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The Other Paraclete.

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In the parting discourse of the Lord (John 13, 12—16, *ult.*) “the other Paraclete” is a prominent figure, and every reference to Him carries a deep significance for the Church of Christ. The particular texts in question are John 14, 16, 26; 15, 26; 16, 7ff.

The fact that Jesus, in John 14, 16, speaks of “another” Paraclete expresses indeed the personality of this “other.” The idea of personality is, besides, a plain premise — unasserted because self-evident — for all that is said regarding the activity of the other Paraclete. But the term “another” at once raises the question, Who is the first Paraclete? The context suggests the answer. Jesus had just advised the disciples of His impending departure, chap. 13, 33. The information started a lively questioning of the Lord by Peter, chap. 13, 36, and Thomas, chap. 14, 5. The disciples were becoming disquieted, filled with anxiety. In view of this the talk of Jesus was sounding a compassionate, consolatory note, chap. 14, 1—3, leading over to a very encouraging remark, chap. 14, 12ff., and to the promise of the other Paraclete, v. 16; who is to “abide forever” with the disciples. That is, this other Paraclete is not going to depart from them, as Jesus is preparing to do now. It is plain that the first Paraclete is Jesus Himself, and the other Paraclete is somehow to be His substitute among the disciples. So John, who is the only one of the New Testament writers to use the term Paraclete, evidently understood the situation; for he gives this title to Christ, 1 John 2, 1. There are, then, two Paracletes to whom the disciples are to look up: Christ and the Holy Spirit; for “the other Paraclete” is declared in the verse immediately following to be “the Spirit of Truth.”

But what is a Paraclete? According to its root meaning *παράκλητος* signifies a person who is called, summoned, to one's

side, *der Herbeigerufene*. In classical Greek it has the technical meaning of "attorney-at-law," "advocate." (Demosthenes; Diogenes; Dio Cassius.) In later Greek the meaning has been expanded to embrace any one who takes some one's side, pleads his cause, speaks a good word for him—*der Fuersprecher*. (Philo; Josephus; Flaccus.) This is the meaning which Luther and the Authorized Version have given to the term in their translation of 1 John 2, 1. A still wider meaning must be credited to the term in the gospel of John, where a number of specific activities of the Holy Spirit as Paraclete are stated. In view of these activities the term Paraclete might be interpreted by any one of these terms: Helper, Sustainer, Vindicator, Caretaker. In the gospel of John, Luther, under the influence of the context, has appropriately rendered the term by *Troester*, and the Authorized Version has translated Luther rather than the original Greek.¹) It is squeamish to criticize Luther for translating *παράκλητος* by "Comforter," as Meyer does, merely on the ground that *παράκλητος* is in the passive form and should therefore be given a passive meaning. Even if we would render the term by "Advocate," we would constantly be thinking of what the Advocate is to do for us rather than of the fact that He has been summoned. Luther's practical exegesis of the Paraclete passages in John²) is not only a vindication of his translation, but also a classical interpretation of the Paraclete texts. Every pastor and pastoral conference should make Luther's exposition of these texts the subject of special study.

How well Luther has caught the tenor of the Lord's discourse in which this peculiar title of the Holy Spirit occurs, the introductory remarks of his exposition of John 14, 15, 16 may show. "These are altogether words such as a person speaks who is about to take his leave and say good night. His object is to comfort them and to encourage them not to be alarmed at His departure nor yield to sadness. As though He meant to say: I have to be gone now from your sight; therefore I am saying this to you for a good-bye. This is to be My farewell to you: Be not fearful or terrified; only believe in Me and grasp what I am telling you. For, though you have no help nor comfort in the world, it is not

1) Incidentally it may be noted that the translation of *παράκλητος* in the Authorized Version is one of the numerous proofs of the dependence of this Version upon Luther's translation.

2) VIII, 377—411; 456—466; 597—607; 644—666. Compare also the sermons in both postils on the pericopes for Exaudi and Cantate.

My intention to leave you without comfort and help. Yea, the very reason why I am going to My Father is that I may take possession of My powerful government and manifest the same toward you. Although I get away from you bodily, I shall send you another Comforter from the Father, who is to be ever with you. For I know that you cannot abide in the world without a Comforter. Hitherto I have been your Comforter by My bodily presence, in which you rejoiced, felt safe, were without fear, and would like to remain. Now that you hear that you are about to lose this comfort, you are sad and depressed. But you are not going to suffer any damage. Only remain My disciples and stick to Me, and I shall give you a rich compensation for what you lack. For I Myself shall pray the Father to give you the Comforter who is to abide with you forever, and whom neither the world nor the devil shall take from you spite of their frenzied and insane efforts. He is to strengthen you, make you confident and bold, more than I can by My bodily presence. He is also to make you more prudent and wise than all the world, so that you shall have no lack of consolation, strength, and courage, nor of wisdom. That is the comfort." 3)

This generous valedictory promise of Jesus to His little band of followers had been foreshadowed by His remarks to them on the occasion when they were starting out on their first personal Gospel expedition, Matt. 10, 19 f., in the Master's talk on avoiding hypocrisy, Luke 12, 11 f., and quite recently in His eschatological discourse on Mount Olivet, Mark 13, 11. On each of these occasions the prospect had been held up to them that in their future hours of trial they would be made inspired mouthpieces of the Holy Ghost. The remarks of Jesus on the Paraclete in the upper room at Jerusalem, immediately before He started for Gethsemane, expand the previous promises of the gift of the Holy Spirit and present striking details of the work of the Holy Spirit in and through the Church of Christ, which was to be established throughout the world by the disciples' testimony.

During the triennium of their comradeship with Jesus the disciples had become closely attached to their great Teacher. They had felt that in the company of Jesus they were constantly moving in the presence of the Deity, not in its terrible majesty as their forefathers had witnessed it at the foot of the quaking mount in the desert, but in a compassionately condescending manifestation

3) VIII, 377 f.

with soul-winning power. John 1, 17. In Jesus God had chosen to reveal Himself "full of grace and truth." It was unparalleled grace to behold "the great God and Savior Jesus Christ," Titus 2, 13, in His conversation among them descending to the level of sinful men: He walked with weak, erring mortals as one of them, bore with their daily shortcomings, mercifully corrected their waywardness, and kept alive their faith and hope in the life everlasting, His great promise. By His preaching and teaching they had been led into a knowledge of truth such as had been accessible to them nowhere else: truth regarding God's essence and will, truth regarding themselves and all other men, truth regarding all things in this present life and that which is to come, truth concerning the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven on earth, the true character of the Church, her mission among the nations, her fortunes during the present eon, her destiny. All their wants had been supplied, all difficulties leveled for them, all dangers overcome, the mouths of their enemies stopped, their frequent misgivings dissipated, by their divine Teacher and Friend. They had learned what it means to be children of God and had confessed the full assurance of faith which they placed in Him and the abundance of consolation they derived from Him, John 6, 68f.; Matt. 16, 16, even as other believers in the wider circle of the followers of Jesus confessed these facts, John 11, 27. What a wealth of varied experiences may be summed up in the brief remark of John: "Of His fulness have all we received, and grace for grace"! John 1, 16. As many men come to a fountain freely flowing, and while one dips into it to satisfy himself, the water keeps on surging upward to meet the need of the next client, so they had been dipping into the inexhaustible fountain of the mercy, love, grace, kindness, and compassion of Jesus and had found that there was no end of it: new grace came crowding in upon the last grace received, and every kindness seemed in danger of being buried under a multitude of impending kindnesses.⁴⁾ Thus had Jesus been their Paraclete.

This state of affairs is not to terminate. The disciples must not think so; they must not misconstrue Christ's words of farewell. Where He leaves off His ministration to them, those of Another will set in. This other will be Christ's compeer,⁵⁾ kith and kin of the divine Jesus, hence fully competent to carry on the work of

4) Proximam quamque gratiam satis quidem magnam gratia subsequens cumulo et plenitudine sua quasi obruit. — *Bengel*.

5) Χριστῷ σύγγονος. — *Nonnus*.

Jesus and lead it forward to its consummation, on the foundation laid by the teaching of Jesus and, more particularly, by His return to the Father after the completion of His atoning sacrifice. This other Paraclete will "be with them." This same phrase Jesus employs when referring to His own sojourn with the disciples, John 13, 33; 14, 9; 16, 4; Matt. 17, 17. The phrase expresses not only presence, but, as the context shows, helpful presence, like that of a prompter, adviser, sustainer, protector, and sharer of one's joys and sorrows. (Comp. John 17, 24; Matt. 26, 38.) The other Paraclete will be with them "forever." Forty days later the disciples hear their glorified Lord promise them His own presence and companionship in the same terms. Matt. 28, 20. The two promises in John 16, 14 and Matt. 28, 20, while referring to distinct persons in the Godhead, must be taken together. The Holy Spirit is *ἄλλος*, "Another," a distinct divine Ego; but He is never separate from the Redeemer, Christ, in His attentions to the flock of Christ. He is continuing the rescuing and church-building mission of Christ among men, and being able to appeal to the finished work of Christ and operating on the basis of the universal reconciliation of the sinner-world with God which Christ has effected, 2 Cor. 5, 18 ff., He is accomplishing through the believers "greater works" after the withdrawal of Christ's visible presence from men than were done in the days of Christ's flesh. John 14, 12. Christ is still present with His people, in their inner life of faith and in their outward activities as empire-builders for the King of kings; the mode and manner of His presence alone has been changed. The apostles knew that the Spirit who was operating through them and the young congregations of Christians that were springing up throughout Asia Minor and Europe was "the Spirit of God," "the Spirit of Christ," Rom. 8, 9; Gal. 4, 6; in fact, it was the exalted Christ Himself communicating Himself through the other Paraclete to the believers, Rom. 8, 10; Gal. 2, 20. With a joyous ring in His words the greatest of them sums up the blessed consciousness of them all thus: "The Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass [mirror] the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*" 2 Cor. 3, 17 f. Once the beloved disciple had recorded their believing consciousness by saying: "We beheld His glory," John 1, 14; now they and all who have believed through their word, John 17, 20, are now believing, and will hereafter believe, can and do say: "We behold His glory." Was not Luther right in calling

this change from the first to the other Paraclete "a rich compensation"?

A mind of deep spirituality and experience in practical church-life like Luther's is required to bring out into plain view the hidden beauties of this parting promise of Jesus concerning "the other Paraclete." Luther holds that in uttering this promise, Christ "looks with disdain at everything that would terrify Christians, cause them sadness, and induce despondency. As though He were saying: I am well aware that the world, the devil, and your own conscience will frighten and torment you. But do not become disheartened on that account; for you must realize over against all these that I will not have you terrified nor saddened, neither will My Father. Whoever does terrify you, even if He displays My or the Father's name, is assuredly the devil." Luther proceeds to explain how the consolations of the Gospel of Christ are applied to the believer by "the other Paraclete" amidst the smitings and terrors of their accusing conscience. He pleads with the afflicted soul: "Be not discouraged; fear not! Don't you know that you are baptized and believe in Christ? Well, then, you must not be thrown into a panic, neither by the devil and all his angels in hell, nor by your own thoughts. You must not worry what may be your standing with God, but you must concentrate your thought on this single fact, that the anger of God and the fires of hell are completely put out. This is, verily, a fact to all who believe, although they are still conscious of sin and weakness." From this evangelical composure of mind, Luther holds, arises the dauntless courage with which believers face the scorn of the world and the rage of Satan. The Paraclete whispers to them: "Neither must you be afraid of the world, tyrants, and all who would strip you of your honor and possessions and wring your neck because of your connection with Christ. Even if they take all these, you have here a greater treasure, which the devil and the world shall never take from you. Having this Comforter, together with the Father and Christ, you have everything that you may wish for. Therefore take courage and enlarge your heart. Defy and despise everything that afflicts you and say: If the devil and the world were much meaner, still I will not be frightened."

Luther believes that he has offered Christianity a "definition" of the term Paraclete. "Whosoever could grasp this definition would have gained the day and would find and behold in heaven and on earth nothing but consolation and joy. For since the Father, upon the request of Christ, sends this Comforter, He surely

does not act in anger, but the sending must flow from nothing but fatherly and cordial love. Accordingly, a Christian at this point must be diligent to learn that he must make this title or name of the Holy Spirit useful to himself, *viz.*, that He is a Comforter, and we are the saddened and timorous people whom He is to comfort. And, indeed, He is called a Comforter to all who are shy, not only to ourselves, but to all such people throughout the world. For Christ here says that He is a Comforter who is to abide in Christendom forever."

These brief citations are a mere smattering of the meaty comments of Luther on the Paraclete texts. Luther's exposition is a veritable soul's feast. No one will rise from the study of this exposition without a purged vision of the mighty and glorious work of grace that is going on in his own heart spite of all his shortcomings, waywardness, and the practical rebellion of his own reason and flesh. He will learn to treasure as a priceless boon the mystery of faith that causes him to wonder at himself, and the mercy of God that hovers over him. He will see the Church of Christ a beauteous bride of her heavenly Liege spite of the rags and tatters in which she plies her work for Jesus in the image of His humility. He will behold her in her perennial Pentecostal equipment, throbbing with marvelous energy, enjoying at the same time the heart's ease and rest of the justified, the liberty of the ransomed, and the zeal of strivers after holiness, and doing under the loving urging of "the other Paraclete" the "greater works" of which the first Paraclete assured her that they would follow.
