brance of his sayings would have been of little importance. ' That before this miraculous shedding abroad of the Spirit they had but a very imperfect knowledge of his doctrines, and of the purpose for which he had come into the world, is apparent from that unseasonable question which they put to him when assembled to witness his glorious ascension ; “ Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel ?" Their minds still cherished with fondness the vain prospect of temporal power; but after the day of Pentecost they were directed to nobler objects. From the same Spirit they received diversities of gifts besides that of language, and thus were well qualified to declare to the world the whole counsel of God.

But the work of the Holy Spirit has not been restricted to the apostles and other possessors of miraculous gifts in the early church. As man is designed for a supernatural state in heaven, he stands in need of supernatural direction to guide him to that state. “ No man,” says our Saviour, “ can come to me except the Father draw him;” and the apostle tells us, that “ as no man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of a man which is in him, even so none knoweth the things of God but the Spirit of God,” (John vi. 44 ; 2 Cor. ii. 11.) This omniscient Spirit indeed searcheth all things, yea even the “ deep things of God,” and revealeth them to the sons of men, to enlighten their understandings and purify their hearts. The grace which he sheds abroad is either external and general, or internal and particular. The former has been extended to the whole church of God under the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations, in such a revelation of the divine will as was sufficient to instruct men unto eternal life, whether they had a full view or not of that stupendous plan of redemption, by which the kingdom of heaven was opened to them after the forfeiture of the terrestrial Paradise; for there have been “ holy prophets ever since the world began ; and prophecy came not at any time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost,” (Luke i. 70, and 2 Peter i. 21.) Hence it is that all scripture was given by inspira­tion of God to teach every thing which it is necessary for us to know and believe; and the scripture is that work of the Spirit which is extended to the universal church.

But the same spirit which thus generally reveals the ob­ject of faith to the church, does likewise particularly illu­minate the minds of individual believers, working in them an assent to that which is taught them from the written word. It was thus that “ the Lord opened the heart of Lydia, (Acts xvi 14,) that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul ;" it is thus that “ the word preached doth not profit if it be not mixed with faith in them who hear it,” (Heb. iv. 2); and it is thus that “ God deals to every man the measure of faith,” (Rom. xii. 3); for “by grace are we saved through faith, which is not of ourselves; it is the gift of God,” (Eph. ii. 8.) This illumination of the Spirit was conveyed to the apostles “ in a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind," because it was meant to testify to the world that they were chosen ministers of the gospel ; but the ordinary Christian receives it “ in the still small voice,” because it is conveyed to him only to “ open his understanding that he may understand the scrip­tures.”

Another operation of the Spirit on the minds of believers is that which in scripture is called Regeneration; for “ according to his mercy God saveth us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he sheds on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Lord,” (Tit. i. 5, 6.) To those who believe that we derive from Adam a corrupted nature, this particular grace must appear so absolutely necessary, that without it we could have no relish for heaven or heavenly things. “ The natural man,” we are told, “ receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned,” (1 Cor. ii. 14.) In­deed whatever be the powers of our moral faculties, when compared with those of our first father, it is so long before they be completely developed, that we should infallibly be lost, if we were not blessed by a supernatural guide, when reason is incapable of directing our conduct. Our passions and appetites are in their full strength before experience has furnished the mind with materials, by means of which motives may be weighed; and therefore it would be impos­sible, without the aid of a divine interference, completely to overcome those evil habits which are formed by sinful indulgence. So true is it, that “ except a man be born again of water and of the Holy Ghost, he cannot enter in­to the kingdom of God.” This change in our dispositions, from an immoderate attachment to earth to a relish for the things of heaven, is in scripture called “ a renewing of our minds, a new creation, a new man ;” in opposition to our natural disposition, which is called “ the old man, corrupted according to the deceitful lusts.”

A third office of the Holy Spirit is to *lead, direct,* and *govern* us through all the periods of our lives. Without such a leader and guide, the temptations with which we are sur­rounded would certainly overcome us, and we should faint long before we arrive at the end of our journey. By the very constitution of our nature we are subjected in some degree to the influence of sense, of which the objects are present, while the enjoyments of heaven are future, and seen, as at a distance, only by the eye of faith ; but “ the law of the Spirit of life, in Christ Jesus, hath made us free from the law of sin and death ;” for God worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure; and as many as are thus led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God ; and while they walk in the Spirit, they do not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.” Without the aid of the same Spirit, we could not even make our prayers acceptable; for since “ our confi­dence in God is, that he heareth us only when we ask any thing according to his will ; and since we know not what we should pray for as we ought, the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Rom. viii. 26.)

A fourth operation of the Holy Ghost, as he is the sanc­tifier of Christians, is to join them to Christ, and make them members of that one body of which he is the head. “ For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13); and as the body is one and hath many members, and all the members of that one body being many are one body, so also is Christ.” “ Hereby we know that God abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.”

It is likewise the office of the Holy Ghost to give us an earnest of our everlasting inheritance, to create in us a sense of the paternal love of God, and thereby to assure us of the adoption of sons. “ As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; and because we are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts. For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but we have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father ; the Spirit itself bearing witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” (GaΙ. iv. 6; Rom. viii. 15, 16.)

By these, and the like means, does the Spirit of God sanc­tify the sons of men ; and in consequence of this sanctifi­cation proceeding immediately from his office, he is called the Holy Spirit and the Comforter. This is such a pro­vision “ for renewing us in the spirit of our minds, and en­abling us to put on the new man, which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness,” as, when made known by revelation, appears to have been expedient, may be conceived to have been even necessary, and though reason could hardly have hoped for it, is contradicted by none of our natural notions either of God or of man.

*Obs.* See Owen’s Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit. J. Pye