

The Holy Spirit the Advocate of the Lord Jesus

by Roy Hession

The Holy Spirit's function is to safeguard the interests and throne rights of the Lord Jesus in the world, the Church, and the individual believer by representing, speaking of, and exalting Christ.

Topics: "The Role of the Holy Spirit", "Advocacy of Christ"

Description

Roy Hession emphasizes the dual role of the Holy Spirit as the Advocate of the Lord Jesus, highlighting that while Jesus intercedes for believers in heaven, the Holy Spirit advocates for Christ's interests within believers. The Holy Spirit's primary function is to glorify Christ, convicting individuals of their sin and revealing the sufficiency of Christ's grace and redemption. Hession illustrates this relationship through the analogy of Abraham's servant, who focused on bringing a bride to Isaac, just as the Holy Spirit draws hearts to Christ. The sermon underscores the importance of recognizing the Holy Spirit's role in continually pointing us back to Jesus, especially in times of spiritual dryness. Ultimately, the Holy Spirit's mission is to exalt Christ and ensure that believers remain focused on Him.

Transcript

WE may now turn to consider what is the function or work of the Holy Spirit here on earth.

The Lord Jesus referred to Him on a number of occasions as 'the Comforter' (John 14. 16, 26; 15. 26) and told the disciples that it was expedient that He, the Lord Jesus, should go away, for otherwise the Comforter would not come unto them (John 16. 7). This word 'Comforter' will help us to understand His function among us. It is the same word in the Greek (paraclete) as appears in 1 John 2. 1, where it is translated 'Advocate'; 'If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins.' Therefore it would be quite in order to substitute the word 'Advocate' for the word 'Comforter' with regard to the Holy Spirit. This means there are two Advocates referred to in these passages; the one is the Lord Jesus Christ and the other is the Holy Spirit.

An advocate is, as we know, one who looks after our interests in a court of law, and answers for us. Here we have a picture of the work of the Lord Jesus for us. He is our Advocate in heaven, and as such, He delights to look after the repentant sinner's interests in those awesome courts. He does not attempt to produce evidence to show our innocence. He knows that every accusation of the holy law of God against us is true, but he pleads on our behalf the value of His atoning Blood. When we sin, our Advocate presents Himself to the Father as the propitiation for our sins. As the hymn says, 'He shows His wounds and spreads His hands'. But for the heavenly intercession of his Advocate, every child of God would have

lost his relationship with the Father long ago. However, he does lose his sense of peace with God when he sins. But as he confesses his sin, he has a renewal of that peace with God through the Blood of Jesus, which he knew when he first came to Him. How wonderful to have a Friend at court like this!

In this passage in John, however, the Holy Spirit is also called an Advocate. This Advocate is not resident in heaven, but in the hearts of believers with whom He comes to dwell when they are born again. But whose Advocate is He? Not the believer's Advocate but rather the Saviour's, whose interests He is charged to safeguard. Here then are the two Advocates, the believer's Advocate with the Father which is Christ, and Christ's Advocate with the believer which is the Holy Spirit. The One looks after the believer's interests in heaven; the Other looks after Christ's interests in the believer.

This makes quite clear His great function. It is to safeguard the interests and throne rights of the Lord Jesus in the world, the Church and the individual believer. This is precisely what the Lord Jesus meant when He said of the Holy Spirit, 'He shall glorify me' (John 16.14). His work is to represent Christ, to speak of Christ, to exalt Christ, to deal with men with regard to Christ, to convict them of sin because they have not believed on Christ, to cause them to repent because of the place they have not given to Christ. Christ, Christ, Christ is the theme of all His speech and the direction of all His activity.

But the Lord not only said of Him, 'He shall glorify me', but also 'He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you' (John 16. 14). This simply means surely that having brought us to repentance with regard to Christ, He will show us the resources of Christ to deal with our now acknowledged sinfulness.

Spirit of God my Teacher be,

Showing the things of Christ to me.

And these 'things' are the things concerning His grace for the guilty, His love for the unlovely, the completeness of His redemption and the value of His Blood and righteousness for people as bad as we now acknowledge ourselves to be—indeed the sufficiency of Jesus for every possible need. They are the 'things' that make for the sinner's peace and pardon, for the Lord Jesus came into the world to save such. It is quite obviously the work of His Advocate to show to penitent ones the complete adequacy of His resources to that end. Indeed, nowhere does the Spirit so glorify Christ as when He reveals the riches of His grace for failures who acknowledge their failure. The recovery of human failure is the sphere where Jesus Christ excels, where He gets His Name. He is not shocked by sin, nor defeated by it, for this is the realm where grace finds its opportunity and He has the answer for it. The convicted one would never believe it, did not the Holy Spirit reveal it to him. How glorious does the Saviour become in his eyes under the Spirit's ministry!

Here then is the Holy Spirit as the great Advocate of the Lord Jesus, to make known to us our need and the rich provisions in Jesus to meet that need. Well has A. H. Vine put it in his hymn to the Holy Spirit,

Christ is our Advocate on high,

Thou art our Advocate within,

O plead the truth and make reply

To ev'ry argument of sin.

It might be however better to say that the Holy Spirit is not our Advocate, but Christ's Advocate, for it is as such that He 'pleads the truth and makes reply to every argument of sin', pointing to Christ and His Blood as the answer.

A vivid illustration of the position and work of the Holy Spirit in God's dealings with men is contained in the story of Abraham sending his servant to a distant land to seek a bride for his son, Isaac. If that servant had spoken of himself and fixed men's eyes there, he would have failed of his object. Having found the right girl, his real work was only just begun. It was so to speak of his master's son as to draw her heart to that son and make her willing to break with her family and follow him to Isaac. Morning, noon and night there was but one theme to his conversation, 'my master's son'. His appearance and attractiveness were doubtless enlarged upon, but especially his wealth, for 'unto him hath my master given all that he hath'. The earrings and bracelets with which he had decked her were but specimens of the wealth that would be the girl's who consented to become his wife. He was apparently a highly eligible young man ! 'And it came to pass' when Laban, Rebecca's brother, 'saw the earrings and bracelets upon his sister's hands ... he said, "Come in, thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest thou without?"' 'Come in,' he said in effect, 'and tell us more about your master's son.' And so he was given ample scope to exercise his ministry. In no time at all, the girl's heart was won and she gave her answer. 'I will go.' The servant's joy was fulfilled when at last he saw Rebecca in Isaac's arms !

The work of the blessed Holy Spirit is precisely to play the part with us that Abraham's servant played with them long ago-so to speak of Christ and of grace and of glory as to woo and win our hearts and make us willing to follow Him to Calvary, there to take the sinner's place at the feet of Jesus. And He does this not only to bring about our first meeting with Jesus, but continually ever after, whenever sin has made us cold and dry and barren. How good it is that Jesus has not left Himself without an Advocate on earth to represent Him in our hearts and to draw us back again and again to His Cross, the place of release and victory.

The Holy Spirit, then, has but one purpose, to exalt Christ. A grasp and experience of this fundamental fact will save us from all sorts of mistakes and sometimes from being dangerously sidetracked. If an outstanding experience of the Holy Spirit leads us to exalt the Holy Spirit and to centre on that experience, then we will find that instead of co-operating with the Holy Spirit we are actually thwarting Him in His design to direct man's eyes on the Lord Jesus alone.

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