holy Ghost.” He was actually possessed of and furnished with all that fulness of spiritual gifts which were any way needful for him or useful unto him, or which human nature is capable of receiving. With respect hereunto doth the evangelist [baptist?] use that expression, Οὐ γὰρ ἐκ μέτρου δίδωσιν ὁ Θεὸς τὸ Πνεῦμα, John 3:34,—“For God giveth not the Spirit by measure.” That it is the Lord Jesus Christ who is here intended, unto whom the Spirit is thus given, is evident from the context, although it be not express[ed] in the text. He is spoken of, and is the subject of the whole discourse: Verse 31, “He that cometh from above is above all: he that cometh from heaven is above all.” John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

None doubts but that this is a description of the person of Christ. And in the beginning of this verse, “He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God;” which is the usual periphrasis of the Lord Christ, used at least twenty times in this Gospel. Of him this account is given, that he “testifieth what he hath seen and heard,” verse 32; and that he “speaketh the words of God,” verse 34. Different events are also marked upon his testimony, for many refused it, verse 32, but some received it, who therein “set to their seal that God is true,” verse 33; for he that “believeth not the record that he gave of his Son hath made him a liar,” 1 John 5:10. As a reason of all this, it is added that “God gave not the Spirit by measure unto him;” so that he was fully enabled to “speak the words of God,” and those by whom his testimony was rejected were justly liable to “wrath,” verse 36. Vain, therefore, is the attempt of Crellius, de Spir. Sanc., followed by Schlichtingius in his comment on this place, who would exclude the Lord Christ from being intended in these words; for they would have them signify no more but only in general that God is not bound up to measures in the dispensation of the Spirit, but gives to one according unto one measure, and to another according to another. But as this gloss overthrows the coherence of the words, disturbing the context, so it contradicts the text itself: for God’s not giving the Spirit ἐκ μέτρου, “by measure,” is his giving of him ἀμέτρως, “immeasurably,” without known bounds or limits, and so the Spirit was given unto the Lord Christ only; for “unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ,” Eph. 4:7,—that is, in what measure he pleaseth to communicate and distribute it. But the effects of this giving of the Spirit unto the Lord Christ not by measure belonged unto that fulness from whence we “receive grace for grace,” John 1:16; for hereby the Father accomplished his will, when “it pleased him that in him should all fulness dwell,” that “in all things he might have the pre-eminence,” Col. 1:18, 19. Nor can any difficulty of weight be cast on this interpretation from the use of the word in the present tense, which is by Crellius insisted on,—δίδωσι, “he giveth:” “For Christ,” they say, “had before received the Spirit, for this is spoken of him after his baptism. If, therefore, he had been intended, it should rather have been, ‘he hath given,’ or ‘he hath not given unto him by measure.’” But,—(1.) This was *immediately on his baptism*, and therefore the collation of the fulness of the Spirit might be spoken of as a thing present, being but newly past; which is an ordinary kind of speech on all occasions. Besides, (2.) The collation of the Spirit is a *continued act*, in that he was given him to abide with him, to rest upon him, wherein there was a continuance of the love of God towards and his care over him in his work. Hence the Lord Christ saith of himself, or the prophet in his person, that the Spirit sent him: “Now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me,” Isa. 48:16. The same work in sending of Christ is ascribed unto the “Lord GOD,” that is, the Father, and to the “Spirit,” but in a different manner. He was sent by the Father *authoritatively*; and the furniture he received by the Spirit, of gifts for his work and office, is called *his sending* of him; as the same work is assigned unto different persons in the Trinity on different accounts.

Fifthly, It was in an especial manner by the power of the Holy Spirit he wrought those great and *miraculous works* whereby his ministry was attested unto and confirmed. Hence it is said that God wrought miracles by him: Acts 2:22, “Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him;” for they are all immediate effects of divine power. So when he cast out devils with a word of command, he affirms that he did it by the “finger of God,” Luke 11:20,—that is, by the infinite divine power of God. But the power of God acted in an especial manner by the Holy Spirit, as is expressly declared in the other evangelist, Matt. 12:28; and, therefore, on the ascription of his mighty works unto Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he lets the Jews know that therein they blasphemed the Holy Spirit, whose works indeed they were, verses 31, 32. Hence these mighty works are called δυνάμεις, “powers,” because of the power of the Spirit of God put forth for their

John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).
Page 10. Exported from [Logos Bible Software](#), 9:05 PM June 4, 2020.

working and effecting: see [Mark 6:5](#), [9:39](#); [Luke 4:36](#), [5:17](#), [6:19](#), [8:46](#), [9:1](#). And in the exercise of this power consisted the testimony given unto him by the Spirit that he was the Son of God; for this was necessary unto the conviction of the Jews, to whom he was sent, [John 10:37](#), [38](#).

Sixthly, By him was he *guided, directed, comforted, supported*, in the whole course of his ministry, temptations, obedience, and sufferings. Some few instances on this head may suffice. Presently after his baptism, when he was full of the Holy Ghost, he was “led by the Spirit into the wilderness,” [Luke 4:1](#). 1. The Holy Spirit guided him to begin his contest and conquest with the devil. Hereby he made an entrance into his ministry; and it teacheth us all what we must look for if we solemnly engage ourselves to follow him in the work of preaching the gospel. The word used in Mark to this purpose hath occasioned some doubt what spirit is intended in these words, Τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτὸν ἐκζάλλει εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, chap. [1:12](#), “The spirit driveth him into the wilderness.” It is evident that the same spirit and the same act are intended in all the evangelists, here, and [Matt. 4:1](#), [Luke 4:1](#). But how the Holy Spirit should be said ἐκζάλλειν, to “drive him,” is not so easy to be apprehended. But the word in Luke is ἦγετο, which denotes a guiding and rational conduct; and this cannot be ascribed unto any other spirit, with respect unto our Lord Jesus, but only the Spirit of God. Matthew expresseth the same effect by ἀνήχθη, chap. [4:1](#),—he was “carried,” or “carried up,” or “taken away,” from the midst of the people. And this was ὑπὸ τοῦ Πνεύματος, “of that Spirit,”—namely, which descended on him and rested on him immediately before, chap. [3:16](#). And the continuation of the discourse in Luke will not admit that any other spirit be intended: “And Jesus being full of the Holy Spirit returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,”—namely, by that Spirit which he was full of. By ἐκζάλλει, therefore, in Mark, no more is intended but the sending of him forth by a high and strong impression of the Holy Spirit on his mind. Hence the same word is used with respect unto the sending of others, by the powerful impression of the Spirit of God on their hearts, unto the work of preaching the gospel: [Matt. 9:38](#), “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest,” ὅπως ἐκζάλλῃ ἐργάτας εἰς τὸν θερισμὸν αὐτοῦ, “that he would thrust forth labourers into his harvest,”—namely, by furnishing them with the gifts of his Spirit, and by the power of his grace constraining them to their duty. So also [Luke 10:2](#). So did he enter upon his preparation unto his work under his conduct; and it were well if others would endeavour after a conformity unto him within the rules of their calling. 2. By his assistance was he carried triumphantly through the course of his temptations unto a perfect conquest of his adversary as to the present conflict, wherein he sought to divert him from his work; which afterward he endeavoured by all ways and means to oppose and hinder. 3. The temptation being finished, he returned again out of the wilderness, to preach the gospel “in the power of the Spirit,” [Luke 4:14](#). He returned ἐν τῇ δυνάμει τοῦ Πνεύματος, “in the power of the Spirit” into Galilee,—that is, powerfully enabled by the Holy Spirit unto the discharge of his work; and hence, in his first sermon at Nazareth, he took these words of the prophet for his text, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor,” verse [18](#). The issue was, that they “all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth,” verse [22](#). And as he thus began his ministry in the power of the Spirit, so, having received him not by measure, he continually on all occasions put forth his wisdom, power, grace, and knowledge, to the astonishment of all, and the stopping of the mouths of his adversaries, shutting them up in their rage and unbelief. 4. By him was he directed, strengthened, and comforted, in his whole course,—in all his temptations, troubles, and sufferings, from first to last; for we know that there was a confluence of all these upon him in his whole way and work, a great part of that whereunto he humbled himself for our sakes consisting in these things. In and under them he stood in need of mighty supportment and strong consolation. This God promised unto him, and this he expected, John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

Page 11. Exported from [Logos Bible Software](#), 9:05 PM June 4, 2020.

Isa. 42:4, 6, 49:5–8, 50:7, 8. Now, all the voluntary communications of the divine nature unto the human were, as we have showed, by the Holy Spirit.

Seventhly, He *offered himself up unto God through the eternal Spirit*, Heb. 9:14. I know many learned men do judge that by the “eternal Spirit” in that place, not the third person is intended, but the divine nature of the Son himself; and there is no doubt but that also may properly be called the eternal Spirit. There is also a reason in the words themselves strongly inclining unto that sense and acceptation of them: for the apostle doth show whence it was that the sacrifice of the Lord Christ had an efficacy beyond and above the sacrifices of the law, and whence it would certainly produce that great effect of “purging our consciences from dead works;” and this was, from the dignity of his person, on the account of his divine nature. It arose, I say, from the dignity of his person, his deity giving sustentation unto his human nature in the sacrifice of himself; for by reason of the indissoluble union of both his natures, his person became the principle of all his mediatory acts, and from thence had they their dignity and efficacy. Nor will I oppose this exposition of the words. But, on the other side, many learned persons, both of the ancient and modern divines, do judge that it is the person of the Holy Spirit that is intended.

And because this is a matter of great importance,—namely, how the Lord Christ offered up himself unto God as a sacrifice by the eternal Spirit,—I shall farther explain it, though but briefly. Those who look only on the outward part of the death of Christ can see nothing but suffering in it. The Jews took him, and they with the soldiers both scourged and slew him, hanging him on the tree. But the principal consideration of it is his own offering himself a sacrifice unto God, as the great high priest of the church, to make atonement and reconciliation for sinners, which was hid from the world by those outward acts of violence which were upon him; and this he did by the eternal Spirit, wherein we may take notice of the ensuing instances:—

1. He *sanctified*, consecrated, or dedicated himself unto God for to be an offering or sacrifice: John 17:19, “For their sakes,”—that is, the elect,—“I sanctify myself.” The Lord Christ was before this perfectly sanctified as to all inherent holiness, so that he could not speak of sanctifying himself afresh in that sense. Neither was it the consecration of himself unto his office of a priest; for this was the act of him who called him: “He glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son,” Heb. 5:5. He made him a priest by his death, “after the power of an endless life,” chap. 7:16, 20, 21. Wherefore, he consecrated himself to be a sacrifice, as the beast to be sacrificed of old was first devoted unto that purpose. Therefore it is said that he thus sanctified or consecrated himself that we might be sanctified. Now, “we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all,” Heb. 10:10. This was his first sacerdotal act. He dedicated himself to be an offering to God; and this he did through the effectual operation of the eternal Spirit in him.

2. He went voluntarily and of his own accord to the garden; which answered the *adduction* or bringing of the beast to be sacrificed unto the door of the tabernacle, according to the law: for there he did not only give up himself into the hands of those who were to shed his blood, but also actually entered upon the offering up of himself unto God in his agony, when he “offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears,” Heb. 5:7; which declares not the matter, but the manner of his offering.

3. In all that ensued, all that followed hereon, unto his *giving up the ghost*, he offered himself to God in and by those actings of the grace of the Holy Spirit in him, which accompanied him to the last. And these are diligently to be considered, because on them depend the efficacy of the death of Christ as John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

to atonement and merit, as they were enhanced and rendered excellent by the worth and dignity of his person; for it is not the death of Christ, merely as it was *penal* and undergone by the way of *suffering*, that is the means of our deliverance, but the *obedience* of Christ therein, which consisted in his offering of himself through the eternal Spirit unto God, that gave efficacy and success unto it. We may, therefore, inquire what were those principal graces of the Spirit which he acted in this offering of himself unto God; and they were,—

(1.) *Love to mankind*, and compassion towards sinners. This the holy soul of the Lord Jesus was then in the highest and most inconceivable exercise of. This, therefore, is frequently expressed where mention is made of this offering of Christ: Gal. 2:20, “Who loved me, and gave himself for me.” Rev. 1:5, “Who loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” And compassion is the first grace required in a high priest or sacrificer, Heb. 5:2. God being now upon a design of love (for it was in the pursuit of eternal love that Christ was sent into the world, John 3:16; Tit. 3:4–6), this love, that was now in its most inconceivable advancement in the heart of Christ, was most grateful and acceptable unto him. And this intenseness of love did also support the mind of Christ under all his sufferings; as Jacob, through the greatness of his love unto Rachel, made light of the seven years’ service that he endured for her, Gen. 29:20. And so did the Lord Christ “endure the cross and despise the shame for the joy” of saving his elect “which was set before him,” Heb. 12:2. And this was one grace of the eternal Spirit whereby he offered himself unto God.

(2.) That which principally acted him in the whole was his *unspeakable zeal* for, and *ardency of affection* unto, the glory of God. These were the coals which with a vehement flame, as it were, consumed the sacrifice. And there were two things that he aimed at with respect unto the glory of God:—[1.] The manifestation of his righteousness, holiness, and severity against sin. His design was, to repair the glory of God, wherein it had seemed to suffer by sin. Ps. 40:6–8, Heb. 10:5–7. He came to do that, with full desire of soul, (expressed in these words, “Lo, I come,”) which legal sacrifices could not do,—namely, to make satisfaction to the justice of God for sin, to be “a propitiation, to declare his righteousness,” Rom. 3:25. And this he doth, as to the manner of it, with inexpressible ardency of zeal and affections: Ps. 40:8, “I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is in the midst of my bowels.” He doubles the expression of the intenseness of his mind hereon. And, therefore, when he was to prepare himself in his last passover for his suffering, he expresseth the highest engagement of heart and affections unto it: Luke 22:15, “With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer;” as with respect unto the same work he had before expressed it, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened,” or pained, “till it be accomplished!” chap. 12:50. His zeal to advance the glory of God, in the manifestation of his righteousness and holiness, by the offering up of himself as a sin-offering to make atonement, gave him no rest and ease until he was engaged in it, whence it wrought unto the utmost. [2.] The exercise of his grace and love. This he knew was the way to open the treasures of grace and love, that they might be poured out on sinners, to the everlasting glory of God; for this was the design of God in the whole, Rom. 3:24–26. This zeal and affection unto the glory of God’s righteousness, faithfulness, and grace, which was wrought in the heart of Christ by the eternal Spirit, was that wherein principally he offered up himself unto God.

(3.) *His holy submission and obedience unto the will of God*, which were now in the height of their exercise, and grace advanced unto the utmost in them, was another especial part of this his offering up of himself. That this was wrought in him by the holy or eternal Spirit was before declared. And it is frequently expressed as that which had an especial influence into the efficacy and merit of his sacrifice: John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

Phil. 2:8, “He humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” And when he “offered up prayers and supplications, though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered,” Heb. 5:7, 8; that is, he experienced obedience in suffering. It is true that the Lord Christ, in the whole course of his life, yielded obedience unto God, as he was “made of a woman, made under the law,” Gal. 4:4; but now he came to the great trial of it, with respect unto the especial command of the Father “to lay down his life,” and to “make his soul an offering for sin,” Isa. 53:10. This was the highest act of obedience unto God that ever was, or ever shall be to all eternity; and therefore doth God so express his satisfaction therein and acceptance of it, Isa. 53:11, 12; Phil. 2:9, 10. This was wrought in him, this he was wrought unto, by the Holy Spirit; and therefore by him he offered himself unto God.

(4.) There belongs also hereunto that *faith and trust in God* which, with fervent prayers, cries, and supplications, he now acted on God and his promises, both with respect unto himself and to the covenant which he was sealing with his blood. This our apostle represents as an especial work of his, testified unto in the Old Testament: Heb. 2:13, “I will put my trust in him.” And, [1.] This respected himself, namely, that he should be supported, assisted, and carried through the work he had undertaken unto a blessed issue. Herein, I confess, he was horribly assaulted, until he cried out, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” Ps. 22:1; but yet, after and through all his dreadful trial, his faith and trust in God were victorious. This he expressed in the depth and extremity of his trials, verses 9–11; and made such an open profession of it that his enemies, when they supposed him lost and defeated, reproached him with it, verse 8; Matt. 27:43. To this purpose he declares himself at large, Isa. 50:7–9. So his faith and trust in God, as to his own supportment and deliverance, with the accomplishment of all the promises that were made unto him upon his engagement into the work of mediation, were victorious. [2.] This respected the covenant, and all the benefits that the church of the elect was to be made partaker of thereby. The blood that he now shed was the “blood of the covenant,” and it was shed for his church, namely, that the blessings of the covenant might be communicated unto them, Gal. 3:13, 14. With respect hereunto did he also exercise faith in God, as appears fully in his prayer which he made when he entered on his oblation, John 17.

Now, concerning these instances we may observe three things to our present purpose:—

(1.) These and the like gracious actings of the soul of Christ were the ways and means whereby, in his death and blood-shedding,—which was violent and by force inflicted on him as to the outward instruments, and was penal as to the sentence of the law,—he voluntarily and freely offered up himself a sacrifice unto God for to make atonement; and these were the things which, from *the dignity of his person*, became efficacious and victorious. Without these his death and blood-shedding had been no oblation.

(2.) These were the things which rendered his offering of himself a “sacrifice to God of a sweet-smelling savour,” Eph. 5:2. God was so absolutely delighted and pleased with these high and glorious acts of grace and obedience in Jesus Christ that he smelled, as it were, a “savour of rest” towards mankind, or those for whom he offered himself, so that he would be angry with them no more, curse them no more, as it is said of the type of it in the sacrifice of Noah, Gen. 8:20, 21. God was more pleased with the obedience of Christ than he was displeased with the sin and disobedience of Adam, Rom. 5:17–21. It was not, then, [by] the outward suffering of a violent and bloody death, which was inflicted on him by the most horrible wickedness that ever human nature brake forth into, that God was atoned, Acts

John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

Page 14. Exported from [Logos Bible Software](#), 9:05 PM June 4, 2020.

2:23; nor yet was it merely his enduring the penalty of the law that was the means of our deliverance; but the voluntary giving up of himself to be a sacrifice in these holy acts of obedience was that upon which, in an especial manner, God was reconciled unto us.

(3.) All these things being wrought in the human nature by the Holy Ghost, who, in the time of his offering, acted all his graces unto the utmost, he is said thereon to “offer himself unto God through the eternal Spirit,” by whom, as our high priest, he was consecrated, spirited, and acted thereunto.

Eighthly, There was a peculiar work of the Holy Spirit towards the Lord Christ whilst he was in the *state of the dead*; for here our preceding rule must be remembered,—namely, that notwithstanding the union of the human nature of Christ with the divine person of the Son, yet the communications of God unto it, beyond subsistence, were *voluntary*. Thus in his death the union of his natures in his person was not in the least impeached; but yet for his soul or spirit, he commends that in an especial manner into the hands of God his Father,—Ps. 31:5, Luke 23:46, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit,”—for the Father had engaged himself in an eternal covenant to take care of him, to preserve and protect him even in death, and to show him again the “way and path of life,” Ps. 16:11. Notwithstanding, then, the union of his person, his soul in its separate state was in an especial manner under the care, protection, and power of the Father, preserved in his love until the hour came wherein he showed him again the path of life. His holy body in the grave continued under the especial care of the Spirit of God; and hereby was accomplished that great promise, that “his soul should not be left in hell, nor the Holy One see corruption,” Ps. 16:10; Acts 2:31. It is the body of Christ which is here called “The Holy One,” as it was made a “holy thing” by the conception of it in the womb by the power of the Holy Ghost. And it is here spoken of in contradistinction unto his soul, and opposed by Peter unto the body of David, which when it died saw corruption, Acts 2:29. This pure and holy substance was preserved in its integrity by the overshadowing power of the Holy Spirit, without any of those accidents of change which attend the dead bodies of others. I deny not but there was use made of the ministry of angels about the dead body of Christ whilst it was in the grave, even those which were seen sitting afterward in the place where he lay, John 20:12; by these was it preserved from all outward force and violation;—but this also was under the peculiar care of the Spirit of God, who how he worketh by angels hath been before declared.

Ninthly, There was a peculiar work of the Holy Spirit in his *resurrection*, this being the completing act in laying the foundation of the church, whereby Christ entered into his rest,—the great testimony given unto the finishing of the work of redemption, with the satisfaction of God therein, and his acceptance of the person of the Redeemer. It is, on various accounts, assigned distinctly to each person in the Trinity; and this not only as all the external works of God are undivided, each person being equally concerned in their operation, but also upon the account of their especial respect unto and interest in the work of redemption, in the manner before declared. Unto the Father it is ascribed, on the account of his authority, and the declaration therein of Christ’s perfect accomplishment of the work committed unto him: Acts 2:24, “Him hath God raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it.” It is the Father who is spoken of, and he is said, as in other places, to raise Christ from the dead; but this he doth with respect unto “his loosing the pains of death,”—λύσας τὰς ὠδίννας τοῦ θανάτου. These are the מְנוֹת־הַמָּוֶת, which, with a little alteration of one vowel, signify the “sorrows of death,” or the “cords of death;” for מְנוֹת־הַמָּוֶת are the “sorrows of death,” and מְנוֹת־הַמָּוֶת are the “cords of death.” See Ps. 18:4, 116:3. And the “sorrows of death” here intended were the

“cords” of it,—that is, the power it had to bind the Lord Christ for a season under it; for the “pains of death,” that is, the ὠδῖνες, “tormenting pains,” ended in his death itself. But the consequents of them are here reckoned unto them, or the continuance under the power of death, according unto the sentence of the law. These God loosed, when, the law being fully satisfied, the sentence of it was taken off, and the Lord Christ was acquitted from its whole charge. This was the act of God the Father, as the supreme rector and judge of all. Hence he is said to “raise him from the dead,” as the judge by his order delivereth an acquitted prisoner or one who hath answered the law. The same work he also takes unto himself: [John 10:17, 18](#), “I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.” For although men by violence took away his life, when “with wicked hands they crucified and slow him,” [Acts 2:23, 3:15](#), yet because they had neither authority nor ability so to do without his own consent, he saith no man did, or could, take away his life,—that is, against his will, by power over him, as the lives of other men are taken away; for this neither angels nor men could do. So, also, although the Father is said to raise him from the dead by taking off the sentence of the law, which he had answered, yet he himself also took his life again by an act of the love, care, and power of his divine nature, his living again being an act of his person, although the human nature only died. But the peculiar efficiency in the reuniting of his most holy soul and body was an effect of the power of the Holy Spirit: [1 Pet. 3:18](#), “He was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit;” ζωοποιηθεὶς δὲ τῷ Πνεύματι,—“he was restored to life by the Spirit.” And this was that Spirit whereby he preached unto them that were disobedient in the days of Noah, verses [19, 20](#); or that Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets from the foundation of the world, chap. [1:11](#); by which he preached in Noah unto that disobedient generation, [2 Pet 2:5](#), whereby the Spirit of God strove for a season with those inhabitants of the old world, [Gen. 6:3](#)—that is, the Holy Spirit of God. To the same purpose we are instructed by our apostle: [Rom. 8:11](#), “If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;”—“God shall quicken our mortal bodies also by the same Spirit whereby he raised Christ from the dead;” for so the relation of the one work to the other requires the words to be understood. And he asserts again the same expressly, [Eph. 1:17–20](#). He prays that God would give his Holy Spirit unto them as a Spirit of wisdom and revelation, verse [17](#). The effects thereof in them and upon them are described, verse [18](#). And this he desires that they may so be made partakers of as that, by the work of the Spirit of God in themselves, renewing and quickening them, they might have an experience of that exceeding greatness of his power which he put forth in the Lord Christ when he raised him from the dead. And the evidence or testimony given unto his being the Son of God, by his resurrection from the dead, is said to be “according to the Spirit of holiness,” or the Holy Spirit, [Rom. 1:4](#) He was positively declared to be the Son of God by his resurrection from the dead, ἐν δυνάμει, κατὰ Πνεῦμα ἀγίωσυνης,—that is, by the “powerful working of the Holy Spirit.” This, also, is the intendment of that expression, [1 Tim. 3:16](#), “Justified in the Spirit.” God was “manifest in the flesh,” by his incarnation and passion therein; and “justified in the Spirit,” by a declaration of his acquittal from the sentence of death and all the evils which he underwent, with the reproaches wherewith he was contemptuously used, by his quickening and resurrection from the dead, through the mighty and effectual working of the Spirit of God.

Tenthly, It was the Holy Spirit that *glorified* the human nature [of Christ], and made it every way meet for its eternal residence at the right hand of God, and a pattern of the glorification of the bodies of them that believe on him. He who first made his nature *holy*, now made it *glorious*. And as we are made conformable unto him in our souls here, his image being renewed in us by the Spirit, so he is in his body, John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

now glorified by the effectual operation of the same Spirit, the exemplar and pattern of that glory which in our mortal bodies we shall receive by the same Spirit; for “when he shall appear, we shall be like him,” [1 John 3:2](#), seeing he will “change our vile bodies, that they may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself,” [Phil. 3:21](#).

And these are some of the principal instances of the operation of the Holy Spirit on the human nature of the Head of the church. The whole of them all, I confess, is a work that we can look but little into; only what is plainly revealed we desire to receive and embrace, considering that if we are his, we are predestinated to be made conformable in all things unto him, and that by the powerful and effectual operation of that Spirit which thus wrought all things in him, to the glory of God. And as it is a matter of unspeakable consolation unto us to consider what hath been done in and upon our nature by the application of the love and grace of God through his Spirit unto it; so it is of great advantage, in that it directs our faith and supplications in our endeavours after conformity with him, which is our next end, under the enjoyment of God in glory. What, therefore, in these matters we apprehend, we embrace; and for the depth of them, they are the objects of our admiration and praise.

II. There is yet another work of the Holy Spirit, not immediately in and upon the person of the Lord Christ, but *towards him*, and on his behalf, with respect unto his work and office; and it compriseth the head and fountain of the whole office of the Holy Spirit towards the church. This was his witness-bearing unto the Lord Christ,—namely, that he was the Son of God, the true Messiah, and that the work which he performed in the world was committed unto him by God the Father to accomplish. And this same work he continueth to attend unto unto this day, and will do so to the consummation of all things. It is known how the Lord Christ was reproached whilst he was in this world, and how ignominiously he was sent out of it by death. Hereon a great contest ensued amongst mankind, wherein heaven and hell were deeply engaged. The greatest part of the world, the princes, rulers, and wise men of it, affirmed that he was an impostor, a seducer, a malefactor, justly punished for his evil deeds. He, on the other side, chose twelve apostles to bear testimony unto the holiness of his life, the truth and purity of his doctrine, the accomplishment of the prophecies of the Old Testament in his birth, life, work, and death; and, in especial, unto his resurrection from the dead, whereby he was justified and acquitted from all the reproaches of hell and the world, and their calumnies refelled. But what could the testimony of twelve poor men, though never so honest, prevail against the confronting suffrage of the world? Wherefore, this work of bearing witness unto the Lord Christ was committed unto Him who is above and over all, who knoweth how, and is able, to make his testimony prevalent: [John 15:26](#), “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.” Accordingly, the apostles plead his concurring testimony: [Acts 5:32](#), “We are his witnesses of these things; and so also is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.” And how he thus gave his testimony our apostle declares, [Heb. 2:4](#), “God also bearing witness with them” (that is, the apostles), “both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, according to his own will.” The first principal end why God gave the Holy Spirit to work all those miraculous effects in them that believed in Jesus, was, to bear witness unto his person that he was indeed the Son of God, owned and exalted by him; for no man not utterly forsaken of all reason and understanding, not utterly blinded, would once imagine that the Holy Spirit of God would work such marvellous operations in and by them who believed on him, if he designed not to justify his person, work, and doctrine thereby. And this in a short time, together with that effectual power which he put

forth in and by the preaching of the word, carried not only his vindication against all the machinations of Satan and his instruments throughout the world, but also subdued the generality of mankind unto faith in him and obedience unto him, 2 Cor. 10:4, 5. And upon this testimony it is that there is real faith in him yet maintained in the world. This is that which he promised unto his disciples whilst he was yet with them in the world, when their hearts were solicitous how they should bear up against their adversaries upon his absence. "I will," saith he, "send the Comforter 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," John 16:7-11. The reason why the world believed not on Christ was, because they believed not that he was sent of God, chap. 9:29. By his testimony the Spirit was to reprove the world of their infidelity, and to convince them of it by evidencing the truth of his mission; for hereon the whole issue of the controversy between him and the world did depend. Whether he were righteous or a deceiver was to be determined by his being sent or not sent of God; and, consequently, God's acceptance or disapprobation of him. That he was so sent, so approved, the Holy Spirit convinced the world by his testimony, manifesting that he "went to the Father," and was exalted by him; for it was upon his ascension and exaltation that he received and poured out the promise of the Spirit to this purpose, Acts 2:33. Moreover, whilst he was in the world there was an unrighteous judgment, by the instigation of Satan, passed upon him. On this testimony of the Spirit, that judgment was to be reversed, and a contrary sentence passed on the author of it, the prince of this world; for by the gospel so testified unto was he discovered, convicted, judged, condemned, and cast out of that power and rule in the world which, by the darkness of the minds of men within and idolatry without, he had obtained and exercised. And that the Holy Spirit continueth to do the same work, though not absolutely by the same means, unto this very day, shall be afterward declared.

And by these considerations may we be led into that knowledge of and acquaintance with our Lord Jesus Christ, which is so necessary, so useful, and so much recommended unto us in the Scripture. And the utter neglect of learning the knowledge of Christ, and of the truth as it is in him, is not more pernicious unto the souls of men than is the learning of it by undue means, whereby false and mischievous ideas or representations of him are infused into the minds of men. The Papists would learn and teach him by images, the work of men's hands, and teachers of lies: for besides that they are forbidden by God himself to be used unto any such purposes, and therefore cursed with barrenness and uselessness, as to any end of faith or holiness, they are in themselves suited only to ingenerate low and carnal thoughts in depraved superstitious minds; for as the worshippers of such images know not what is the proper cause nor the proper object of that reverence and those affections they find in themselves, when they approach unto them and adore before them, so the apprehensions which they can have hereby tend but to the "knowing after the flesh," which the apostle looked on as no part of his duty, 2 Cor. 5:16. But the glory of the human nature, as united unto the person of the Son of God, and engaged in the discharge of his office of mediator, consists alone in these eminent, peculiar, ineffable communications of the Spirit of God unto him, and his powerful operations in him; this is represented unto us in the glass of the gospel, which we beholding by faith, are changed into the same image by the same Spirit, 2 Cor. 3:18.

Our Lord Christ himself did foretell us that there would be great inquiries after him, and that great deceits would be immixed there withal. "If," saith he, "they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers, believe it not," Matt. 24:26. It is not a

wilderness, low, persecuted, inglorious, and invisible condition, as to outward profession, that our Saviour here intendeth: for himself foretold that his church should be driven into the wilderness, and nourished there, and that for a long season, Rev. 12:6; and where his church is, there is Christ, for his promise is, to be with them and among them unto the end of the world, Matt. 28:20. Nor by “secret chambers” doth he intend those private places of meeting for security which all his disciples, for some hundreds of years, were compelled unto and did make use of, after his apostles, who met sometimes in an upper room, sometimes in the night, for fear of the Jews; and such, it is notorious, were all the meetings of the primitive Christians. But our Saviour here foretells the false ways that some would pretend he is taught by and found in; for, first, some would say he was ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ, “in the desert” or wilderness, and if men would go forth thither, there they would see him and find him. And there is nothing intended hereby but the ancient superstitious monks, who, under a pretence of religion, retired themselves into deserts and solitary places; for there they pretended great intercourse with Christ, great visions and appearances of him, being variously deluded and imposed on by Satan and their own imaginations. It is ridiculous on the one hand, and deplorable on the other, to consider the woful follies, delusions, and superstitions this sort of men fell into; yet was in those days nothing more common than to say that Christ was in the desert, conversing with the monks and anchorites. “Go not forth unto them,” saith our Lord Christ; “for in so doing ye will be deceived.” And again saith he, “If they say unto you, He is ἐν τοῖς ταμείοις, in the secret chambers, believe it not.” There is, or I am much deceived, a deep and mysterious instruction in these words. Ταμεῖα signifies those secret places in a house where bread and wine and cates of all sorts are laid up and stored. This is the proper signification and use of the word. What pretence, then, could there be for any to say that Christ was in such a place? Why, there ensued so great a pretence hereof, and so horrible a superstition thereon, that it was of divine wisdom to foresee it, and of divine goodness to forewarn us of it; for it is nothing but the popish figment of transubstantiation that is intended. Christ must be in the secret places where their wafer and wine were deposited,—that is, ἐν τοῖς ταμείοις. Concerning this, saith our Saviour, “Believe them not” All crafts, and frauds, and bloody violences, will be used to compel you to believe a Christ in the pix and repository; but, if you would not be seduced, “believe them not” Such are the false ways whereby some have pretended to teach Christ and to learn him, which have led them from him into hurtful snares and perdition. The consideration that we have insisted on will guide us, if attended to, unto a spiritual and saving knowledge of him. And we are to learn thus to know him,—

First, That we may *love him* with a pure unmixed love. It is true, it is the person of Christ as God and man that is the proper and ultimate object of our love towards him; but a clear distinct consideration of his natures and their excellencies is effectual to stir up and draw forth our love towards him. So the spouse in the Canticles, rendering a reason of her intense affections towards him, says that “he is white and ruddy, the chiefest of ten thousand;” that is, perfect in the beauty of the graces of the Holy Spirit, which rendered him exceeding amiable. So also Ps. 45:2. Would you, therefore, propose Christ unto your affections, so as that your love unto him may be sincere and without corruption, as it is required to be, Eph. 6:24, that you may not lavish away the actings of your souls upon a false object, and think you love Christ, when you love only the imaginations of your own breasts?—consider his human nature, as it was rendered beautiful and lovely by the work of the Spirit of God upon it, before described. Do you love him because he was and is so full of grace, so full of holiness, because in him there was an all-fulness of the graces of the Spirit of God? Consider aright what hath been delivered concerning him, and if you can and do, on the account thereof, delight in him and love him, your love is genuine and spiritual; but if your love be merely out of an apprehension of his being now glorious in heaven, and there able to

John Owen, *The Works of John Owen*, ed. William H. Goold, vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, n.d.).

do you good or evil, it differs not much from that of the Papists, whose love is much regulated in its actings by the good or bad painting of the images whereby they represent him. You are often pressed to direct your love unto the person of Christ, and it is that which is your principal duty in this world; but this you cannot do without a distinct notion and knowledge of him. There are, therefore, three things in general that you are to consider to this purpose:—1. The *blessed union* of his two natures in the same person. Herein he is singular, God having taken that especial state on him, which in no other thing or way had any consideration. This, therefore, is to have a specialty in our divine love to the person of Christ. 2. The *uncreated glories* of the divine nature, whence our love hath the same object with that which we owe unto God absolutely. 3. That perfection and *fulness of grace* which dwelt in his human nature, as communicated unto him by the Holy Spirit, whereof we have treated. If we love the person of Christ, it must be on these considerations; which whilst some have neglected, they have doted on their own imaginations, and whilst they have thought themselves even sick of love for Christ, they have only languished in their own fancies.

Secondly, We are to know Christ so as to labour after *conformity* unto him. And this conformity consists only in a participation of those graces whose fulness dwells in him. We can, therefore, no other way regularly press after it, but by an acquaintance with and due consideration of the work of the Spirit of God upon his human nature; which is therefore worthy of our most diligent inquiry into.

And so have we given a brief delineation of the dispensation and work of the Holy Spirit in and towards the person of our Lord Jesus Christ, the head of the church. His preparation of a mystical body for him, in his powerful gracious work on the elect of God, doth nextly ensue.

