

Of the Concern the Spirit of God Has in the Covenant of Grace.

by John Gill

The Holy Spirit's concern in the covenant of grace is to give his approbation and assent to the covenant, undertake to do certain things, and perform them according to covenant agreements.

Scripture: 2 Samuel 23:5, Isaiah 48:16, Matthew 1:18, John 16:14, Romans 1:4, 2 Corinthians 4:13, Ephesians 1:13, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Titus 3:5, Hebrews 10:22

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Covenant of Grace"

Description

John Gill emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in the Covenant of Grace, illustrating that the Spirit is not merely a bystander but an active participant who approves and engages in the covenant's promises and provisions for salvation. He highlights the Spirit's involvement in the incarnation of Christ, the application of salvation to believers, and the empowerment of the church through various gifts and graces. The Spirit's work includes conviction of sin, regeneration, and sanctification, all of which affirm His commitment to the covenant. Gill asserts that the Spirit's actions are a testament to His agreement with the Father and the Son in the redemptive plan. Ultimately, the sermon underscores the comprehensive nature of the Spirit's work in fulfilling God's promises to His people.

Transcript

A Body of Doctrinal Divinity

Book 2--Chapter 14

OF THE CONCERN THE SPIRIT OF GOD HAS IN THE COVENANT OF GRACE.

Having considered the parts which the Father and the Son have taken in the covenant, the part which the Holy Spirit has in it is next to be treated of; who was not a mere bystander, spectator, and witness of this solemn transaction, compact, and agreement, between the Father and the Son, but was a party concerned in it. And, 1. First, The third person, the Spirit, gave his approbation of, and assent unto every article in the covenant. 1a. In general, what respected the salvation of the chosen ones; for that is the grand and principal article of the covenant; "this", says David, speaking of the covenant, "is all my salvation", (2 Sam. 23:5) that is, the whole of his salvation; all things relative to it were provided for in it, and secured by it; in the economy of which each Person took his part; and that of the Spirit is

Sanctification; which makes meet for the enjoyment of complete and eternal salvation; hence called "the sanctification of the Spirit" (2 Thess. 2:13; 1 Peter 1:2).

And this clearly shows, that the Spirit approved of, and assented to the whole scheme of salvation, or of the thing itself in general; or otherwise he would never have taken a part in it; and as it was the purpose and will of God the Father to save men by his Son, and he appointed them to obtain salvation by him; so the Son of God came to seek and save men, being sent of God for that purpose in which mission of him the Spirit joined; "Now the Lord God, and his Spirit, hath sent me", (Isa. 48:16) which is a plain proof that he approved of and assented to it, that the Son of God should be the Saviour of men; and whereas it was proper that the Son of God should assume human nature, and in it work out the salvation of men; and which was agreed upon between the Father and the Son; so it was approved of and assented to by the Spirit; as appears from his concern in the incarnation of Christ; for what was "conceived in the Virgin was of the Holy Ghost", (Matthew 1:18, 20) and, seeing it was necessary that the Saviour of men should suffer and die for them, to satisfy law and justice; and the divine Father enjoined his Son to lay down his life for them; to which command he became obedient; so the Spirit declared his approbation of it, by testifying beforehand, in the prophets, "the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow"; as well as was assisting to the human nature of Christ, in the sacrifice of himself; since it was "through the eternal Spirit", he offered up himself without spot to God (1 Peter 1:11; Heb 9:14).

Once more, as it was highly proper, that as Christ should be delivered to death for the offences of men, so that he should rise again for their justification; or otherwise, the whole affair of salvation would have miscarried; hence the Father in covenant enjoined his Son, as to lay down his life, so to take it up again; and which he did, and in which the Spirit was concerned; and which showed his approbation of this closing part of the scheme of salvation by Christ (see Rom. 1:4). 1b.

The Spirit of God approved of and assented to all the promises in the covenant: there are many exceeding great and precious promises in the Scriptures, which are transcribed from the covenant, and are all Yea and Amen in Christ, and in which the Spirit has a concern; hence he is called "the Holy Spirit of promise", (Eph. 1:13) indeed, he himself is the great promise of the covenant; promised both to Christ the Head, and to his members, (Matthew 12:18; Isa. 42:1, 44:3; Gal. 3:14) and he is concerned in the application of every promise to the elect; it is he that remembers to them the word of promise, on which the Lord has sometimes caused them to hope; and it is he that opens the promise to them, instructs them in it, and shows them what is contained in it, the nature, use, and suitableness of it; it is he that applies the promises to them at a proper season, when they are like apples of gold in pictures of silver; and he it is that keeps up their faith and hope, as to the grand promise of eternal life; so that they, "through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith", (John 14:26; Prov. 25:11; Gal. 5:5) by which it appears, that he approved of every promise of the covenant made in eternity, or he would never act the part he does, in the application of them in time. 1c.

The blessed Spirit approved of and gave his assent to all the grants made to Christ, and to his people in the covenant, to the sure mercies of David, to the spiritual blessings wherewith the elect are blessed in heavenly places in Christ; for he takes of these in time, and shows them to the persons interested in them, and their interest therein, (John 16:14) which he would not do, if he had not approved of the grants of these blessings to them, in the everlasting covenant; as for instance, the blessing of a justifying righteousness, to be wrought out by Christ, was provided in the covenant; and which being brought in, is revealed in the gospel from faith to faith: and besides the external revelation of it in the gospel, the Spirit of God brings near this righteousness, and sets it in the view of an awakened sinner, and shows him its

suitableness, fulness, and excellency, works faith in him to receive it, and pronounces in his conscience his justification by it; hence it is said of such, that they are "justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit our God" (1 Cor. 6:11).

Pardon of sin is another blessing of the covenant through Christ, and the Spirit takes the blood of Christ, the blood of the covenant, shed for the remission of sin, and sprinkles it on the conscience, and thereby speaks peace and pardon to it; saying, Son, or "daughter, be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee" (Heb 8:12, 10:22, 12:24). Adoption also, a blessing of grace, provided in the covenant, and which the Spirit bears witness to and makes application of, and is sent down into the hearts of the covenant and adopted ones for that purpose, and is hence called "the Spirit of adoption", (2 Cor. 6:18; Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:15, 16).

In short, all the grace given to the elect in Christ, before the world began, all the things that are freely given them of God in the covenant, the Spirit in time makes known unto them, and declares and testifies their interests in them, (1 Cor. 1:12, 2:9-11). All which abundantly prove his approbation of and assent unto everything contained in the covenant of grace. 2. Secondly, There are many things which the Holy Spirit himself undertook and engaged in covenant to do; and nothing more strongly proves this than his doing them; for had he not agreed to do them, they would not have been done by him.

And, 2a. First, Some things he has done, as he agreed to do, with respect to Christ; he formed the human nature of Christ, in which he obeyed and suffered for the salvation of the elect: every individual of human nature is, indeed, made by him; "The Spirit of God hath made me", says Elihu, (Job 33:4) but the individual of Christ's human nature, was "fearfully and wonderfully made" by him, as David, representing him, says he was "in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth", in the womb of the Virgin, according to the model of it, in the book of God's purposes and decrees; it was produced by the power of the Highest, the overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, without the instrumentality of man; and so was free from the pollution of sin, propagated by ordinary and natural generation, and therefore called the holy thing, born of the Virgin (Ps. 139:14-16; Luke 1:35).

The Spirit of God filled the same human nature with his gifts and graces without measure, which are the oil of gladness he anointed him with above his fellows, and thereby fitted and qualified him as man, for the discharge of his office as Mediator, (Isa. 11:1-3, 42:1, 61:1) he descended upon him as a dove at his baptism; which was the signal by which John the Baptist knew he was the Messiah, and pointed him out as such to others; he assisted him as man, in the ministry of the gospel, whereby he spake as never man did, and with an authority the Scribes and Pharisees did not; and in the performance of miracles; for he cast out devils, as he himself says, by "the Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28).

He also was concerned in Christ's offering up himself a Sacrifice; and in his resurrection from the dead, as before observed; whereby he glorified him, as well as by other things, Christ said he would (John 16:14). All which he did according to covenant agreements and settlements. 2b. Secondly, There are other things he has done, as he agreed to do, with respect to men; either, 2b1. To such as are in a public office and capacity, as the prophets of the Old Testament; whom he inspired to speak and write as they did, (2 Peter 1:21) and the apostles of the New, who were endowed with power from on high, with his extraordinary gifts to preach the gospel, in all languages, to all people, and to confirm it with miracles, (Acts 1:4, 5, 2:4; Heb 2:3, 4) and ordinary ministers of the word, in all succeeding generations, with gifts and grace suitable to their office; whom he calls and separates to it, directs where they should go, he has work for them to do, and makes them overseers of flocks or churches committed to their care, (Acts 13:2, 16:6, 7, 20:28) and it

is he that makes the word preached by them effectual to the conviction and conversion of sinners, and to the comfort and edification of saints; and whereby he conveys himself into the hearts of men (1 Thess. 1:5, 6; 2 Cor. 3:6, 8; Gal. 3:2).

All which he undertook to do, and has done. Or, 2b2. To such as are in a private capacity, to whom he is, 2b2a. A Spirit "of conviction"; he convinces them of sin, original, actual, of all their sins of thought, word, and deed; of the demerit of sin, and of the inability of men to make atonement for it; and brings them to such a sense of it, as to loath it, and themselves for it; to blush and be ashamed of it, and to have such a godly sorrow for it, which works repentance unto salvation.

And "of righteousness"; of the insufficiency of their own righteousness to justify them before God; and of the excellency and suitableness of the righteousness of Christ. And "of judgment"; that there is one not to be escaped, and at which all must appear, and in which there will be no standing, but in the righteousness of Christ (John 16:8). 2b2b. A Spirit "of regeneration" and "renovation"; men must be born again, and they that are born of God, even of the Spirit of God, are renewed by him in the Spirit of their minds; all things are made new; a new man is created in them, a new heart and a new spirit are given unto them, according to the covenant of grace; hence we read of "regeneration", and "the renewing of the Holy Ghost" (Titus 3:5). 2b2c.

A Spirit "of faith"; all men have not faith, only God's elect; and therefore true faith is called the faith of God's elect; and those that have it, have it not of themselves, it is the gift of God; it is of the operation of God, a work of his almighty power, begun, carried on, and performed with power, and that by the Holy Ghost: and therefore he is called "the Spirit of faith" (2 Cor. 4:13). 2b2d. A "Comforter", under which character he is often spoken of, and promised by Christ, that he should be sent by him, and from his Father, according to covenant agreements; and which office, as he freely undertook in covenant, he performs, by shedding abroad the love of God and Christ in the hearts of his people; by leading into the comfortable doctrines of the gospel; by opening and applying the precious promises of it; by taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to them; and by witnessing to them their adoption; and by being the earnest of their inheritance, and the sealer of them up unto the day of redemption. 2b2e.

A Sanctifier; if any are sanctified, it is by the Spirit of God; sanctification is his work, and therefore called "the sanctification of the Spirit", as before observed: it is the Spirit that begins, and carries on, and finishes the work of grace and holiness upon the hearts of God's elect, without which no man shall see the Lord. He is the Spirit of strength to the saints, to enable them to exercise grace, and to perform duties he is put into them according to the covenant of grace, to cause them to walk in the statutes and judgments of the Lord to do them; to strengthen them to walk on in the ways of the Lord, and to persevere in faith and holiness to the end.

And all this the Spirit of God does, as he engaged and undertook to do, in the everlasting covenant; and therefore he is said to "come", being sent, to do these things; not without his will and consent, but according to his voluntary engagements in covenant, without which he could not be sent by the Father and the Son, being equal to them; and this will account for the several passages where he is said to be sent by the Father, in the name of Christ, and by Christ, from the Father (John 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7; Gal. 4:6). This being all agreed on, and settled in the covenant between them.

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