

THE PARACLETE

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A SERMON
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 AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

*“I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever.”
 John 14:16.*

THE unspeakable gift of the Son of God was followed up by the equally priceless gift of the Holy Spirit. Must it not be confessed by us that we think far less of the Holy Spirit than we should? I am sure we do not exalt the Savior too much, nor is He too often the subject of our meditations; but at the same time, we give to the Holy Spirit a very disproportionate place, compared with the Redeemer. I fear that we even grieve the Spirit by our neglect of Him.

Let me invite your devout contemplations to the special work of the Holy Spirit. Such an invitation is necessary. The subject has not grown stale, for it too seldom occupies our thoughts. We have not been unduly engrossed with honoring the Spirit of God, for this is a fault seldom or never committed. We have met with uninstructed persons who have glorified the love of Jesus beyond that of the Father, and there are others so occupied with the decrees of the Father as to cast the work of the Son into the background; but very few and far between are those believers who have dwelt upon the doctrine of the Holy Spirit beyond its proper measure and degree. The mistake has almost invariably been made in the opposite direction. The personal name of the third person of the blessed Trinity is, the “Spirit,” or the, “Holy Spirit,” which words describe His nature as being a pure, spiritual, immaterial existence, and His character as being in Himself, and in His workings pre-eminently holy. We commonly also speak of Him as the, “Holy Ghost,” but the name is now an erroneous one; the word “ghost” was the same as “spirit” in years gone by, when the present translation of the Bible was made, but it does not popularly signify “spirit” now. Superstition has degraded the word from its elevated meaning, and it might be as well, perhaps, if the word were dropped altogether, and we confined ourselves to the more accurate word, “Holy Spirit.” The term, “Holy Spirit,” is His personal title, and we have in this verse His official title—He is in the English version called the “Comforter,” but the word used in the original, upon which we will meditate this morning, has a much wider range of meaning. The word is *Parakletos*—we used it just now in our hymn, translating it into the English as, “Paraclete”—

*“Cheer our desponding hearts,
 You heavenly Paraclete!
 Give us to lie, with humble hope,
 At our Redeemer’s feet.”*

Now, it is true that the name, “Comforter,” is a fair translation from some points of view, but it rather translates a *corner* of the word than the whole of it; it is a light which really streams from the text, but it is one of the seven prismatic colors rather than the combined light of the very instructive and wonderful word, Paraclete. Understand, then, that we have now to consider, this morning, the official title of the Holy Spirit. May we be filled with loving reverence while we study His gracious work and His official name.

I. First, this morning, I shall try to EXPLAIN HOW THE SPIRIT OF GOD IS THE PARACLETE. The word Paraclete is so full, that it is extremely difficult to convey to you all its meaning; it is like those Hebrew words which contain so much in a small compass; it is sternly and even primitively sublime in its simplicity, yet it comprehends great things. Literally, it signifies, “called to,” or, “called beside” another to aid him. It is synonymous verbally, though not in sense, with the Latin word, *advocatus*, a person called in to speak for us by pleading our cause. Yet, as we have come to use the word, “advocate,” in a different sense, that word, although it would like that of, “comforter,” convey a part of the meaning, it could not contain it all. Paraclete is wider than “advocate,” and wider than “comforter.” I think the meaning of the word, “Paraclete,” might be put under the two headings of one “called to,” and

one “calling to.” one called to, that is, to come to our aid, to help our infirmities, to suggest, to advocate, to guide and so on, and one who in consequence thereof for our benefit, calls to us—for some see in it the idea of monitor, and certainly the blessed Paraclete is our teacher, remembrancer, incentive, and Comforter. His work as one called in to help us, consists very largely in His strengthening us by admonition, by instruction, by encouragement, and by those works which would come under the head of a teacher or a Comforter. Paraclete is a word too extensive in meaning to be exchanged for any one word in any language; it is most comprehensive, and we shall hope not so much to *interpret* as to paraphrase it in the first head of our sermon this morning.

Let us take all the passages in John 14:15-16 which refer to this title and study them with care. From the first, which is our text, we learn that the Holy Spirit, as the Paraclete, is to be to *us* all that Jesus was to His disciples. Read the text, “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you *another* Comforter.” This plainly teaches that the Lord Jesus Christ is the *first* Paraclete, and that the Holy Spirit is a *second* Paraclete occupying the same position as the living Jesus did. It would not be easy to describe all that Jesus was to His disciples when He dwelt among them. If we called Him their “guide, and counselor, and friend,” we should but have begun to catalog His kindnesses. What a valiant leader is to an army when his very presence inspires them with valor, when his wisdom and tact conduct them to certain victory, and when his influence over them nerves and strengthens them in the day of battle—all that, and more, was Jesus Christ to His disciples! What the shepherd is to the sheep, the sheep being foolish, and the shepherd, alone, wise; the sheep being defenseless, and the shepherd strong to protect them; the sheep being without power to provide for themselves in any degree, and the shepherd able to give them all they require—all that was Jesus Christ to His people! You see Socrates in the midst of his pupils, and you observe at once that the great philosopher is the main professor of his school; but still, some follower of Socrates may improve upon what he teaches. Now, when you see Jesus, you observe at once that all His disciples are but as little children compared with their Master, and that the school would cease at once if the great teacher were gone! He is not only the founder, but the finisher of our system; Jesus is to us not only the doctor but the doctrine—“He is the way, and the truth, and the life.” The disciple of Christ feels Jesus to be inexpressibly precious; he does not know how many uses Christ can be put to, but this he knows—Christ is all in all to him! As the Orientals say of the palm tree, that every fragment of it is of use, and there is scarcely any domestic arrangement into which the palm tree, in some form or other, does not enter; even so Jesus Christ is good for everything to His people, and there is nothing that they have to do, or feel, or know that is good or excellent, but Jesus Christ enters into it. What would that little company of disciples have been as they went through the streets of Jerusalem without their Lord? Think of Him absent and no other Paraclete to fill His place and you see no longer a powerful band of teachers equipped to revolutionize the world, but a company of fishermen without intelligence and without influence—a band which in a short time will melt under the influence of unbelief and cowardice! Christ was all in all to His people while He was here.

Now, all that Jesus was, the Spirit of God is now to the church. He is “Another Paraclete to abide with us forever.” If there is this day any power of God in the Church of God, it is because the Holy Spirit is in the midst of her! If she is able to work any spiritual miracles, it is through the might of His indwelling; if there is any light in her instruction; if there is any life in her ministry; if there is any glory gotten to God; if there is any good worked among the sons of men, it is entirely because the Holy Spirit is still with her! The entire weight of influence of the church as a whole, and every Christian in particular, comes from the abiding presence of the sacred Paraclete! And brothers and sisters, we shall do well to treat the Holy Spirit as we would have treated Christ had He been yet among us. Our Lord’s disciples told Him their troubles; we must trust the Comforter with ours. Whenever they felt that they were barbed by the adversary, they fell back upon their leader’s power; so must we call in the aid of the Holy Spirit. When they needed guidance, they sought direction from Jesus; we also must seek and abide by the Spirit’s leadings. When knowing what to do, they felt themselves weak for the accomplishment of it, they waited upon their Master for strength; and so must we upon the Spirit of all grace. Treat the Holy Spirit with the love and tender respect which are due to the Savior, and the Spirit of God will deal with you as the Son of God did with His disciples!

Now, beloved, we must pass on in our review of the passages of Scripture which relate to the Paraclete and remember there are only five. We know that the Holy Spirit comforts the people of God by the

mere fact of His presence and indwelling. “I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever.” “For,” says the 17th verse, “He dwells with you, and shall be in you.” Beloved, I have said that the mere fact of the presence of the Holy Spirit is comfort to the saints, and is it not? Jesus has not left you orphans, O you His chosen friends! He has gone, but He has left an equally divine substitute, the Holy Spirit! And if at this moment you do not feel His power; if you are even crying out under a sense of your own natural deadness, yet is it not a comfort to you that there is a Holy Spirit, and that the Holy Spirit dwells in you at this present time? You are not required to bring down the Holy Spirit from heaven by praying—

*“Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With all Your quickening powers.”*

He *has* come down from heaven and has never gone back again! He dwells in His Church perpetually, and is not to be brought from on high. He is lawfully to be *called upon* to work in us, and He is always here! “Oh,” you say, “then I must have hope, for if the Spirit of God is in me, I know that He will expel my sin; if I were alone and had to fight my spiritual battles alone, I might despair; but if it is true that the eternal God Himself, in the majesty of His omnipotence, dwells within my bosom, then, my heart, be of good comfort and be encouraged, the Lord who is in you is mightier than all they that are against you!” Satan may roar, the lusts of the flesh may rebel, and the temptations of the world may assail, but if the Holy Spirit is really resident within the believer’s heart, then perfection will one day be attained, and the last enemy will be trod down! It is consolation to us to know that the Holy Spirit dwells in us and He deserves His name of Comforter from the mere fact of His presence and indwelling.

But we pass on to notice that according to the 26th verse, the Spirit of God exercises His office as a Paraclete, and comforts us by His teaching—“The Comforter, who is the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatever I have said to you.” It is a part of the Spirit’s work to make us understand what Jesus taught; if He were merely to bring to remembrance the words of Jesus, it would do us little good; even as when a child learns his catechism, and does not understand it, it is not of much service to him to bring to remembrance the words of the questions and answers. But if you first *teach* him their meaning, and *then* bring the words to remembrance, you have conferred upon him a double and an inestimable gift. Now, we can, as far as the letter goes, learn from the Scriptures the words of Jesus for ourselves; but to *understand* these teachings is the *gift* of the Spirit of God and of none else! After He takes the key and lets us into the inner meaning of the Lord’s words—after He makes us experimentally and inwardly to know the force and the power of the truth of God which Christ revealed—then it is very profitable to us to have brought up before our minds the very words of Jesus, and they come to us full of power and sweetness.

Now, beloved you perceive that while the word “Comforter,” does not take in all the meaning of the word Paraclete, yet every work of His assists our consolation, and the Holy Spirit as a teacher teaches us truths which comfort us. What comfort is there in the world equal to the words of Jesus when they are really understood? Is not Jesus Christ Himself, “The consolation of Israel”? And therefore, everything that is of Him is full of consolation to Israel! If the Spirit of God makes us understand the doctrines of Christ, as, for instance His teaching concerning the pardon of sin by faith, and the love of God towards the contrite, and His teaching in His own person of the need of a substitute, and of the provision of a substitute; if those things are really taught to our souls, the Paraclete becomes, indeed, a Comforter to us! I can, as God may help me, teach you the letter of God’s Word, but there is one who teaches you to profit effectually and savingly; may He exercise His office upon each one of you!

Furthermore, we note that in this manner, through the Holy Spirit, we obtain peace. Observe the verse which follows: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world gives, give I unto you.” He who is taught of God naturally enjoys peace, for if I am taught that my sins were laid on Jesus, and the chastisement of my peace was upon Him, how can I help having peace? If I am taught that Jesus intercedes for me before the eternal throne, and has taken His blood as my atonement into the Holy Place, how can I help having peace? And if I am taught the promises of God, and made to know that they are, “Yes and amen in Christ Jesus,” how can I be prevented from enjoying peace? Can I not sing—

*“The gospel bears my spirit up!
A faithful and unchanging God
Lays the foundation for my hope,*

In oaths, and promises, and blood”?

Let the Spirit of God reveal God to you as the everlasting God who loved you before the world was; as the unchanging God who never can turn away His heart from you, and can you do otherwise than rejoice with exceedingly great joy? Let the Spirit of God reveal to you the pierced hands and feet of Jesus; let Him enable you to put your finger into the prints of the nails, and touch the wounds of His feet, and lay your heart to His heart—why, if you have not peace, you would be a melancholy miracle of perverse despondency! But you must have rest when you have Jesus Christ, yes, and such a rest that Jesus calls it, “My peace,” the very peace that is in the heart of Christ, the unruffled serenity of the conquering Savior who has finished forever the work which God gave Him to do! What rich comfort is this which the Paraclete brings to us!

But we have not brought out all the meanings yet, for as we have already said, the word, Paraclete, signifies advocate. You remember in John’s first epistle he uses this expression, “If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous”? Now in the Greek the passage stands, “If any man sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father”—it is the same word which is here rendered Comforter, and you see clearly that it would not do to render it Comforter in that place, else it would read, “If any man sin, we have a Comforter with the Father,” which would be absurd! The word means, “advocate,” there, and so it must here! The Spirit of God exercises for us the office of an advocate, but He is *not* an advocate or intercessor *in heaven*—our Lord Jesus Christ fills that office! The Holy Spirit does not intercede for the saints, but He makes intercession *in* the saints according to the will of God. God the Son makes intercession *for* the saints; God the Holy Spirit makes intercession *in* the saints. Let me show you how that is by bringing you back to the chapters which we are studying.

In the 15th chapter we find the Savior describing His saints in the world as hated and persecuted for His sake, and He bids them expect this. But He consoles them in the 26th and 27th verses—“When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceeds from the Father, He shall testify of Me: and you also shall bear witness, because you have been with Me from the beginning.” Now the passage means just this—while Jesus Christ was here, if anyone had anything to say against Him or His disciples, the Master came forward to the front, and He soon baffled His foes so that they confessed, “Never man spoke like this man.” At this present time our Master and head is gone from us—how are we to answer the attacks of the world? Why, we have another Paraclete to come to the front and speak for us, and if we had but confidence in Him, beloved, He would have spoken for us much more loudly than sometimes He has done! And whenever we learn to leave the business in His hands, He will do two things for us—first, He will speak for us Himself, and next, He will enable us also to bear witness. At this present time many questions of doctrine are mooted, many objections to the truth of God are started, and there are many who would lay the axe at the very root of Christianity and cut it down as a rotten tree! What is our answer? I will tell you. Nearly all the books that have been written to answer modern philosophies are a waste of time and a waste of paper; the only way in which the church can hold her own, and answer her detractors is by *real* power from God! Has she done anything for the world? Can she produce results? By her fruits shall she be proved to be a tree of life to the nations!

Now the Spirit of God, if we would but trust Him, and give up all this idolatry of human learning, cleverness, genius, eloquence, rhetoric, and I know not what beside, would soon answer our adversaries! He would silence some of them by converting them as He answered Saul of Tarsus by turning him from a persecutor to an apostle; He would silence others by confounding them, by making them see their own children and relations brought to know the truth of God! If there is not a miraculous spiritual power in the Church of God at this day, she is an impostor! At this moment the only vindication of our existence is the presence and work of the Paraclete among us; is He still working and witnessing for Christ? I fear He is not in some churches, but here we behold Him; look at His workings in this place; nearly 20 years ago our ministry commenced in this city under much opposition and hostile criticism; the preacher being condemned on all hands as vulgar, unlearned, and, in fact, a nine days’ wonder! Jesus Christ was preached by us in simpler language than men had been accustomed to hear, and every one of our sermons was full of the old-fashioned gospel. Many other pulpits were intellectual, but we were Puritanical. Rhetorical essays were the wares retailed by most of the preachers, but we gave the people the gospel—

we brought out before the world the old Reformers' doctrines, Calvinistic truth, Augustinian teaching, and Pauline dogma!

We were not ashamed to be the "Echo of an exploded evangelism," as some wiseacre called us; we preached Christ and Him crucified, and by the space of these 20 years have we ever lacked a congregation? When has not this vast hall been thronged? Have we ever lacked conversions? Has a Sunday passed over us without them? Has not the history of this church, from its littleness in Park Street until now, been a march of triumph with the hearts and souls of men as the spoil of the war of which the standard has been Christ crucified? And it is so everywhere! Only let men come back to the gospel and preach it ardently, not with comeliness of words and affectation of polished speech, but as a burning heart compels them, and as the Spirit of God teaches them to speak it; then will great signs and wonders be seen! We must have signs following—else we cannot answer the world; let them sneer; let them rave; let them curse; let them lie—God will answer them! It is ours in the power of the Spirit of God to keep on preaching Christ, and glorifying the Savior. Just as Jesus always met the adversary in a moment, and the disciples had no need of any other defender, so we have another Paraclete, who in answer to prayer will vindicate His own cause, and gloriously avenge His own elect.

And then, brothers and sisters, we are promised that this same Spirit will make us witnesses, too. It shall be given us in the same hour what we shall speak. The Christians who were brought before the Roman tribunals often nonplussed their enemies, not by excellence of words and human wisdom, but by their holy simplicity and zeal. Christ, by His Spirit, was manifest in the midst of the primitive saints, and they were victorious through this other Paraclete who was with them! Moreover, brothers and sisters, the advocacy of the Holy Spirit does not merely relate to the ungodly, but it has to do with ourselves. The Spirit of God is an advocate with us, or within us; He leads us into comfort and advocates our cause before the judgment seat of our conscience; this work He does in a manner strange to flesh and blood. Beloved, if the Holy Spirit is an advocate within you, speaking peace within you by Jesus Christ, I will tell you how He will plead with you. First, He will convict you of sin; He will show you to be altogether lost and ruined, and undone—for till your self-righteousness is swept out of you, there will be no solid consolation. He will convict you of the master sin of having been an unbeliever in Christ, and He will lay you low at the foot of the cross as well as at the foot of Sinai to make you feel that you are a sinner against God's love as well as His law—a rebel against the five wounds of Jesus as well as against the Ten Commandments of God! And when He has done this, He will convict you of righteousness, (John 16:10) that is to say, He will show you that the righteousness of Christ renders you perfectly acceptable with God; He will show you, in fact, that Jesus is "Made of God unto you righteousness." Then the Spirit of God will comfort you again by bringing home to you a sense of judgment; He will show you that you and your sins were both judged and condemned on Calvary; He will show you that the evil which now seeks to get the mastery over you was then and there judged and condemned to die, so that you are fighting with a convicted adversary who only lingers for a little while, and then shall be entirely dead, even as he now is crucified with Christ.

When the Spirit of God has brought these three things home to you, what an advocate He will be with you! He will say, "Heart, can you now despair? What will you despair about? Your sin was laid on Jesus! What do you fear? Oh heart, do you lament your lack of righteousness? You have it all in Jesus! Why do you tremble? Do you fear the coming judgment? You have been judged and condemned in Christ—therefore the sin that is in you shall die, and your inner life shall live eternally." It is blessed when the Spirit of God argues thus in our conscience. Memory will say, "You did such-and-such that will condemn you." But the Spirit of God replies, "That has been already acknowledged; I have already condemned this sin, but it was laid upon the great scapegoat's head and carried away." Then Fear will come up and say, "The Lord will visit this man's sin upon him." The Spirit of God will plead again, and ask, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? Is God unrighteous to forget the work and labor of His dear Son?" So with blessed debating power the holy Comforter within our soul will plead and intercede in us, and we shall obtain consolation!

Once again, the Holy Spirit is a Paraclete according to the 16th chapter, at the 13th verse, by His *guiding* us into all truth, which is, I think, more than was meant by His *teaching* us all truth. There are a number of caverns, full of sparkling stalactites in some parts of the world. Now, it is a good thing when you are traveling to be taught where each of these caverns is—that is teaching you truth. But it is a better

thing when the guide comes forward with his flaming torch and conducts you down through the winding passages into the great subterranean chambers, and holds his flambeau aloft while 10,000 crystals, like stars, vying in color with the rainbow, flash their beams upon you! So the Spirit of God will convince you that such-and-such a teaching is the truth of God, and that is very much to know; But when He leads you *into* it so that you *experimentally* know it, taste it, and feel it—oh, then you are admitted to the innermost cave of jewels where “The diamond lights up the secret mine!” It is a blessed thing when the Spirit of God guides us into all the truths of God! A great many Christians never get *into* the truth of God; they sit on the outside of it, but do not enter in; it is like a great nut to them—they polish the shell and prize it, but if they could once pierce the kernel and taste the interior flavor of the nut, how greatly would they be comforted! John Bunyan used to say he never knew a truth of God until it was burned into him as with a hot iron. I sympathize in that expression; there are some truths in the Bible which nobody could make me doubt at all, because they are interwoven with my vitality; and others are so profitable to my inmost soul that I could not give them up; they are the very life and joy of my being!

There is an old story of a bishop making £10,000 a year who had an argument with a young man upon the correctness of episcopacy, and at the end replied to his antagonist: “Does this young man imagine that he can reason me out of £10,000 a year?” Self-interest in the bishop’s case sustained his reasoning! The same is true with me, only in an infinitely higher degree, and in a far more spiritual sense. If the doctrines I preach to you are not true, I am a lost man; my life becomes an agonizing disappointment, and my death a horrible calamity. I know the gospel is true because I have tried and proved its power; I know its inside as well as its outside; I do not merely believe its creed, but its truth is to me real and practical; so therefore I say, “Does the fool think he can argue me out of my peace of heart; my joy in the Lord; my hope of heaven?” It cannot be! The experienced believer is invulnerable from head to foot against anything and everything that can be hurled against him by skepticism! We are as sure of the truth of the gospel as we are of our own existence! The old philosopher heard a man assert that we do not exist, and his only reply was to get up and walk! So when we hear arguments against our holy faith, all we have to do is just live on in the power of the Spirit and silence gainsayers. May the Holy Spirit thus lead you into all truth; into the secret of the Lord may He conduct you, and there may you feast upon fat things, full of marrow, and upon wines on the lees well-refined.

Once more, in the 16th chapter, and 14th verse, we are told that the Paraclete glorifies Christ by, “Taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to us.” Could infinite wisdom select a sweeter topic for a disconsolate heart than, “The things of Christ?” Ah, beloved, when you speak of the things of Christ to a broken heart, you have laid your fingers on the right string! You may bring me the things of Moses and of David, of Solomon and of Daniel, but what are *they* to me compared with the things of Christ? Bring me the things of Christ; these are the balm of Gilead; these are the plasters which heal the sores; these are the true medicines of diseased souls! Therefore the Holy Spirit, in His infinite wisdom, lifts Jesus up before us, makes Him great in our esteem, glorifies Him in our hearts, and straightway our souls are full of consolation! How could it be otherwise?

I am sorry that my subject is much too long for my time this morning, and therefore I must pass away from this first head to glance at the second point which I had hoped to have dwelt upon at length.

II. We shall now, secondly, REMARK UPON THE NATURE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT’S COMFORT, and will speak very briefly. It is evident from the passages we have read to you this morning, that the Spirit of God never dissociates His Comfort from His character. John 14:15—“If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter.” The Spirit of God never comforts a man in his sin; disobedient Christians must not expect consolation; the Holy Spirit *sanctifies* and *then* consoles. Search and look, you who hang your heads like bulrushes! See what it is that makes you sorrow, then obey, and you shall be comforted!

Next, the Spirit of God does not aim at working mere comfort by itself and alone, but He produces peace in the heart as the result of other divinely useful processes. He does not comfort us as a fond mother may please her wayward child by yielding to its foolish wishes; the mother does not teach the child anything, nor does she cleanse its body or purify its heart in order to comfort it—perhaps she even neglects these to please the little one! But the Holy Spirit never acts so unwisely. He blesses by purity and *then* by peace. When a man is feeling pain, he is very desirous that the surgeon should administer some drug which will stop the unpleasant sensation immediately, yet the surgeon refuses to do anything

of the kind, but endeavors to remove the *cause* of the evil, which lies far deeper than the pain. Is not the doctor correct? So the Spirit of God comforts us by taking away our ignorance, and giving us knowledge by removing our misapprehensions, and giving us clear understanding, and by taking away our insensibility and convicting us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Do not expect to get comfort by merely running to sweet texts, or listening to pleasing preachers who give you nothing but cups of sugared doctrine! Expect to find comfort through the holy, reproving, humbling, strengthening, sanctifying processes which are the operation of the divine Paraclete!

Note next, the comfort of the Holy Spirit is not a comfort founded upon concealment. Some have obtained consolation by conveniently forgetting troublesome truths of God. Now the Holy Spirit lays the whole truth of God open before us; He brings *all* truth to our recollection, and hides nothing from us; therefore the comfort we obtain from Him is worth having; the consolation not of fools, but of wise men; peace, not for blind bats, but for bright-eyed eagles; a peace which age and experience will not invalidate, but which both of these will deepen, causing it to grow with our growth, and strengthen with our strength. Such is the consolation which the Holy Spirit gives. And mark, and be glad of it, it is a comfort always in connection with Jesus. If you get near to Jesus in your contemplations, you feel you are approaching those comforts which the Spirit intends you to enjoy. Oh, beloved, do not run for consolation to mere prophecies of the future, or soft reflections about the past! Hard by the cross is the deep well of undefiled consolation from which the eternal Spirit draws full buckets for His thirsty people. Be afraid of that comfort which is not based upon the truth of God; hate the comfort which does not come from Christ! Water from the well of Bethlehem is what you need.

It is also comfort which is always available. The comforts of the Holy Spirit do not depend upon health, strength, wealth, position or friendship. The Holy Spirit comforts us through the truth, and the truth does not change. He comforts us through Jesus, and He is, "Yes, and amen." Therefore our comforts may be quite as lively when we are dying, as when we are in vigorous health, and our consolations may be even more abounding when the purse is empty, and the cruse of oil low than when all worldly store and cheer abound to us! This is the comfort, beloved, which in all ages has been the mainstay of believers. It was the comfort of the Spirit which brought the martyrs to stand before their accusers, and to face death without fear; it was the comfort of the Holy Spirit which led the Waldenses to count not their lives dear to them; it made Luther so brave in the face of death, and Latimer so merry even upon the blazing stake! Many a man has died in ecstasy under the power of this consolation, and many a woman has pined away slowly, rejoicing to do so, because when heart and flesh have failed her, this consolation has been the strength of her soul! If you can know the Holy Spirit as your Paraclete, you need not desire any other consolation!

III. And now, finally, let us utter SOME OBSERVATIONS UPON THE WHOLE SUBJECT.

First, to the believer: dear brothers and sisters, honor the Spirit of God as you would honor Jesus Christ if He were present! If Jesus Christ were dwelling in your house, you would not ignore Him; you would not go about your business as if He were not there! Do not ignore the presence of the Holy Spirit in your soul! I beseech you, do not live as if you had not heard whether there were a Holy Spirit. To Him pay your constant adorations; reverence the august guest who has been pleased to make your body His sacred abode; love Him, obey Him, worship Him! Take care never to impute the vain imaginings of your fancy to Him. I have seen the Spirit of God shamefully dishonored by persons (I hope they were insane) who have said that they have had this and that revealed to them. There has not, for some years, passed over my head a single week in which I have not been pestered with the revelations of hypocrites or maniacs! Semi-lunatics are very fond of coming with messages from the Lord to me, and it may save them some trouble if I tell them once and for all that I will have none of their stupid messages! When my Lord and Master has any message to me, He knows where I am, and He will send it to me direct—not by mad-caps! Never dream that events are revealed to you by heaven, or you may come to be like those idiots who dare impute their blatant follies to the Holy Spirit; if you feel your tongue itch to talk nonsense, trace it to the devil, not to the Spirit of God! Whatever is to be revealed by the Spirit to any of us is in the Word of God already; He adds nothing to the Bible, and never will! Let persons who have revelations of this, that, and the other, go to bed and wake up in their senses. I only wish they would follow the advice and no longer insult the Holy Spirit by laying their nonsense at His door!

At the same time, since the Holy Spirit is with you, beloved, in all your learning, ask Him to teach you; in all your suffering, ask Him to sustain you; in all your teaching, ask Him to give you the right words; in all your witness-bearing, ask Him to give you constant wisdom, and in all service depend upon Him for His help. Believingly reckon upon the Holy Spirit. We do not continually take Him into our calculations as we should; we reckon up so many missionaries, so much money, and so many schools, and so conclude the list of our forces, but the Holy Spirit is our great need, not learning or culture! Little knowledge or great knowledge shall answer almost as well if the Spirit of God is there; but all your knowledge shall be worthless without Him! Let but the Spirit of God come and all shall be right. I would we always took the power of the Spirit into our calculations; you have a class at school and do not feel fit to teach it; ask Him to help you, and you do not know how well you will teach! You are called to preach, but you feel you cannot, for you are dull, and your talk will be flat, stale, unprofitable; bring the Holy Spirit into it, and if He heats you, you shall find even the slenderest materials you have collected will set the people on fire! We ought to reckon upon the Spirit—He is our main force; what if I say He is our *only* force, and we grieve Him exceedingly when we do not reckon upon Him? Love the Spirit; worship the Spirit; trust the Spirit; obey the Spirit, and as a church cry mightily to the Spirit; beseech Him to let His mighty power be known and felt among you! The Lord fire your hearts with this sacred flame, for as this made Pentecost stand out from all other days, may it make the close of this year stand out in our history from all other years. Come, Holy Spirit, now! You are with us, but come with power, and let us feel Your sacred Might!

To the unconverted, these few words—dear friend, if you are ever to be saved, the Holy Spirit is essential to you. Unless you are born-again from above, you can never see the kingdom of God, much less enter it. Without the Holy Spirit you are dead! You will never come to any life unless He quickens you, and even the Savior Himself upon the cross will never be a Savior to you till the Holy Spirit comes and gives you eyes with which to look upon Him, and a heart with which to receive Him! Remember that. Therefore I charge you take care that you honor the Spirit and never say a word against Him, lest you be found guilty of that sin against the Holy Spirit which shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come. And let me ask you, has He ever convicted you of the sin in not believing in Jesus? Has He convicted you that there is no righteousness but in Christ? Has He convicted you that God will judge you and all the rest of mankind according to our gospel by Christ Jesus? If so, since He has done that much for you, beseech Him now to take of the things of Christ and show them to you; there is hope for you there! All the salvation of a sinner lies in Jesus, and when the Spirit of God brings Jesus to the heart, He brings salvation!

Oh, poor heart, you will never get out of doubting castle, never cease to be a captive, till the Spirit brings the things of Jesus to you! And I pray that He may, and that He may do so at once. Submit yourself, now, to all that He teaches you; believe the truth of God as He reveals it; above all, listen and be obedient to that great command, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved.” “Incline your ear, and come unto Me: hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.” “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and He will have mercy upon him and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon.” May the Spirit of God lead you in the way of humble confession of sin, of repentance of sin, and of believing in Jesus; and then we will meet in heaven to bless the eternal Paraclete, with the Father and Son forever! Amen.

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