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ON THE OFFICE OF THE PARACLETE IN THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH

BY
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The word Παρακλητος properly signifies a patron who comforts us by the access which, as intercessor, he has on our behalf to another.

It is the will of God that men should not be without such a paraclete. Such was our Lord Jesus while on earth (John xiv. 16) - such is He still at God's right hand (1 John ii. 1). And, in the strictest sense, He is the only Paraclete. But when He was about to leave this earth for a season, He promised to His disciples that the Father should give to them, at His request, another Paraclete, who should remain with them until the age (εις των αιωνα) (John xiv. 16), and whose presence, being virtually His presence, and, by anticipation, His return, should prevent them from being orphans. Yet He vindicated the unity of the office as His own, though fulfilled through another person, by calling that other Paraclete the Holy Spirit, whom the Father should send in His name, whom He should send from the Father, and who should teach and bring to remembrance His words. (John xiv. 26; xv. 26.) And in saying, "He shall not come unto you except I go away," He showed that we cannot have two Paracletes at once. (John xvi. 7.) Therefore, while Christ is our only Paraclete, we have now with us a distinct Divine

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Person, whose functions, as Paraclete in His stead, are as real and as definite as His.

Moreover, our Lord describes the testimony given concerning Him, by the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, as a distinct thing from the testimony given concerning Him by His disciples who had been with Him from the beginning. (John xv. 26.) And Paul describes it not only as distinct from, but as added to, the testimony of those who have heard the Lord, in order to form the complement of theirs. This the word *συνεπιμαρτυρουντος* imports. (Heb. ii. 4.)

Further, Paul declares that the Holy Spirit not only enables us to cry „Abba, Father,“ but does Himself bear concurrent witness, with our spirit, that we are children of God. In other words, He not only, as the Spirit of adoption, *Πνευμα υιοθεσιας*, the Spirit by whom adoption is wrought, inspires us with faith in our adoption, but also bears witness that we are God’s children, by doing those things for us which He does for God’s children alone - i.e., by being the Paraclete to us. (Rom. viii. 16.)

The mission of Paul, as we learn from Romans xv. 16, was,¹ that he should be the Minister or Liturgist (*λειτουργος*) of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, transforming the Gospel of God into priestly service (*ιερουργουντα το ευαγγελιον*); in other words, building among them, by the Gospel, a temple for God, and changing them from being hearers of the Gospel to be worshippers of God, in order that the offering (*προσφορα*) of the Gentiles might become acceptable (*εμπροσδεκτος*), being sanctified in the Holy Ghost (*ηγιασμενη εν Πνευματι αγιω*) - i.e., in order that the Gentiles, who had till then brought unacceptable offerings, and had themselves been an unacceptable offering, might bring and be an acceptable offering, by

¹ The Romans whom Paul addressed were a Church originally composed, and then mainly consisting, of Jews, whom he desired to teach how they should regard their Gentile brethren. They were the *δυνατοι*, the strong, who had to bear the infirmities of the *αδυνατοι*, the weak, that the *οικοδομη*, the building of the one house, might go forward among them, through the patience of the strong, as the bearers of Christ’s reproach, with the weak, who brought the reproach, and through the comfort, *παρακλησις*, of the Comforter, who was to establish their unity in the Head. The Jews were the strong, by having already “received mercy” in that circumcision which only awaited its true fulfilment, and in those promises which only awaited their confirmation. The Gentiles were weak, by having only then „received mercy.“ Both were to be strong in joy, peace, and hope, through the power of one Spirit. And he rests his admonition on the fact that he was commissioned to make the Gentiles a covenant people, and worshippers in the Holy Ghost, as well as the Jews.

that sanctification. The ground of this acceptance is not only faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, but being brought by that faith through holy baptism into a position in which the Holy Ghost can consecrate us to Christ, and through Him to God.

Now, in order to understand how this is done, we must rightly apprehend the new relations into which the Holy Spirit came through the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of the Son.

Although the Son was from all eternity destined to be the Head of the Church, He did not become so at His incarnation. The future King of the Jews was then born; but He did not then appear as king. The High Priest of the true tabernacle was then born; but He did not then appear as a priest. As long as He was on earth He neither was nor could be a priest. Till He commenced His public ministry, at thirty years of age, His whole life was no more than that of the righteous man and the faithful Jew - fulfilling every human obligation to God and man, and fulfilling all righteousness in the highest form in which man was then required to do so - namely, by the observance of the whole Jewish law. And when He commenced His public ministry, He did not cease to be under the Jewish law, but taught, by word and deed, its spiritual fulfilment.

At that age the Holy Spirit descended and abode upon Him, first, in testimony that He was the man in whom God was well pleased; second, as the answer of God to His great act of repentance in receiving the baptism of John; third, in order to furnish Him with the power to fulfil His ministry, active and passive; fourth, as the seal and pledge of that eternal life which He should, as man, inherit for us.

Previous to that time the Holy Ghost had acted in His incarnation and sanctification. But then the Spirit of God, the Spirit of the Father and the Son, became the Spirit of the Son in a new manner, as the Spirit of the Man Jesus Christ. In other words, the change wrought on the relations of the Son by His adoption of a created subsistence into His divine person, induced an analogous change in the relations of the Holy Spirit when He took His abode in the Son as man. The Holy Spirit neither did nor could become incarnate; and He did not, by dwelling in the Son, assume the place of the human spirit in man. But the Son, in becoming man, became capable of being His dwelling-place. In descending on the Son, the Holy Spirit found a dwelling-place in one who had become man, and thenceforward He was not only the Spirit of God, but also the Spirit of the Man Jesus Christ.

Thus He came into a condition in which He was capable of humiliation, suffering, and exaltation. He had not been changed into a creature, and, therefore, His humiliation was not that of a creature; nor was it that very humiliation which the Son underwent in becoming man; but it resulted from it, and was akin to it. He did not die when Christ died, but He was humbled and suffered as the Spirit of Him who died. He was not quickened and glorified as Christ was, but He was exalted and glorified with the Son, at the resurrection of the latter. Both are now „most high in the glory of God the Father.“

Tertillian (adv. Prax.) has a remarkable passage, in which, arguing against the doctrine that the Father suffered, he sets forth the suffering of the Spirit connection with that of the Son: „Etsi Spiritus Domini quid pati possit in Filio, quia tamen non in Patre pateretur, sed in Filio, Pater passus non videretur. Sed sufficit nihil Spiritus Dei passus suo nomine; quia, si quod passus est, in Filio quidem passus est, in quo erat Pater.“

In like manner the Holy Spirit is not now the Mediator, or a second Mediator, between God and man; the Man Christ Jesus alone is Mediator between *God* and *man*. But in consequence of, and in connection with, that mediatorial office which the Son received at

His ascension, the Holy Spirit has received a peculiar office in the body of Christ, and for its members, of whom the Son is the glorified Head. That office is exercised in the consecration of the persons and offerings of the saints, and in the adaptation of them to be presented by Christ to His Father. In the Mediation of Christ we see that none but He who is God can present our offerings to God; in the office of the Holy Spirit we see that none but God can perfect our offerings, and so make them fit to be presented. Wherein there is no infringement on the righteousness of Christ, as the sole ground of our acceptance, and the sole righteousness that can be in us. For the Holy Spirit neither speaketh, acteth, nor showeth of Himself. The perfection with which He crowns our offerings is, though wrought by Him, still the perfection of Christ. His office bears the same relation to that of Christ, that His presence with us does to Christ's presence with us.

Let us apply these remarks to the Sacrifice of the Eucharist and the Office of Prayer.

The bread and wine at the Holy Eucharist are brought up and offered by us in order that they may, through our instrumentality, yet by God's act, become the body and blood of Christ, which, thus constituted, we have the privilege of offering to God, in memorial

of Christ's sacrifice. We believe, with the Roman Catholic Church, not, indeed, that the mere words of institution recited by the priest effect the consecration, but that it is effected by the act of the priest, in obedience to the command, and in the faith of the presence, of Christ. But though the consecration is thus effected, the act is that of a man. God has indeed acted, but He has acted only in that form and measure in which He acts through a creature. The consecration is divine in no higher, as in no lower, sense than that in which the Sacrifice of the Eucharist is divine. And as that sacrifice is not the *very* death of Christ, or the *very* entrance of Christ personal into the Holiest, but only the memorial thereof, so is the consecration, although divine in its nature and effects, such only as a creature can perform.

The sin of the human instruments employed by God, or sin actually committed by them when so employed, can only be purged by the blood of Christ. But, altogether independent of such sin, and on the assumption that none such is committed, the act of consecration, like every act performed by a creature, carries with it the stamp of that infirmity which essentially belongs to every act of the creature - simply because it is a creature, and not God Himself, that does the act. Thus is the offering necessarily imperfect; and it cannot be made perfect otherwise than by

the addition of a divine element, which shall cause it to be no longer a mere creature offering. This element is obtained by the invocation, and found in the operation, of the Holy Spirit, not merely to provide the Eucharist, for that is the work of faithful man, but to sanctify and perfect it - which God alone can do - and, out of two elements testifying of death, to make, by reconstitution into one, a sacrifice testifying of life, and meet to be offered to Him.

The Invocation of the Holy Ghost, omitted in the Roman but retained in the Greek Liturgy, is not a mere prayer that the Holy Spirit would do something in or for us, by assisting us to consecrate aright; nor is it a mere prayer that He would put forth His power in making bread and wine to be Christ's body and blood; nor is it a mere prayer that Christ would, by the Holy Ghost, perform the consecration, for He does all His works in the Church by the Holy Ghost: but, in addition to all this, it is a prayer that, after the priest, abiding in Christ (and in so far as He does so, sinless), has done his part, his very best - he in Christ, and Christ in him - the Holy Ghost Himself would, as a Divine person (although the Spirit of, and subordinate to, the Incarnate Word), descend and impart to the offering the virtue of His Divinity, that what the work of faith has produced may be perfected, and made meet for presentation through

Christ, as the offering of man indeed, yet not as that alone, but as an offering crowned with the element of Divine presence - a sacrifice at once acceptable and accepted by the fire of God - an earthly offering converted by one Divine Person into a heavenly one, to be presented by another Divine Person, not upon the altar on earth, but upon the altar in Heaven.

Moreover, as with the Eucharist, so with those who partake of it. Not only are we holpen by the Holy Spirit to partake in faith, but, having partaken, we expect to be sanctified by Him, crowned by His presence, and so made meet to be seated in heavenly places, now in faith, and afterwards in fact.

In like manner with the Office of Prayer. The Christian Church has rightly retained the practice, observed by the very heathen and enjoined by God on the Jews, of burning incense at the offering of prayer. As symbolic acts relate not to things absent, but to things present in the Church, this use of incense must express something done in the Church during prayer; and that is especially the intercession of the Holy Ghost.

In the Epistle to the Romans (ch. viii.) we are told that they fulfil the law who walk in the Spirit; that they are in the Spirit in whom the Spirit of God

dwells; that they who are led by the Spirit of God are the Sons of God; and that, in the spirit of adoption (υιοθεσιας) - that is, in that Spirit who is the earnest of our future sonship - we cry, "Abba, Father." But we are told more. We are told not only of a work of God's Spirit in us, but also of His work for us; namely, that He, as a separate Person, witnesses with our spirits that we are the Sons and heirs of God. We are further told wherein this His concurrent testimony consists - viz., in doing that for us which He does for God's children alone. We are still further informed what it is which He thus does for us - viz., that, while we who have the first-fruits of the Spirit do groan in ourselves, reaching out for our future sonship (which shall be declared at our entrance into glory, as that of Christ was at His), the Holy Spirit also Himself, or personally, as distinct from us, συναντιλαμβάνεται ταις ασθενειαις ημων, co-undertakes for, or comes to the succour of, our infirmities. And, in the last place, we learn how He does this - viz., that, while we do not know τι προσευξομεθα καθως δει, what we should pray as is fitting, i.e., what is prayer fitting to be presented to God by Christ as Mediator, αυτο το Πνευμα, the Holy Spirit Himself, υπερεντυγχανει υπερ ημων, prays or supplicates in addition, or over and above, for us, not merely in us, στεναγμοις αλαλητοις, with groanings unuttered - i.e.,

not as we do, with groanings uttered in the liturgical forms of prayer, or in occasional ejaculations, but with groanings of a higher character than any human prayer, and heard by no ear but that of God - groanings which form a transaction among the Persons of the adorable Trinity, which proceed from that Spirit of God who alone knoweth the mind of God, and yet which, ascending from the Church wherein the Spirit dwells, constitute in truth the προσευχη καθως δει, the prayer which crowns all ours, and makes them to be prayer as it should be - prayer fit for Christ to present to the Father. Thus are our infirmities holpen, in approaching to God, by the addition of a divine intercession to ours, in such a way that the intercession is still regarded and accepted as ours. He who operates all grace in the Church is the same who intercedes for us in the Church; and, having once descended from Heaven into His temple on earth, He not only abides therein until it is taken up into glory, but intercedes without intermission till the mystery of God is finished. Identified with us, yet superior to us, and next to our glorified Head, He occupies a place of which that assigned to the Virgin Mary, as the "neck of the Church," is the perverted indication; and when we pray in the Holy Ghost, not in mere spiritual power, but with the help of the Spirit's intercession, the Lord has respect not only to the voice of the lowly, but also to the Spirit, whose mind He knows. (Rom. viii. 27.)

Herein lies the emphasis of those words in our Liturgy by which are set forth the fourfold ground of our acceptance in prayer. 1st. That we pray according to God's will; 2nd. That we who pray are the Body of Christ; 3rd. That the intercessions of the Holy Ghost are known to God; 4th. That the mediation of Christ (covering both our prayers, crowned by the intercessions of the Spirit, and those intercessions themselves) prevails with God. And as the Holy Sacrament is the proper symbol of Christ's mediation, so is the incense that of the Spirit's intercession.

Let us now apply this doctrinal truth to the visions of the Apocalypse.

We read in Rev. v. 8, that when the Lamb takes the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, who express the ministry and rule of the Church, fall down before Him, εχοντες εκαστος κιθαρας και φιλιας χρυσας γεμουσας θυμιαματων, αι εισιν αι προσευχαι των αγιων, having each harps and vials brimful of odoriferous things, which (odoriferous things) are the prayers of the saints. This points out praise and prayer as the two chief components of worship; and, concerning prayer, it indicates the difference between the vials and their components. The vials are not the prayers - their contents are the prayers. Of these contents the vials are full to

the brim; and these golden vials, thus filled, and held in the hand of each living creature and elder, are not the saints or their prayers, but the various forms of truth which those prayers should fill with life in holy worship.

What, then, are these odours or odoriferous things, these *θυμιαματα* ? This we learn from Rev. viii. 8, where the sounding of the seven trumpets is introduced by the twofold use of an incense store-vessel, first for the offering of incense on the altar, and then for the casting of the fire of the altar into the earth. We there see an angel standing *επι το θυσιαστηριον*, at or on the altar, having *λιβανωτον χρυσουν*, a golden incense-vessel, and to whom are given *θυμιαματα πολλα*, many odoriferous things, *ινα δωση ταις προσευχαις των αγιων παντων*, that he may give or add them to the prayers of all the saints, *επι του θυσιαστηριου*, at or on the golden altar, before the throne. Whereupon the smoke *των θυμιαματων ταις προσευχαις των αγιων*, of the odoriferous things, (added to) the prayers of the saints, ascends up before God. The odoriferous things which, in the former vision, are seen as being already in the vials, are here seen as before they are put into them, and as they are contained in a *λιβανωτος*, or vessel for holding a supply of incense. These odoriferous things

are not, as some would read it, given or presented by or through means of, but are added to, the prayers, as one part of a compound is added to another. The vials are not the prayers, but they are the forms which should contain the prayers; therefore they hold a compound composed of the odoriferous things and the prayers to which these odoriferous things are added. And as, in the former vision, the odoriferous things are identified with the prayers, it is plain that the addition of these odoriferous things is that which makes the prayers worthy of the name, and which fits them for ascending up before God. The prayers of the saints are accepted by reason of something which is added to them, which embraces, covers, and perfects them, as a thing distinct from, yet mingled with, themselves. In other words, the Holy Spirit residing in the Church as the Spirit of Truth, instead of offering incense received from man, gives forth incense, to be added to man's prayers, out of His storehouse, as the Filler of all things. And the intercession of the Spirit is ever added to our prayers when we pray in the Holy Ghost. We lay them on the earthly altar; the Holy Spirit takes them up to the heavenly. The place also where this addition is made, at or on the altar, informs us that the intercession of the Spirit does not, like His ordinary guidance or promptings, enter into the formation of our prayers, but is a grace added to and bestowed upon them after they are formed and

ready to be offered, in order thus to fit them for acceptance by the fire of God. Finally, the plural number of the odoriferous things, coupled with that of the prayers, shows us that, as often as faithful prayer is made, the intercession of the Spirit is so also, and that the Holy Spirit, distributed throughout the body of Christ, not only supplies His intercession to prayer as a whole, but applies it to all the individuals and acts which compose the whole; in other words, that His agency as Paraclete corresponds to the number of persons and variety of prayers in the Church. It is not undeserving of inquiry, how far the composition of the incense under the law may afford instruction not only as to the ingredients of our prayer, but as to the offices of the Paraclete in connection with it.

Not till the supply of incense is all applied and exhausted is the incense store-vessel empty and ready to be filled with fire from the altar. In other words, judgment does not go forth till the prayers of the saints and the intercession of the Spirit are finished: when He shall return to His glory, taking up with Him those whose prayers He has in Christ's stead continually made valid and perfect.

The above remarks as to the Ministry of the Paraclete in prayer are not to be understood as implying that the use of incense is in no sense to be re-

garded as a symbol, both of Christ's intercession in Heaven and of faithful prayer arising from the hearts and lips of men; on the contrary, it is the counterpart of one and the associate of the other. But whatever the mediation of Christ may be for the world, in the Church His mediation is not intended for any prayers but those to which the intercession of the Spirit can be added. There should be no others in the Church. The two things should never be divorced. Therefore, while the incense symbolizes that intercession of the Holy Ghost which sanctifies, it has certainly, also, a legitimate application to the prayers which are sanctified thereby, and to the mediation through which they ascend. Our prayers are not, strictly speaking, to use the Psalmist's words (Ps. cxli. 2), "set forth before God as incense" until the intercession of the Holy Ghost is added to them. With this addition, we are indeed for a sweet-smelling savour unto God; and, having boldness of access into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, as our Paraclete in Heaven, we derive from the mighty succour and incessant pleadings of the Holy Spirit, as the Paraclete who is beside us on earth, a peace and security, a power and largeness of prayer, an assurance of being heard on high, and a triumphant foretaste of things hoped for, to which we should else be strangers.