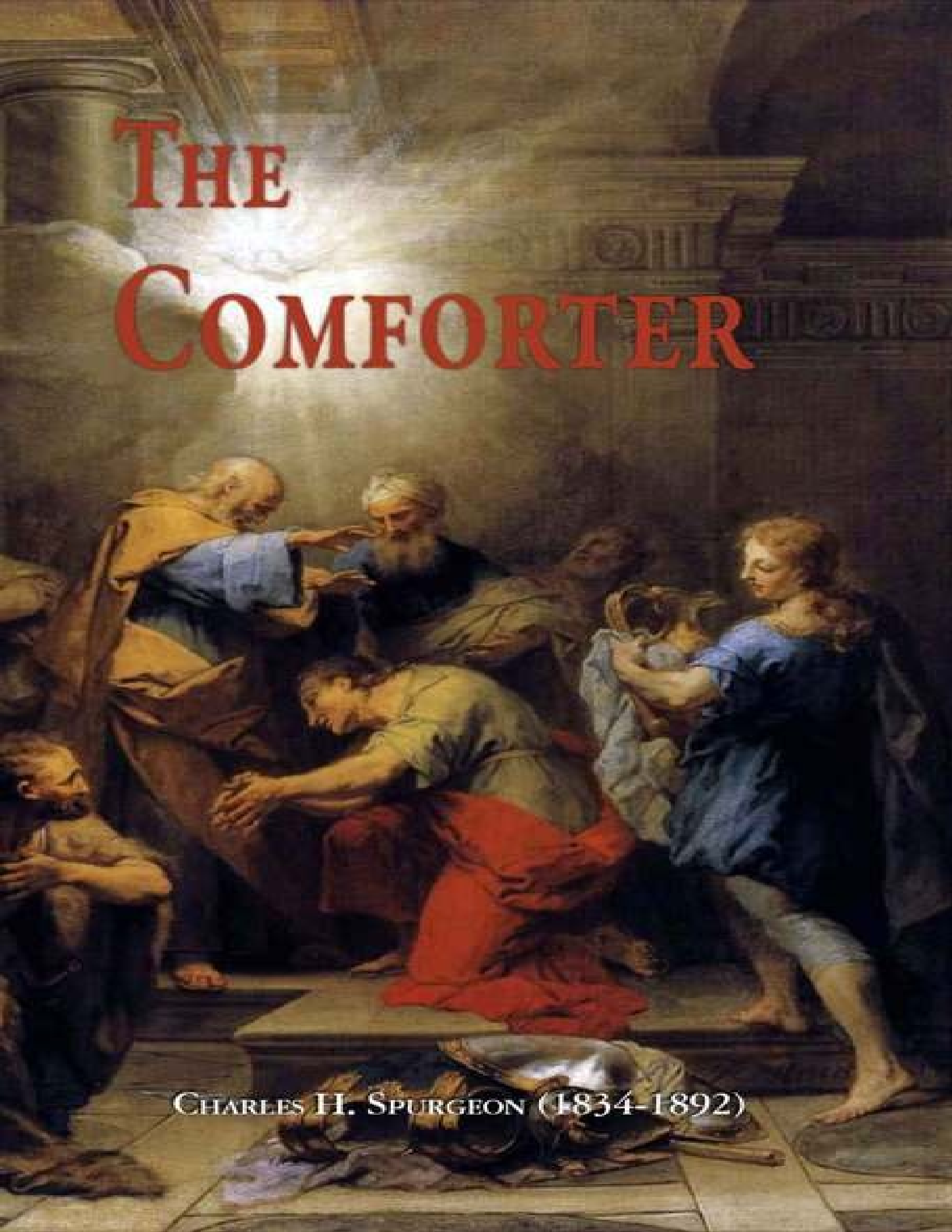
The Comforter



Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892)

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Short Biography of Charles H. Spurgeon

Chapel Library Resources

The Comforter

"I will pray the father, and he shall give you
another Comforter, that he may abide
with you for ever."—John 14:16

The unspeakable gift of the Son of God was followed up by the equally priceless gift of the Holy Ghost. 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 Saviour 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, even as compared with the Redeeemer. 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 honouring 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 must be 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 IIaraklhtos; we used it just now in our hymn, englishing it into "Paraclete":

“Cheer our desponding hearts,
Thou 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 colours 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.

1. The Spirit of God as the Paraclete

First, 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 that 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, would 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 two headings: 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 that 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.

“He will give you another Comforter” (:16)

Let us take all the passages in John 14, 15, and 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 will give you *another* Comforter”; plainly teaching 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 catalogue His kindnesses.

What a valiant leader is to an army, when his very presence inspires them with valour, 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 factotum[1] 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 them not only the Doctor but the Doctrine: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life” (Joh 14:6).

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? Conceive 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 you for ever.” If there be this day any power in the Church of God, it is because the Holy Spirit is in the midst of her. If she be able to work any spiritual miracles, it is through the might of His indwelling. If there be any light in her instruction, if there be any glory gotten to God, if there be any good wrought 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, cometh from the abiding presence of the sacred Paraclete.

And brethren, 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 baffled 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 Saviour, and the Spirit of God will deal with you as the Son of God did with His disciples.

“He dwelleth with you” (:17)

Now, beloved, we must pass on in our review of the passages of Scripture which relate to the Paraclete, and remember they 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 for ever.” “For,” says the seventeenth verse, “he dwelleth 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, oh ye 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 nor a comfort to you that there is a Holy Spirit, and that the

Holy Spirit dwells in you at this present time? Ye are not required to bring down the Holy Spirit from heaven by praying—

> *"Come Holy Spirit, heavenly Dove,*
> *With all thy 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, but He is always here. "Oh," say you, "then I must have hope, for if the Spirit of God be in me, I know that He will expel my sin. If I were alone, and had to fight my spiritual battles unhelped, I might despair: but if it be true that the eternal God Himself, in the majesty of His omnipotence, dwells within my bosom, then, my heart, be of good comfort." If He be really resident within the believer's heart, then perfection will one day be attained, and the last enemy will be trodden down. It is consolation to us to know that the Holy Spirit dwelleth in us, and He deserves His name of Comforter from the mere fact of His presence and indwelling.

"**He shall teach you all things**" (:26)

But we pass on to notice that according to the twenty-sixth verse, the Spirit of God exercises His office as a Paraclete and comforts us by His *teaching*. "The Comforter, who is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall *teach* you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto 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 boon.

Now, we can, so 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 that 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 truth that comforts 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" (Luk 2:25)? 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, His teaching in His own person of the need of a substitute—if those things be really taught as God may help me teach you the letter of God's Word—there is One Who teacheth 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 giveth, give I unto you" (Joh 14:27). He who is taught of God naturally enjoys peace, for if I be 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[2] 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 "yea 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 exceeding 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. Yea, 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 Saviour Who has finished forever the work that God gave Him to do. What rich comfort is this that the Paraclete brings to us!

“We have an advocate with the Father” (1Jo 2:1)

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” (1Jo 2:1). Now in the Greek the passage stands, “If any man sin, we have a *Paraclete* with the Father.” It is the same word that 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 do 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 maketh 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 that we are studying. In the fifteenth chapter we find the Saviour 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 twenty-sixth and twenty-seventh verses:

> *“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: And ye also shall bear witness, because ye 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, forward to the front came the Master, and He soon baffled His foes, so that they confessed, “Never man spake like this man” (Joh 7:46).

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. But 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 to bear witness. At this many questions of doctrine are mooted,[3] many objections to the truth are started[4]—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 waste time and waste paper. The only way in which the Church can hold her own and answer her calumniators[5] is by real power from God. Has she done anything for the world? Can she produce results? For 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, and 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. If there be 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 twenty 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[6] 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[7] 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 twenty years have we ever lacked a congregation? When has not this vast hall been thronged? Have we ever lacked conversions? Has a Sabbath 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; we cannot answer the world else. 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 Saviour. 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, brethren, 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[8] their enemies, not by excellency 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, brethren, 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 be an advocate within thee, speaking peace within thee by Jesus Christ, I will tell thee how He will plead with thee.

First, He will convince thee of *sin*. He will show thee to be altogether lost, ruined, and undone; for till thy self-righteousness be swept out of thee there will be no solid consolation. He will convince thee of the master sin of having been an unbeliever in Christ. And He will lay thee low at the foot of the cross as well as at the foot of Sinai, to make thee feel that thou art a sinner against love as well as Law, a rebel against the five wounds of Jesus as well as against the Ten Commands of God.

And when He has done this He will convince thee of *righteousness* (Joh 16:10). That is to say, He will show thee that the righteousness of Christ renders thee perfectly acceptable with God. He will show thee, in fact, that Jesus “of God is made unto us…righteousness” (1Co 1:30). Then the Spirit of God will comfort thee again by bringing home to thee a sense of *judgment*. He will show thee that thou and thy sins were both judged and condemned on Calvary. He will show thee that the evil which now seeks to get the mastery over thee was there and then judged and condemned to die, so that thou art fighting with 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 thee, doest thou now despair? What wilt thou despair about? Thy sin was laid on Jesus.

What dost thou fear? Oh heart, dost thou lament the lack of righteousness? Thou hast it all in Jesus. Wherefore dost thou tremble? Dost thou fear the coming judgment? Thou hast been judged and condemned in Christ; therefore the sin that is in thee shall die, and thine inner life shall live eternally. It is blessed when the Spirit of God argues in our conscience thus. Memory will say, “Thou didst so and so, that will condemn thee.” But the Spirit of God replies, “That has been acknowledged. I have already condemned this sin, but it was laid upon the great Scapegoat’s head and carried away.” Then will come up fear 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 labour 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 sixteenth chapter, at the thirteenth 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,[9] 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 ten thousand crystals, like stars, vying in colour with the rainbow, flash their beams upon you. So the Spirit of God will convince you that such and such a teaching is truth, 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 truth.

A great many Christians never get into the truth. 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 flavour of the nut, how greatly would they be comforted. John Bunyan[10] used to say he never knew a truth until it was burned into him as with a hot iron. I sympathize deeply in that expression. There are some truths in the Bible that 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 with £10,000 a year,[11] who held 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 be 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. Hence 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 to live on in the power of the Spirit, and silence gainsayers.[12] May the Holy Spirit thus lead you into all truth—into the secret of the Lord may He conduct you, and there feast you upon fat things, full of marrow, and upon wines on the lees well refined.

"Shew it unto you" (16:14)

Once more, in the sixteenth chapter and fourteenth verse, we are told that the Paraclete glorifies Christ by receiving "of mine [Christ], and shall shew it unto you." Could infinite wisdom select a sweeter topic for a disconsolate heart than "the things of Christ?" Ah! Man, 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, there are the plaisters[13] which heal the sore. These are the true medicines of souls diseased. 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.

2. The Nature of the Holy Spirit’s Comfort

We shall now, secondly, remark upon the nature of the Holy Spirit’s comfort.

It is evident from the passages we have read to you this morning, that the Spirit of God *never dissociates His comfort from character*. “If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter” (Joh 14:15-16). 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, ye who hang your heads like bulrushes! See what sin it is that makes you sorrow—obey, and ye 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 endeavours to remove the cause of the evil, which lies far lower than the pain. Is not the doctor right?

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 convincing us of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment (Joh 16:8). 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, but expect to find comfort through the holy, reproving, humbling, strengthening, sanctifying processes that are the operations 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 truth. Now the Holy Spirit lays the whole truth 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; peace that age and

experience will not invalidate, but which both these will deepen, causing it to grow with our growth and strengthen with our strength. Such is the consolation that 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 that 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 consolation undefiled, from which the eternal Spirit draws full buckets for His thirsty people. Be afraid of that comfort which is not based upon truth. Hate the comfort which does not come from Christ. Water from the well of Bethlehem is what you want.

It is comfort, too, that 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 yea and amen (2Co 1:20). 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, that in all ages has been the mainstay of believers. It was the comfort of the Spirit that brought the martyrs to stand before their accusers and to face death with unblanching cheek.[14] It was the comfort of the Holy Spirit that led the Waldenses[15] to count not their Latimer[16] so merry even upon the blazing stake. Many a man hath died in ecstasy under the power of this consolation; and many a woman has pined away slowly, rejoicing so to do, because—when heart and flesh have failed her—this consolation has been the strength of her soul. If you can know the Holy Ghost as your Paraclete, you need not desire any other consolation.

3. Observations

And now, finally, let us utter some observations upon the whole subject.

To the believer

First, to the believer: Dear brother, honour the Spirit of God as you would honour 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 Ghost in your soul. I beseech you, do not live as if you had not heard whether there were any 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 dishonoured 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 spare them some trouble if I tell them once 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, and not by madcaps.[17] 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 Ghost. 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 Ghost 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 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. 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 be 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 took the power of the Spirit into our calculations always. You have a class at school, and you 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; you are dull, and your talk will be flat, stale, unprofitable. Bring the Holy Spirit into it, and if He fire you, you shall find even the slender materials you have collected will set the people on a blaze. We ought to reckon upon the Spirit. He is our main force, what if we say He is our sole 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! Thou art with us, but come with power and let us feel Thy sacred might!

To the unconverted

To the unconverted, these few words: Dear friend, if thou art ever to be saved, the Holy Spirit is essential to thee. Except thou be born again from above, thou canst never see the kingdom of God, much less enter it. Without the Holy Ghost thou art dead. Thou wilt never say never a word against Him, lest thou be found guilty of that sin against the Holy Ghost which shall never be forgiven, neither in this world nor in that which is to come(Mat 12:31).

And let me ask thee, has He ever convinced thee of thy sin in not believing in Jesus? Has He convinced thee that there is no righteousness but in Christ? Has He convinced thee that God will judge thee and all the rest of mankind according to our gospel by Christ Jesus? If so, since He has done thus much for thee, beseech Him now to take of the things of Christ and show them to thee. There is hope for thee 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, thou wilt

never get out of Doubting Castle,[18] never cease to be a captive, till the Spirit bring the things of Jesus to thee; and I pray that He may, and that He may do so at once.

Submit thyself now to all that He teaches thee. Believe the truth as He reveals it. Above all, listen thou, and be obedient to that great command,

> *"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Act 16:31).*
>
> *"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" (Isa 55:3).*
>
> *"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 (Isa 55:7)."*

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 Father and Son, forever. Amen.

Short Biography of Charles H. Spurgeon

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-1892) was born in Kelvedon, Essex, England, June 19, 1834. Because his father and grandfather were pastors, Spurgeon was reared with the knowledge of the Gospel. Yet, he was not converted until a snowy January morning in 1850. In August of the same year, Spurgeon preached his first sermon to a small gathering of farmers.

A year later, a village church called him as its pastor. In 1854, when he was nineteen, he was installed as shepherd over the flock of the New Park Street Chapel, Southwark, London, which later became the Metropolitan Tabernacle. Beginning in January 1855, Spurgeon's sermons were published weekly, a practice which did not cease until 1916, twenty-four years after his death. During his pastorate in London, Spurgeon ministered to a congregation of nearly 6,000 people each Sunday, published his sermons weekly, and wrote a monthly magazine. He also founded a college for pastors, two orphanages, a home for the elderly, a colportage society, and several mission stations.

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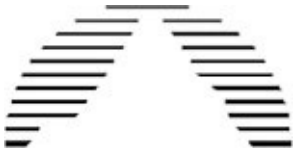

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[1] **factotum** – one employed to do all sorts of work.
[2] **atonement** – reconciliation by paying the debt owed for an offense.
[3] **mooted** – suggested or brought up for discussion.
[4] **started** – blocked.
[5] **calumniators** – enemies who defame and slander.
[6] **Rhetorical** – pertaining to the art of eloquent language in speech.
[7] **Augustine** of Hippo (354-430) – early church theologian born in Tagaste, North Africa. Known as the father of orthodox theology.
[8] **nonplussed** – bewildered; thoroughly perplexed.
[9] **stalactites** – cone-shaped structures in caves formed by mineral deposits from dripping water.
[10] **John Bunyan** (1628-1688) – English minister, preacher, and beloved author of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, *The Holy War*.
[11] **£10,000 a year** – amount of annual income. Equivalent to hundreds of thousands today. 1.00 British pound = ~$1.50.
[12] **gainsayers** – those who deny, contradict, or oppose.
[13] **plaisters** – medicinal paste-on cloths applied to the body.
[14] **unblanching cheek** – staunch boldness.
[15] **Waldenses** – members of a greatly persecuted Christian movement which began in the 12th century.
[16] **Latimer**, Hugh (c. 1487-1555) – English protestant martyr.
[17] **madcaps** – reckless or impulsive persons.
[18] **Doubting Castle** – from Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678), where Giant Despair tormented Christian and Faithful after their attempted shortcut to heaven.