

word. It was an anticipation of the marvellous comprehensiveness of that title in the Christian thought.

Our Lord himself while on earth was Paraclete as well as Prophet. In all the manifold meanings of the word was He Paraclete: Comforter, Advocate, Patron.

This last epithet may assist our conceptions. What a Patron was to his clients in the palmiest days of Rome, accustomed to gather them around his hearth, to feed them from his stores, to interpose between them and such as would do them wrong. To answer for them in the courts of law. Such a Paraclete was our Blessed Lord in the days of His flesh to the little flock who listened to His voice.

And now that He is to go away, He would have no sorrow to fill their hearts, no sense of orphanage to oppress their spirits. He will distribute His offices. Such as in anywise reach men through the medium of flesh and sense, teaching, discipline, absolution, and the ministry at earthly altars, are committed to men duly commissioned. By the all-power that was in Him, He gives us a mission for all earthly ministries, identical in its authority with that which He had exercised during the three and thirty years.

But man may not be Paraclete. To quicken the dull intelligence; to impart vitality to deadened affections; to carry true comfort to souls too much stunned by the blows of adversity to think or reason; to make intercession for the saints when they can find no words wherewith to phrase their needs, and when their best devotions are but groans inarticulate, these offices demand an eternal and ever-present Minister. And thus our Lord promises another Comforter, an abiding Paraclete; One who shall teach us all that we have need to learn; One who shall remind us of principles of the Gospel of Christ, well-known, indeed, in theory, but through our narrowness and unspirituality so apt to be forgotten when we have to deal with the practical problems of life and duty.

Were it not for this conviction that a Personal Comforter, the Eternal Spirit of Wisdom, is as really present in our humbler synods as in the first Council at Jerusalem, or in the great Councils which formulated the articles of the faith, or in the conferences of the Anglican Reformers who fashioned our Prayer Book; were we not bold to cry: Where is the Lord God of Elijah, and of Paul, and of Athanasius, and of the Anglican Doctors? then, indeed, we unworthy ones who are set to guide the religious thought and activities of this Western world, might shudder at so great responsibility and say as Moses: "O Lord send by the hand of him whom Thou wilt send."

Let us pause just here and consider the difficulty and the intricacy of the problems which in Canada and the United States as well, we have need to grapple.

We are in a new world, of vast territory and of inflowing population. It is the spring-time of the church in America. If we have the sagacity to plant aright, many a seed seemingly insignificant, shall develop into a goodly tree, sheltering beneath its branches the generations that are to be.