

WHO IS THE PARACLETE?

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INTRODUCTION

It is often claimed by dawahgandists that the Paraclete in John 14-16 is Muhammad. Various assertions have been made along these lines:

In earlier times, some Muslim scholars who could not read the Gospels in their original Greek language and, thus, only had access to its Syriac and Arabic versions, thought the Syriac word “Paraqlita” or the Arabic “Faraqlit” meant Muhammad or Ahmad. They thought the Christians had not translated it in order to hide its real meaning and to give another interpretation for it (mostly as the Holy Spirit).¹

Other suggestions included a correlation between “Ahamd” and “Menahem”:

After a while, Muslim scholars more seriously examined the idea of a literal connection between the two words. It seems that the Palestinian-Syriac versions of the Gospel strengthened this idea, because in these versions the true meaning of the word “Paraclete” (comforter) is mentioned with a pronunciation of its Syriac and Hebrew equal Monahhema or Munahhemana (menahhemana). Because the latter word seems very similar to the Arabic word “Muhammad,” some Muslim scholars supposed that it is indeed the Prophet’s name. Ibn Ishaq (d. 767), the great Muslim historian, in his famous book *The Life of Muhammad*, gives a somewhat inaccurate paraphrase of John 15:18-27:

It is extracted from what John [Yuhannis] the apostle set down for them when he wrote the Gospel for them from the Testamant of Jesus Son of Mary: “When the Comforter [Munahhemana] has come whom God will send to you from the Lord's presence, and the spirit of truth [*ruh al-qist*] which will have gone forth from the Lord's presence he (shall bear) witness of me and ye also, because ye have been with me from the beginning ...” The Munahhemana (God bless and preserve him!) in Syriac is Muhammad; in Greek he is the Paraclete [*al-baraqclitis*]. (Ibn Hisham 1955, 103-4)²

¹ Montazery, Seyyed Saeed Reza and Karimpur, Saeed, ‘The History of the Idea of a Literal Connection between the Words “Ahmad” and “Paraclete” in the Qur’an and the Gospel of John’, *Religious Inquiries* Volume 7, Number 13, June 2018, p. 115.

² Ibid., pp. 116-117.

More recently, a different idea took hold:

Islamic sources before the nineteenth century, contain only an incorrect supposition about a similarity of meanings between the word “Paraclete” and the words “Ahmad” and “Muhammad,” but no further analysis. However, since the nineteenth century, a new idea appeared in Islamic writings. Scholars began to argue that the word “παράκλητος” (Parakletos) was a distorted form of the original word “περικλυτος” (Periklutos, Pericyte or Periclete in some western scholars’ writings), whose meaning was equal to the meanings of “Ahmad” and “Muhammad.”¹ This new idea became very popular in the Islamic world.

It is improbable that the Muslim scholars who claimed, for the first time, that a distortion had occurred in the Gospel and who suggested the supposedly correct Greek word “περικλυτος” (Periklutos), had enough knowledge of Greek to even know the meaning of the original word.³

It need hardly be said that the word περικλυτος (*Periklutos*) never occurs in either the Greek New Testament or the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint).

Furthermore, in John 14:16, He is presented as ἄλλον παράκλητον – “*Another Advocate*”, the first one obviously being Jesus. There are no New Testament manuscripts or quotations from Patristic authors where περικλυτος is substituted for παράκλητος, as the authors of the above article acknowledge (with regard to NT manuscripts):

Another reason confirming that the word “περικλυτος” (Periklutos) was never mentioned in the ancient Greek manuscripts of the Gospel of John is the total absence of this word in our existing ancient documents. There are around five-thousand ancient Greek manuscripts, which contain all or parts of the New Testament (Metzger 1968, 36), and there exist a plethora of known Christian documents which have mentioned or referred to the prophecy. All of these documents have recorded the word solely as “παράκλητος” (Parakletos) or its transliteration or translation.⁴

1. The meaning of παράκλητος

This is what the renowned Greek-English Lexicon by Liddell & Scott says on the word:

³ Ibid., p. 119.

⁴ Ibid., p. 122.

παράκλητος ον, *called to one's aid*, in a court of justice, Lat. *advocatus*: as Subst. *a legal assistant, advocate*, Dem. 341. 10, etc.; cf. Herm. Pol. Ant. §142. 14 —*an intercessor*, Philo 2. 520, etc.

II. in N. T. and Eccl., ὁ Παράκλητος, of the Holy Spirit, the Intercessor, or the Comforter.⁵

If we start with ‘Herm. Pol. Ant. §142. 14’, this is the context:

The proceedings before the court itself were simple... As regarded the principals themselves, they were represented by their legal assistants, or counsel...

Παράκλητον, Demosth. F. L. init.; Æschin. F. L. extr., παρακαλῶ δὲ Ἐμβουλον συνήγορον, coll. adv. Ctesiph. c. 67; Demosth. 1.1 p. 434. 15; Andoc de Myster. extr.: Δευρο Ἀνευτε Κεφαλε, ἐπὶ δὲ καὶ οἱ φυλεται οἱ ἡργημέγοι μοι συνδίκειν. Compare at large, Salinas. Misc. Deff. p. 854, sqq.; Herald. 1. c. vi. c. 10, 12. p. 452, sqq.: 467, sqq.; Heffter, p. 105. In course of time this became a trade; see Plat, de Legg. xi. extr.⁶

We now examine Demosthenes (384 –322 BC), a politician and orator in ancient Athens, in Oration 19 *On the False Embassy* (Περὶ τῆς παραπρεσβείας), he states this:

Ὅση μὲν, ὧ ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, σπουδὴ περὶ τουτονὶ τὸν ἀγῶνα καὶ παραγγελία γέγονε, σχεδὸν οἶμαι πάντας ὑμᾶς ἡσθῆσθαι, ἐορακότας ἄρτι τοὺς ὅτ’ ἐκκληροῦσθ’ ἐνοχλοῦντας καὶ προσιόντας ὑμῖν. δεήσομαι δὲ πάντων ὑμῶν, ἃ καὶ τοῖς μὴ δεηθεῖσι δίκαιόν ἐστιν ὑπάρχειν, μηδεμίαν μὴτε χάριν μὴτ’ ἄνδρα ποιεῖσθαι περὶ πλείονος ἢ τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὸν ὅρκον ὃν εἰσελήλυθεν ὑμῶν ἕκαστος ὁμωμοκῶς, ἐνθυμουμένους ὅτι ταῦτα μὲν ἐσθ’ ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν καὶ ὅλης τῆς πόλεως, αἱ δὲ τῶν παρακλήτων αὗται δεήσεις καὶ σπουδαὶ τῶν ιδίων πλεονεξιῶν εἵνεκα γίνονται, ἃς ἵνα κωλύθῃ οἱ νόμοι συνήγαγον ὑμᾶς, οὐχ ἵνα κυρίας τοῖς ἀδικοῦσι ποιῇτε.⁷

This is translated as follows:

Citizens of Athens, I do not doubt that you are all pretty well aware that this trial has been the centre of keen partisanship and active canvassing, for you saw the

⁵ Liddell, Henry George & Scott, Robert, *Greek-English Lexicon* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1883), p. 1132.

⁶ Hermann, Charles Frederick, *A Manual of the Political Antiquities of Greece, Historically Considered* (Oxford: D. A. Talboys, 1836), pp. 283, 284-285.

⁷ Vince, C. A. & Vince, J. H. (trans.), *Demosthenes: De Corona and De Falsa Legatione*. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1926), p. 246.

people who were accosting and annoying you just now at the casting of lots. But I have to make a request which ought to be granted without asking, that you will all give less weight to private entreaty or personal influence than to the spirit of justice and to the oath which you severally swore when you entered that box. You will reflect that justice and the oath concern yourselves and the commonwealth, whereas the importunity and party spirit of advocates serve the end of those private ambitions which you are convened by the laws to thwart, not to encourage for the advantage of evil-doers.⁸

The reference to “of advocates” translates τῶν παρακλήτων – *tōn paraklēton*. An advocate in this sense is someone who speaks on behalf of something or someone. Diogenes Laertius, who lived in the third century AD, in his work *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, referring to Bion of Borysthenes (c. 325 – c. 250 BC), observes this comment:

πρὸς τὸν ἀδολέσχην λιπαροῦντα αὐτῷ συλλαβέσθαι, τὸ ἱκανόν σοι ποιήσω, φησὶν, ἐὰν παρακλήτους πέμψῃς καὶ αὐτὸς μὴ ἔλθῃς.
To an importunate talker who wanted his help he said, “I will satisfy your demand, if you will only get others to plead your cause and stay away yourself.”⁹

The words “others to plead your cause” translates παρακλήτους (*paraklēτους*). Philo, the Alexandrian Jew whose lifetime (c. 20 BC – c. 50 AD) crosses that of the earthly life of Jesus, uses the term:

When Philo is telling the story of Joseph and his brethren, he says that, when Joseph forgave them for the wrong that they had done him, he said, “I offer you an amnesty for all that you did to me; you need no other *paraklētos*” (*Life of Joseph* 40). Philo tells how the Jews of Alexandria were being oppressed by a certain governor and determined to take their case to the emperor. “We must find,” they said, “a more powerful *paraklētos*, advocate, by whom the Emperor Gaius will be brought to a favourable disposition towards us” (*In Flaccum*, 968 B).¹⁰

It is clear that Παράκλητος was never a proper name, but was used descriptively, and possibly in a titular sense, and was used of lawyers – those who speak on behalf of others.

⁸ Ibid., p. 247.

⁹ Hicks, R. D. (trans.), *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers* Vol. I (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929), pp. 428, 429.

¹⁰ Barclay, William, *The Letters of John and Jude* (Louisville & London: Westminster Knox Press, 2002), p. 41.

2. Παράκλητος in the Johannine corpus

Raymond Brown writes: ‘The word παράκλητος is peculiar in the New Testament to the Johannine literature. In I John ii. 1 Jesus is a παράκλητος (not a title), serving as a heavenly intercessor with the Father. In five passages in the Fourth Gospel the title παράκλητος is given to someone who is not Jesus, nor is he an intercessor, nor is he in heaven.’¹¹ The last-mentioned needs to be qualified, but we will come to that. Again, we see the descriptive use of the word – as Brown observes, it is not a title. In 1 John 2.1, it is used as follows:

Τεκνία μου, ταῦτα γράφω ὑμῖν ἵνα μὴ ἁμάρτητε· καὶ ἐάν τις ἁμάρτη, παράκλητον ἔχομεν πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, Ἰησοῦν χριστὸν δίκαιον
My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

Jesus here is presented as the Advocate for Christians when they sin – someone who represents them to the Father, “defending” them in the sense of an attorney, more by action than word. Brown continues:

As a passive form from παρα/καλεῖν in its elementary sense (‘to call alongside’), meaning ‘one called alongside to help’, thus an advocate or a defence attorney. Often this interpretation is combined with a picture drawn from other New Testament works where the Holy Spirit comes to the defence of the disciples when they are put on trial (Matt. x. 20; Acts vi. 10), and the Paraclete becomes the defence attorney of the disciples. That the Paraclete has a forensic function is clear from John xv. 26 (bears witness) and xvi. 8-11 (proves the world wrong); yet there is not the slightest suggestion in any of the five Johannine passages that he will protect the disciples when they are in difficulties. If one insists on an analogy from modern court procedure, the Paraclete’s role as seen in xvi. 8-11 would be closer to that of a prosecuting attorney proving the world guilty, than to that of a defence attorney for the disciples. However, we must recognize that neither role fits exactly into the judicial procedure familiar in Israel where the judge himself did much of the interrogation; at most there was a witness for the defence rather than an advocate (for which there is no word in Hebrew). If we are to attribute a forensic function to the Paraclete, it must be that of witness (xv. 26): by the evidence he gives on Jesus’ behalf, he proves the world wrong.

¹¹. Brown, Raymond E., ‘The Paraclete in the Fourth Gospel’, *New Testament Studies* Volume 13 Issue 02, January 1967, p 113.

Note that the forensic aspect of the Paraclete's action is related to the defence of Jesus and not to the defence of the disciples. It has been noted many times that the Fourth Gospel is written in a legal atmosphere where Jesus is put on trial.¹²

This helps make sense of John 14:16-17:

¹⁶And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, ¹⁷ even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

¹⁶ καὶ γὰρ ἐρωτήσω τὸν πατέρα, καὶ ἄλλον παράκλητον δώσει ὑμῖν, ἵνα μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα ᾗ, ¹⁷ τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας, ὃ ὁ κόσμος οὐ δύναται λαβεῖν, ὅτι οὐ θεωρεῖ αὐτὸ οὐδὲ γινώσκει· ὑμεῖς γινώσκετε αὐτό, ὅτι παρ' ὑμῖν μένει καὶ ἐν ὑμῖν ἔσται.

Immediately we see that the Advocate is *another* Advocate. He is identified as the Spirit of truth. The Apostles *know* Him. Note that the text does not say that they know *about* Him, but rather know Him. Many people know about the President of the USA or the Monarch of the UK, but how many could say that they actually *know* such individuals? Secondly, the Advocate *dwells* with them. Finally, the promise is given that He will dwell *in* them. This cannot be Muhammad - the Apostles did not know him, he was not yet alive, so could not dwell with them, and no man can be *in* another man as suggested here – a spirit may do so. Moreover, the Advocate is explicitly identified as the Holy Spirit in 14:26:

²⁶ ὁ δὲ παράκλητος, τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ὃ πέμψει ὁ πατὴρ ἐν τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐκεῖνος ὑμᾶς διδάξει πάντα καὶ ὑπομνήσει ὑμᾶς πάντα ἃ εἶπον ὑμῖν.

²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

In the light of this, one wonders how anyone could seriously suggest that the Paraclete is anyone other than the Holy Spirit? We again quote Brown:

But the Paraclete of the Gospel is not in heaven before the Father; rather he has come to dwell within the disciples, and there is no suggestion that he makes intercession for them or for Jesus. Nor is he a spokesman for the disciples (an

¹² Ibid., p. 116.

idea again influenced by Matt. x. 20). As we see in xv. 26-7, he speaks and bears evidence through them; and the disciples are the spokesmen of the Paraclete whom the world cannot see (xiv. 17; cf. I John iv. 6). The only aspect of 'spokesman' that seems applicable to the Paraclete is that he is spokesman for the absent Jesus: 'He will speak only what he hears... because he will take what is mine to announce to you' (xvi. 13-14).¹³

So, in this sense, the Holy Spirit is the Advocate for the Ascended Jesus, speaking for Jesus through the Apostles. Carson focuses on the work of the Paraclete in 16: 7-11, and we must remember that John 14-16 is a single discourse:

⁷ Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: ⁹ concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; ¹⁰ concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; ¹¹ concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.

Carson notes the various interpretations, the first of which is this:

The Paraclete will prove the world wrong about sin; that is, he will convict the world of wrong ideas about sin, in that they do not believe; of wrong ideas about righteousness, in that Jesus is glorified and has gone to the Father; and about judgment, in that the prince of this world is judged... The world misconstrues righteousness, because it does not recognize that Jesus and his cross-work have been vindicated by his glorification; and it misconstrues the nature of the judgment which took place at the cross, because, contrary to the world's opinion, the prince of this world was then condemned, not Jesus. In a sense, then, the Paraclete is re-enacting the trial of Jesus.¹⁴

The second view enjoys some academic support, but seems too restrictive:

Most important, it says that "to prove (the world) wrong about" does not mean "to convict (the world) of wrong ideas about." Rather, the proof that the world is wrong is proof provided for the disciples. This passage, it is argued, says nothing about what the Paraclete does to or for the world. On the contrary, it testifies to the work of the Paraclete in keeping and strengthening the disciples, a work achieved by proving to them that the world is wrong. The second distinctive note

¹³ Ibid., p. 117.

¹⁴ Carson, D. A., 'The Function of the Paraclete in John 16:7-11', *JBL* 98/4 (1979), p. 549.

of this interpretation is that the proof is an entirely inward work within the disciples and has nothing to do with apostolic signs and wonders or the like.¹⁵

Indeed, Carson criticizes this interpretation:

In the farewell discourse itself, the disciples, empowered by the Spirit, are to bear witness to Jesus; and clearly, such witness must be borne before the world. Moreover, Jesus himself exercised a ministry to the world. For a start, all of his disciples were chosen out from the world in which they once had a part. Would it not be surprising if the Paraclete, this *ἄλλος* Paraclete, himself enjoyed no ministry to the world? One must surely conclude that this second interpretation is implausible within the framework of johannine theology and must be accepted only if there is none better.¹⁶

There are several other possibilities, but Carson concludes with this paraphrase:

When the Paraclete comes, he will convict the world of its sin (that is, so convince it of its sin as to drive home self-conscious conviction of sin), its righteousness (that is, what the world takes to be righteousness but which is woefully inadequate or tainted), and its judgment (that is, all of its false assessment of spiritual reality, culminating especially in its false assessment of Jesus):

its sin, because the (the people of the world) do not believe in me and are by this unbelief self-excluded (apart from the work of the Paraclete) from the one source that would reveal their need to them;

its righteousness, because I am going to the Father and will no longer be present in the same way to convict them of their sin. The Paraclete will therefore take over this ministry from me. Moreover, you believers will no longer see me either; but the Paraclete will enable you to discharge faithfully your responsibilities as witnesses.

its judgment, because, with the condemnation of the prince of this world, the age of salvation and of condemnation has already dawned, and it has become terribly urgent that the people of the world change their false and sinful assessment of spiritual reality before it is too late.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 551.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 553-554.

¹⁷ Ibid., pp. 565-566.

Apparently, some Muslims misconstrued what Carson stated at the beginning of his paper: ‘JOHN 16:7-11 constitutes one of the most baffling passages in the fourth gospel. Augustine acknowledged their difficulty; and almost every commentator who has addressed the problem since Augustine has prefaced his interpretation with apposite notice that these verses are not easy to sort out.’¹⁸ Augustine was not questioning whether the Paraclete was the Holy Spirit, but simply what was the correct exegesis of the verses in question.

It is the practice of the academic discipline known as *Biblical Theology* to examine each book of the Bible on its own account, but we should remember that the Gospel of John was written *after* Luke-Acts. In John’s Gospel, Jesus is presented as the One who Baptizes in the Holy Spirit, as accounted by John the Baptist in the first chapter:

³² And John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. ³³ I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴ And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

In Acts 1, Jesus says the following to the Apostles:

⁴ And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵ for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

John is obviously referring to the same event we witness in Acts. In Acts 2, the Spirit *fills* the Apostles – He is now *in* them, and this was caused by the Risen, Ascended Jesus:

⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance... ³² This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. ³³ Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 547.

Prior to this, in the Gospel of John, 20:22, the Risen Jesus proleptically grants them an experience of the Spirit prior to Pentecost:

²¹ Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you.” ²² And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, “Receive the Holy Spirit. ²³ If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld.”

There can be no doubt that the Paraclete is identified with the Holy Spirit, and the reception of the Spirit by the Apostles was something which occurred in their lifetimes.

3. Παράκλητος in the Early Church

It is essential to remember that the Early Church was not fixated on the title Παράκλητος but rather on the Person and Work of the Holy Spirit, so the concept should be approached on that basis. However, let us begin with the rather misnamed 2 *Clement*, which Ehrman dates to the second century, perhaps the 140s.¹⁹ The epistle uses the word, not of the Spirit, but in a technical sense, as an “advocate”:

ἢ τίς ἡμῶν παράκλητος ἐσται, εἰ μὴ εὗρεθώμεν ἔργα ἔχοντες δσια καὶ δίκαια;
Or who will serve as our advocate, if we are not found doing what is holy and upright?²⁰

This shows, however, the sense of the word in the Sub-Apostolic period. It clearly does not refer to a prophet of any hue. In Sunni Islam, the immediate disciples of Muhammad are called the *Sahabah* (‘Companions’). Their immediate followers are termed the *Tabi’un* (‘Followers’ or ‘Successors’), and *their* immediate disciples are called the *Tab’Tabi’un*. The Apostles of Jesus, such as John the Evangelist, were equivalent to the *Sahabah*. Sunnis define the *Tabi’un* as those who saw the *Sahabah*, were ‘rightly-guided’ (i.e., orthodox in Sunni terms), and died in that state. The *Tab’Tabi’un* were those who saw the *Tabi’un*, etc. The

¹⁹ Ehrman, Bart D (Ed. & trans.), *The Apostolic Fathers, Volume I: I Clement; II Clement; Ignatius; Polycarp; Didache* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2003), p. 160.

²⁰ Ibid. pp. 174, 175.

Tab'Tabi'un include some of the founders of the *madhabs*, schools of Islamic jurisprudence, such as Abu Hanifa, Shafi'i, Imam Malik and Ahmed ibn Hanbal.

The Apostle John was equivalent to one of the *Sahabah*, his disciple Polycarp was equivalent to one of the *Tabi'un*, and his disciple was Irenaeus, who was thus equivalent to the *Tab'Tabi'un* in Sunni Islam. Irenaeus, writing c. 170 in *Against Heresies*, 3:11:9, identifies the Paraclete with the Spirit:

Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John's Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit.²¹

He also says this at 3:17:2:

This Spirit did David ask for the human race, saying, "And stablish me with Thine all-governing Spirit;" who also, as Luke says, descended at the day of Pentecost upon the disciples after the Lord's ascension, having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life, and to the opening of the new covenant; from whence also, with one accord in all languages, they uttered praise to God, the Spirit bringing distant tribes to unity, and offering to the Father the first-fruits of all nations. Wherefore also the Lord promised to send the Comforter, who should join us to God.²²

So, a disciple of the disciple of the Apostle John, writing in the second century, clearly identifies the Paraclete/Comforter with the Holy Spirit, obviously recalling the words of Jesus in the Gospel of John 14-16.

Tertullian (c. 155-230), was a Latin North African Christian. He strongly defended the Trinity, and in doing so, identified the Spirit with the Paraclete:

²¹ Schaff, Philip, *Ante-Nicene Fathers 01: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, originally published 1885), pp. 1090-1091.

²² Ibid., p. 1121.

The Word, therefore, is both always in the Father, as He says, “I am in the Father;” and is always with God, according to what is written, “And the Word was with God;” and never separate from the Father, or other than the Father, since “I and the Father are one.” This will be the prolation, taught by the truth, the guardian of the Unity, wherein we declare that the Son is a prolation from the Father, without being separated from Him. For God sent forth the Word, as the Paraclete also declares, just as the root puts forth the tree, and the fountain the river, and the sun the ray.

...I testify that the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit are inseparable from each other, and so will you know in what sense this is said. Now, observe, my assertion is that the Father is one, and the Son one, and the Spirit one, and that They are distinct from Each Other. This statement is taken in a wrong sense by every uneducated as well as every perversely disposed person, as if it predicated a diversity, in such a sense as to imply a separation among the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit.²³

He continues in this vein, showing what is meant by the Paraclete:

Happily the Lord Himself employs this expression of the person of the Paraclete, so as to signify not a division or severance, but a disposition (of mutual relations in the Godhead); for He says, “I will pray the Father, and He shall send you another Comforter...even the Spirit of truth,” thus making the Paraclete distinct from Himself, even as we say that the Son is also distinct from the Father; so that He showed a third degree in the Paraclete, as we believe the second degree is in the Son, by reason of the order observed in the Economy.²⁴

Tertullian makes it clear that the Paraclete is not a human being:

God forbid, (is my reply). For we, who by the grace of God possess an insight into both the times and the occasions of the Sacred Writings, especially we who are followers of the Paraclete, not of human *teachers*, do indeed definitively declare that *Two* Beings are God, the Father and the Son, and, with the addition of the Holy Spirit, even *Three*, according to the principle of the *divine* economy, which introduces number, in order that the Father may not, as you perversely infer, be Himself believed to have been born and to have suffered, which it is not lawful to believe, forasmuch as it has not been so handed down. That there are, however, two Gods or two Lords, is a statement which at no time proceeds out of

²³ Schaff, Philip, *Ante-Nicene Fathers 03: Latin Christianity: Its Founder, Tertullian* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, originally published 1885); Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, Chapters VIII, IX, pp. 1349, 1350.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1350.

our mouth: not as if it were untrue that the Father is God, and the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and each is God...²⁵

It follows from this that the Paraclete cannot refer to any would-be prophet, since the Paraclete is not human. In Chapter XXV, he focusses on the identity and work of the Paraclete:

What follows Philip's question, and the Lord's whole treatment of it, to the end of John's Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Paraclete or *Comforter*, also, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father. *He is called* "another Comforter," indeed; but in what way He is another we have already shown, "He shall receive of mine," says Christ, just as *Christ* Himself received of the Father's. Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, *who are yet distinct* One from Another. These Three are one *essence*, not one Person, as it is said, "I and my Father are One," in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number.²⁶

Novatian (c. 200 – c. 258), a Latin writer who may, perhaps irregularly, have become bishop of Rome in 251, and then led a schismatic, but not heretical group thereafter, also identifies the Paraclete as the Spirit in his work *The Trinity*:

If Christ is only man, how does He say that the Paraclete will receive of what is His and will declare these things? For the Paraclete does not receive anything from man, but rather gives knowledge to man. Nor does the Paraclete learn future things from man; He instructs him about things to come. Therefore, either the Paraclete did not receive from Christ, as Man, what He should make known, simply because man will never be able to give anything to the Paraclete, from whom he himself must receive (and in that case, Christ not only errs but also deceives in the present passage when He says that the Paraclete will receive from Him, as Man, the things which He will make known), or He does not deceive us - just as He does not deceive - and the Paraclete receives from Christ the things which He will make known. (3) If He received from Christ the things which He will make known, then surely Christ is greater than the Paraclete, since the Paraclete would not receive from Christ unless He were less than Christ. Now, the fact that the Paraclete is less than Christ proves that Christ is also God, from whom He received what He makes known. This, then, is a great testimony to

²⁵ Ibid., p. 1360.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 1391.

Christ's divinity, inasmuch as the Paraclete, having been found to be less than Christ, takes from Him what He gives to others. If Christ were only man, Christ would receive from the Paraclete what He should say; the Paraclete would not receive from Christ what He should make known.²⁷

He expressly identifies the Paraclete with the Spirit:

Next, well-ordered reason and the authority of our faith bid us (in the words and the writings of our Lord set down in orderly fashion) to believe, after these things, also in the Holy Spirit, who was in times past promised to the Church and duly bestowed at the appointed, favorable moment. (2) He was indeed promised by the prophet Joel but bestowed through Christ. "In the last days," says the prophet, "I will pour out from My spirit upon My servants and handmaids."! And the Lord said: "Receive the Holy Spirit; whose sins you shall forgive, they are forgiven; and whose sins you shall retain, they are retained." (3) Now the Lord sometimes calls the Holy Spirit the Paraclete and at other times proclaims Him to be the Spirit of truth.²⁸

Our final quotation from Novatian is this:

Therefore, it is one and the same Spirit who is in the prophets and in the apostles... He was not, however, manifested before the Lord's Resurrection but conferred by Christ's Resurrection. (7) In fact, Christ said: "I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate that He may be with you forever, the Spirit of truth;" and "When the Advocate has come whom I will send you from My Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from My Father"; and "If I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you"; and "when the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide you to all truth." (8) Since the Lord was about to go to heaven, He had to give the Paraclete to His disciples, that He might not leave them as orphans, as it were, and abandon them without a defender or some sort of guardian. That would not have been proper at all.²⁹

So, both in terms of nomenclature and operation, Novatian identifies the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete. In Egypt, Origen of Alexandria (c. 185 – c. 253), the great theologian and Biblical scholar, also identified the Spirit as the Paraclete in his work *On First Principles* (Chapter VII:1 *On the Holy Spirit*):

²⁷ DeSimone, Russell J., *Novatian: The Trinity; The Spectacles; Jewish Foods; In Praise of Purity; Letters* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1974, 2008 reprint), p. 62.

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 99-100.

²⁹ Ibid., pp. 100-101.

It is time, therefore, for us to discuss to the best of our ability a few points about the Holy Spirit, whom our Lord and Savior in the gospel according to John called the Paraclete (Jn 14:16, etc.). Now just as it is the same God himself and the same Christ himself, so also it is the same Holy Spirit himself who was in the prophets and the apostles, that is, both in those who believed in God before the coming of Christ and in those who have taken refuge in God through Christ. We have heard of heretics who have dared to say that there are two Gods or two Christs, but we have never heard it maintained by anyone that there are two Holy Spirits.³⁰

The identification with the Johannine Paraclete is explicit – the reference is to the Holy Spirit. Origen repeats this identification in VII:3

These divisions and distinctions are unperceived by those who, hearing him called in the gospels the Paraclete (Jn 14:16, etc.), but not considering from what work or activity he takes this name, have likened him to some common spirits or other and by so doing have tried to disturb the churches of Christ even to the point of arousing no small dissensions among the brethren. But the gospel shows him to be of such power and majesty that it says the apostles could not yet receive those truths which the Savior wished to teach them until the time “when the Holy Spirit should come” (Jn 16:12-14), who would pour himself into their souls and to enlighten them, concerning the nature and faith of the Trinity.³¹

This explicit identification continues in VII:4

We must know, therefore, that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit, who teaches truths greater than can be uttered by the voice... But the Paraclete, who is called the Holy Spirit, is so called from his work of “consolation” (*paraclesis* being termed in Latin *consolatio*); for anyone who has been deemed worthy to partake of the Holy Spirit, when he has learned his unspeakable mysteries, undoubtedly obtains consolation and gladness of heart...

We have made mention, then, of the Paraclete and to the best of our ability have explained how we ought to think about him. But in the epistle of John our Savior is also called a “paraclete,” when it says, “If any man sin, we have a paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins.” Let us then consider whether perhaps this title “paraclete” means one thing when applied to the Savior and another when applied to the Holy Spirit. Now in regard to the Savior “paraclete” seems to mean intercessor; for in Greek it bears both meanings, comforter and intercessor, but according to the phrase that

³⁰ Butterworth, G. W. (trans.), *Origen: On First Principles* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, Inc., 2013), p. 145.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 147.

follows, in which it says that “he is the propitiation for our sins” (1 Jn 2:1,2), it seems that in the case of the Savior the word “paraclete” must be understood rather in the sense of intercessor, for he is said to intercede with the Father “for our sins.” When used of the Holy Spirit, however, the word “paraclete” ought to be understood as “comforter,” because he provides comfort for the souls to whom he opens and reveals a consciousness of spiritual knowledge.³²

In actual fact, although Origen is technically correct about the linguistic possibilities of παράκλητος, the employment of the word in both Gospel and Epistle surely bears the sense of Advocate in both, as we have suggested. In his *Homilies on Luke*, in Homily 25 on Luke 3:15, doubtless controverting Marcionism, he dismisses the idea that anyone but the Spirit could be the Comforter:

5. For, some say this, that the passage in Scripture that speaks of “sitting at the Savior’s right and left” applies to Paul and Marcion: Paul sits at his right hand and Marcion at his left. Others read the passage, “I shall send you an advocate, the Spirit of Truth,” and are unwilling to understand a third person besides the Father and the Son, a divine and exalted nature. They take it to mean the apostle Paul. Do not all of these seem to you to have loved more than is fitting and, while they admired the virtue of each, to have lost moderation in love?³³

Again, in his *Homilies on Numbers*, on Homily 12 Numbers 21:16-23, Origen repeats the identification of the Spirit and the Paraclete:

For the Son is different from the Father, and he that is the Father is not also the Son, as he says himself in the Gospels: “There is another who speaks testimony about me, the Father.” And again I think a third well can be seen in the knowledge of the Holy Spirit. For he too is different from the Father and from the Son, as it is said of him no less in the Gospels: “The Father shall send you another Paraclete, the Spirit of truth.” So there is this distinction of three persons in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, which is recalled in the plural number of the wells. Yet of these wells there is one spring. For the substance and nature of the Trinity is one.³⁴

³² Ibid., pp. 148, 149.

³³ Lienhard, Joseph T., *Origen: Homilies on Luke; Fragments on Luke* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1996), pp. 106-107.

³⁴ Scheck, Thomas P. (trans.), *Homilies on Numbers/Origen* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2009), p. 63.

If we move on the fourth century Palestinian historian Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260/265–339), in his work *Ecclesiastical Theology*, attacking the Modalistic views of Marcellus of Ancyra, he states this (3:4):

So through these statements and [others] like these, this most wise fellow tries to argue that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one and the same, the three names being laid upon a single hypostasis. (6) For in these matters neither has he understood how the Son is said to proceed from the Father and likewise the Holy Spirit, nor has he been able to grasp in what sense the Savior said concerning the Holy Spirit, “He will take what is mine and declare it to you,” nor in what sense, having breathed upon his disciples, he said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”...

The Savior himself shows this clearly when he says, “He will take what is mine and declare it to you.” For this would be unmistakable proof that the Son and the Holy Spirit are not one and the same. For that which takes from another is thought to be other than the one who gives.³⁵

Clearly, Eusebius is utilizing the Johannine references to the Paraclete, and he continues to do so:

(1) And that the Holy Spirit is other than the Son, our Savior and Lord himself taught clearly and distinctly in the plainest of words, when he said to his disciples, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive.” You see that he says that the Spirit is “another Counselor” and other than himself. And if, having breathed upon the disciples, he said, “Receive the Holy Spirit,” one must not be ignorant that the breath was in some way purifying of the soul of the apostles, rendering them fit for the (2) reception of the Holy Spirit.

To this he adds, “These things I have spoken to you, while I am still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” You hear that he has used a plural verb about himself and the Father, having said, “We will come to him and make our home with him,” and in speaking of the Holy Spirit as of another, he said, “He (6) will teach you all things.” Of this nature was also the statement, “And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth.” Therefore, the Counselor was another beside him [Christ], concerning whom he taught these sorts of things. Therefore, quite rightly again he added, saying, “These things I

³⁵ Spoerl, Kelley McCarthy & Vinzent, Markus (trans.), *Eusebius of Caesarea: Against Marcellus and On Ecclesiastical Theology* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2017), pp. 306, 307.

have spoken to you while I was still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that (7) I have said to you.” For I have up to this time said these things to you, he says, but the Spirit of truth, whom my Father will also send, he will teach you everything (8) that you have not learned now because you were not capable of it; but when he has come, I mean the Counselor, he will complete the teaching, along with calling to your remembrance even the things now said by me. And again, he adds, “But when the Counselor, whom I shall send to you from the Father, comes, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will give witness concerning me.” Through all of these remarks, he clearly shows that the one who is sent by him and who is going to give witness concerning him (9) is another besides himself. He confirms [this] fact still further by also saying in these words, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.” In saying that he went away, he also revealed in these remarks his passion (10) and the ascension to the Father that occurred after this...

For this reason, by the judgment of the Father, when the Father desires, then the Son and Savior through himself sends to his disciples the Spirit of truth, the Counselor, to counsel them and to comfort them in what they suffered at the hands (12) of those who were persecuting them while they were preaching the gospel. And [he sent the Holy Spirit] not only to counsel them, but also to teach them the entire truth of the new covenant, which they did not grasp from the Savior’s instruction when he conversed about these matters with them, because they were still enslaved by their Jewish (13) education.³⁶

There can be no doubt from all this that Eusebius identified the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete. Eusebius was present at the Council of Nicaea, as was Athanasius of Alexandria (c. 296–298 –373), who became bishop of the famous city. In his *Letters to Serapion* regarding the Holy Spirit, he clearly equates the Spirit with the Paraclete, as in *Letter 1:33*:

For the Spirit is inseparable from the Son, as the Son is inseparable from the Father. The Truth himself bears witness when he says, ‘I will send you the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, whom the world cannot receive’, that is, those who deny that he is from the Father in the Son.³⁷

³⁶ Ibid., pp. 308, 309, 310.

³⁷ Shapland, C. R. B. (trans.), *The Letters of Saint Athanasius Concerning the Holy Spirit* (London: The Epworth Press, 1951), p. 149.

The Greek for the most relevant part “I will send you the Paraclete, the Spirit of truth” is πέμψω ὑμῖν τὸν παράκλητον τὸ πνεῦμα τῆς ἀληθείας. This clearly identifies the Spirit as the Paraclete. Earlier, he also referred to the Spirit as the Paraclete, 1:4:

Tell us, then, is there any passage in the divine Scripture where the Holy Spirit is found simply referred to as ‘spirit’ without the addition of ‘of God’, or ‘of the Father’, or ‘my’, or ‘of Christ’ himself, and ‘of the Son’, or ‘from me’ (that is, from God), or with the article so that he is called not simply ‘spirit’ but ‘the Spirit’, or the very term ‘Holy Spirit’ or ‘Paraclete’ or ‘of Truth’ (that is, of the Son who says, ‘I am the Truth’), that, just because you heard the word ‘spirit’, you take it to be the Holy Spirit? ³⁸

Again, in 1:6, we read this:

In giving him to his disciples he said: ‘Receive the Holy Spirit’; and he taught them: ‘The Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.’ And a little later, concerning the same: ‘When the Paraclete is come, whom I shall send unto you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.’³⁹

In 1:11, Athanasius attacks the views of the Valentinian Gnostics about the Spirit, stating the following:

11. What is this mighty folly of theirs? Once again, where in the Scriptures have they found the Spirit referred to as an angel? I am obliged to repeat what I have said before. He is called Paraclete, Spirit of adoption, Spirit of sanctification, Spirit of God, and Spirit of Christ; but never angel or archangel, or ministering spirit, as are the angels.⁴⁰

In 1:20, quoting John 16:7, he again makes explicit identification of the Spirit with the Paraclete: “The Son is sent from the Father; for he says, ‘God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son.’ The Son sends the Spirit; ‘If I go away,’ he says, ‘I will send the Paraclete.’”⁴¹ In 1:25, referring to John 14:16-17, Athanasius writes: “The Lord called the

³⁸ Ibid., p. 68.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 73.

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 87.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 117.

Spirit ‘Spirit of truth’ and ‘Paraclete’; whence he shows that the Triad is in him complete.”⁴² Since Athanasius is here referring to the Trinity, it is obvious that no human being could be the Paraclete. In *Letter III:1*, he again makes this identification:

Our Lord himself said that the Paraclete ‘shall not speak from himself, but what things soever he shall hear, these shall he speak... for he shall take of mine and shall declare it unto you’; and, ‘having breathed on them’, he gave the Spirit to the disciples out of himself,’ and in this way the Father poured him out ‘upon all flesh’, as it is written... For the Son himself says: ‘When the Paraclete is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me.’⁴³

Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376–444), bishop of the city 412–444, wrote a commentary on the Gospel of John. This is what he says about the Paraclete:

...and the Saviour Himself saith of the Paraclete, that is, the Spirit, *I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot hear them now: but, when He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you in all truth; for He shall not speak of Himself, hut whatsoever He shall hear, He shall speak: and He will declare you, things to come. He shall glorify Me, for He shall receive of Mine and shall tell it unto you;* for being the Spirit of Truth, He will enlighten them in whom He is, and will lead them unto the apprehension of the truth. And this we say, not as severing into diversity and making wholly separate, either the Father from the Son, or the Son from the Father, nor yet the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, but since One Godhead truly IS, and is thus preached as viewed in the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity, the Acts belonging to Each, and which seem to be attributed to Them severally, are defined to be the Will and Operation of the Whole Godhead.⁴⁴

It is clear from this that Cyril equates the Paraclete with the Spirit, and the Spirit is identified as a member of the Trinity, rather than a mere human being, such as a prophet. In Book VIII of his commentary, he repeats this identification:

Where did the Lord go down? Or in what manner doth the Holy Trinity urge Itself on to the descent? And how, tell me, did the Saviour Himself also promise to send

⁴² Ibid., p. 129.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 169–170.

⁴⁴ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel according to S. John* Vol. I, S. John I–VIII (Oxford: James Parker & Co., 1874), p. 402.

to us the Paraclete from heaven? For where or, whence is That Which filleth all things sent? *For the Spirit of the Lord filleth the world*, as it is written.⁴⁵

In Book IX, dealing with the Paraclete passage in John 14, he again makes this identification:

Another Paraclete, however, is the name He gives to the Spirit that proceeds from the essence of God the Father and from that of Himself, For the kind of the essence is the same in the case of Both, not excluding the Spirit, but allowing the manner of His distinctness to be understood as lying solely in His being and subsisting in a separate personality. For the Spirit is not a Son, but we will accept in faith verily and properly to be and to subsist as That Which He is; for He is the Spirit of the Father and of the Son. But [the Son] knowing that He Himself also both is in truth a Paraclete and is so named in the Sacred Writings, He calls the Spirit *another Paraclete*; not on the ground that the Spirit can skill to effect in the Saints something else perchance more than what He also can. Whose Spirit He both is and is called. And that the Son also Himself both was named and is a Paraclete, John will bear record, in his own compositions, when he says: *These things say I unto you, that ye may not sin. And if any man sin, we have a Paraclete with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins*. So Jesus calls the Spirit another Paraclete, willing Him to be conceived of as possessing the attributes of a proper personality; albeit having so close a likeness to Himself, and able so to work in exact correspondence what things soever He Himself might haply work, as that He might seem to be the Son Himself and no whit different: for He is His Spirit. And indeed Jesus called Him the Spirit of Truth, saying also in the discourse before us that He is Himself *the Truth*.⁴⁶

There are several other examples we could give from Cyril, but surely the preceding quotes are sufficient. We turn next to John Chrysostom (c. 347 –407), Archbishop of Constantinople. In *Homily 75 (John 14.15-30)* he is also explicit identifying the Paraclete with the Spirit:

Therefore, what did He say? ‘I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate’; that is, ‘Another like Me.’ Let those afflicted with the disease of Sabellius blush for shame, and likewise those who do not have the proper opinion of the Holy Spirit. And they should be discomfited, for the marvel of His

⁴⁵ Cyril of Alexandria, *Commentary on the Gospel according to S. John* Vol. II, S. John IX-XXI (London: Walter Smith, 1885), p. 106.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 301-302.

statement is this: that with one blow it has felled heresies that teach doctrines diametrically opposite. For by saying ‘another’ He showed His distinction of Person; and by saying ‘Advocate,’ He showed the sameness of Their essence.⁴⁷

It is clear that Chrysostom saw the Spirit/Paraclete as *divine*, rather than just a creature, like a prophet. In *Homily 77 (John 15.11-16.4)*, he says this:

Accordingly, see what sort of consolation He went on to mention, lest they be disturbed by these reflections. ‘When the Advocate has come, whom I will send you, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me. And you also bear witness, because from the beginning you are with me.’ He will be trustworthy, for He is the Spirit of Truth. That is why Christ called Him, not ‘the Holy Spirit,’ but ‘the Spirit of Truth.’

Moreover, the words, ‘who proceeds from the Father,’ mean that He has precise knowledge of all things, as He Himself also said of Himself: ‘I know where I came from and where I go,’ and there also He was speaking on the subject of truth. ‘Whom I will send.’ See, it is no longer the Father only, but also the Son who sends.⁴⁸

No prophet is omniscient, not even true prophets, yet Chrysostom presents the Spirit/Paraclete as such, meaning that He must be divine. Finally, in *Homily 78 (John 16.5-15)*, we read:

‘For if I do not go,’ He declared, ‘the Advocate will not come.’ What have they to say here, who do not properly esteem the Spirit? Is it ‘expedient’ for the Lord to go away and for a servant to come instead? Do you perceive how great the dignity of the Spirit is?⁴⁹

Chrysostom dismisses the idea that a mere servant could replace the Lord Jesus, which immediately precludes any human being of any description fitting the role of the Paraclete. He gives more examples, but these will suffice. The Cappadocian Fathers - Basil of Caesarea (330-378), Gregory of Nyssa (c. 335 – c. 395) and Gregory Nazianzus (c. 329 –390) were among the greatest theologians of the Early Church, and they are particularly relevant to the

⁴⁷ Goggin, Sister Thomas Aquinas (trans.), *Saint John Chrysostom: Commentary on Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist Homilies 48-88* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1959, 2000), pp. 300-301.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 331.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 341.

issue of the Holy Spirit, as they combatted the *Pneumatomachians* (“Spirit-fighters”), who denied the Spirit’s deity. If we begin with Basil, one of his greatest works was *On the Holy Spirit* (chapter 9:23):

23. The Spirit does not take up His abode in someone’s life through a physical approach; how could a corporeal being approach the Bodiless one? Instead, the Spirit comes to us when we withdraw ourselves from evil passions, which have crept into the soul through its friendship with the flesh, alienating us from a close relationship with God. Only when a man has been cleansed from the shame of his evil, and has returned to his natural beauty, and the original form of the Royal Image has been restored in him, is it possible for him to approach the Paraclete.⁵⁰

Again, we see the identification of the Spirit with the Paraclete, and it should be noted that Basil refers to the Spirit/Paraclete coming to “us” – and we need to recall that he is writing in the fourth century. In Chapter 18:44 he writes the following:

44. When the Lord taught us the doctrine of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, He did not make arithmetic a part of this gift! He did not say, “In the first, the second, and the third,” or “In one, two, and three.” He blessed us with the knowledge given us by faith, by means of holy Names. We are saved through faith; numbers have been invented as symbols of quantity. These men bring ruin on themselves through every possible source; they have even turned man’s ability to count against the faith! Numbers cannot change the nature of anything, yet these men honor arithmetic more than the divine nature, lest they give the Paraclete more honor than He is due! But the Unapproachable One is beyond numbers, wisest sirs; imitate the reverence shown by the Hebrews of old to the unutterable name of God.⁵¹

It is obvious that Basil sees the Spirit/Paraclete as a member of the Trinity, and thus divine, as opposed to some human being. Later, in the same chapter, Basil further emphasizes the deity of the Spirit, which precludes His being a purported prophet:

46. This is not our only proof that the Holy Spirit partakes of the fullness of divinity; the Spirit is described to be of God, not in the sense that all things are of God, but because He proceeds from the mouth of the Father, and is not begotten

⁵⁰ Anderson, David (trans.), *St Basil the Great: On the Holy Spirit* (New York: St Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), p. 44.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

like the Son. Of course, the “mouth” of the Father is not a physical member, nor is the Spirit a dissipated exhalation, but “mouth” is used to the extent that it is appropriate to God, and the Spirit is the essence of life and divine sanctification. Their intimacy is made clear, while the ineffability of God’s existence is safeguarded. He is also called the Spirit of Christ, since He is naturally related to Him. That is why Scripture says, “Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him.” Only the Spirit can adequately glorify the Lord: “He will glorify me,” not as a creature, but as the Spirit of truth, since He Himself is truth shining brightly. He is the Spirit of wisdom, revealing Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God, in His own greatness. As the Paraclete He reflects the goodness of the Paraclete (the Father) who sent Him, and His own dignity reveals the majesty of Him from Whom He proceeded.⁵²

In 19:48, quoting John. 14:26, Basil says this:

He shares the name Paraclete with the Only-Begotten, who said, “I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Paraclete.” The Spirit shares titles held in common by the Father and the Son; He receives these titles due to His natural and intimate relationship with them. Where else would they come from? Again He is called the ruling Spirit, the Spirit of truth, and the Spirit of wisdom.⁵³

Gregory of Nazianzus, in *Oration 41 On Pentecost*, makes the identification clear in dealing with the Feast of Pentecost, when the Apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit:

XII. And therefore He came after Christ, that a Comforter should not be lacking unto us; but Another Comforter, that you might acknowledge His co-equality. For this word Another marks an Alter Ego, a name of equal Lordship, not of inequality. For Another is not said, I know, of different kinds, but of things consubstantial.⁵⁴

In *Oration 5:3 On the Holy Spirit*, he states:

But we have so much confidence in the Deity of the Spirit Whom we adore, that we will begin our teaching concerning His Godhead by fitting to Him the Names which belong to the Trinity, even though some persons may think us too bold. The Father was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the

⁵² Ibid., p. 74.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 76.

⁵⁴ Schaff, Philip (Ed.), *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* Vol. 7 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, originally published 1893), p. 762.

world. The Son was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world. The Other Comforter was the True Light which lighteneth every man coming into the world.⁵⁵

In Oration 5:XXVI, Gregory is even more explicit about the identity of the Comforter:

And indeed it is by little and little that He is declared by Jesus, as you will learn for yourself if you will read more carefully. I will ask the Father, He says, and He will send you another Comforter, even the spirit of Truth. This He said that He might not seem to be a rival God, or to make His discourses to them by another authority. Again, He shall send Him, but it is in My Name. He leaves out the I will ask, but He keeps the Shall send, then again, I will send, — His own dignity. Then shall come, the authority of the Spirit.⁵⁶

As for Gregory of Nyssa, in his *Letter 35 To Peter his own brother on the Divine Ousia and Hypostasis*, addressing John 15:26, he identifies the nature of the Paraclete therein with the Spirit:

4e. The Son who makes known the Spirit who issues from the Father (Jn 15.26) through himself and with himself, and who alone shines forth as the only begotten from the unbegotten light, has no communion with the Father or the Holy Spirit in the distinguishing marks of individuality. He alone is known by the signs just stated.⁵⁷

We have seen that there is a wide temporal and geographical diversity in our treatment of the subject. From what is now modern-day France to Turkey and North Africa at various times, leading Christian figures all identified the Paraclete as the Spirit. At this point we return to where it all began – Palestine, in the figure of Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313 – 386). In the Jerusalem Creed (c. 350) associated with him, we read that the Holy Spirit is explicitly termed the Paraclete:

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 641.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 654.

⁵⁷ Silvas, Anna M., *Gregory of Nyssa: The Letters* (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2007), p. 253.

Πιστεύομεν εἰς ἕνα Θεόν Πατέρα παντοκράτορα...	We believe in one God the Father Almighty...
Καὶ εἰς ἕνα κύριον Ἰησοῦν Χριστόν...	And in one Lord Jesus Christ...
Καὶ εἰς ἕν ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τὸν παράκλητον,	And in one Holy Ghost, the Advocate, who spake in the Prophets...

Note that here we are presented with ἕν ἅγιον πνεῦμα, τὸν παράκλητον - one Holy Ghost, the Advocate. The equation could scarcely be more pronounced – the Spirit is the Paraclete/Advocate. In *Catechesis XVI On the Holy Spirit (1)*, Cyril identifies the Paraclete with the Spirit:

Not all the classes of angels, not all their hosts together have equality with the Holy Spirit. The all-perfect power of the Paraclete overshadows them all. While they are sent to minister, He searches even the deep things of God, according to the Apostle: “For the Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the things of a man save the spirit of the man which is in him? Even so, the things of God no man knows but the Spirit of God.”⁵⁸

Earlier in the *Catechesis*, Cyril refers to the Spirit as the Advocate:

(3) There is One Holy Spirit, the Advocate. As there is One God, the Father, and there is no second Father, and as there is one Only-begotten Son and Word of God, and He has no brother, so there is one only Holy Spirit, and there is no second Spirit equal in honor to Him. The Holy Spirit is a mighty Power, a being divine and unsearchable. He is living and rational, the Sanctifier of all things made by God through Christ. He enlightens the souls of the just; He inspired the prophets; he inspired the Apostles in the New Testament.⁵⁹

In referring to the reception of the Spirit at Pentecost, Cyril presents this as the fulfilment of the promise of Jesus to send the Advocate:

We do not divide the Holy Trinity, like some, nor do we confuse the Persons, like Sabellius. In true piety we know one Father, who sent His Son to be our Savior;

⁵⁸ McCauley, Leo P., & Stephenson, Anthony A. (trans.), *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem Volume 2* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), p. 90.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 77.

we know one Son, who promised to send the Advocate from the Father; we know the Holy Spirit, who spoke in the prophets, and on Pentecost descended upon the Apostles in the form of fiery tongues here in Jerusalem, in the Upper Church of the Apostles.⁶⁰

Indeed, elsewhere in the same *Catechesis*, Cyril identifies the Advocate with the Spirit:

This is the good Sanctifier of the Church, her Helper and Teacher, the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, of whom our Savior said: “He will teach you all things,” and He did not say merely “He will teach,” but also: “and he will bring to your mind whatever I have said to you”; for the teaching of Christ and that of the Holy Spirit are the same, not different.⁶¹

He gives further examples in the same *Catechesis*:

For there is one Salvation, one Power, one Faith. There is One God, the Father; One Lord, His Only-begotten Son; One Holy Spirit, the Advocate.⁶²

But her Helper stood by, the Advocate, the Spirit who sanctifies every rational nature.⁶³

In *Catechesis XVII On the Holy Spirit (2)*, he repeats this equation:

...in fact from our present lectures and our former discourses you may have conceived a firmer faith “in One God, the Father Almighty, and in our Lord Jesus Christ, His Only-begotten Son, and in the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.” The word itself and the title of “Spirit” are applied to Them in common in the Holy Scriptures, for it is said of the Father: “God is spirit,” as it is written in the Gospel according to John; and of the Son: “A spirit before our face, Christ the Lord,” as Jeremiah the Prophet says; and of the Holy Spirit: “But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,” as it has been said; yet the order of the Creed, if devoutly understood, excludes the error of Sabellius.⁶⁴

Cyril refers to the Spirit as the Advocate elsewhere in this *Catechesis*:

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 78.

⁶¹ Ibid., p. 84.

⁶² Ibid., p. 91.

⁶³ Ibid., p. 95.

⁶⁴ Ibid., p. 117.

For it is One and the Same Spirit, who, "dividing" his gifts "to everyone according as he will," yet remains Himself undivided. For the Advocate is not different from the Holy Spirit, but one and the same, though called by different names; living, subsisting, speaking and working; and the Sanctifier of all rational beings made by God through Christ, angels as well as men...

...in the traditional confession of the faith, which commands us to "believe in one Holy Spirit, the Advocate, who spoke by the prophets"; thus you know that though His titles are many, the Holy Spirit is One. We shall now mention a few of these many titles.

(4) He is called Spirit according to the text just read: "To one through the Spirit is given the utterance of wisdom"; He is called the Spirit of truth, in our Savior's words: "But when he, the Spirit of truth, has come"; He is also called Advocate by the Lord: "For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you"; that He is one and the same, though with different titles, is clear from what follows. That the Holy Spirit and the Advocate are the same is manifest from the words: "But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit"; the identity of the Advocate and the Spirit of truth, from the words: "and I will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth"; and again: "But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth."⁶⁵

In the last section Cyril is quoting John 14:26; 16, 17 and 15:26. The identification of the Spirit and the Advocate is rock-solid. We will end with this long quote from the same *Catechesis* which also refers to John 14, 15, and 16:

...again He says: "And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you shall know him, because he will dwell with you, and be in you." Further: "These things I have spoken to you, while yet dwelling with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your mind whatever I have said to you." Also: "But when the Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness concerning me." Again the Savior says: "For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go I will send him to you. And when he has come, he will convict the world of sin, and of justice, and of judgment": and subsequently: "Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot hear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will teach you all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he will

⁶⁵ Ibid., pp. 97, 98.

hear he will speak, and the things that are to come he will declare to you. He will glorify me, because he will receive of what is mine, and declare it to you. All things that the Father has are mine. That is 'why I have said that he will receive of what is mine, and will declare it to you.' I have read the very words of the Only-begotten, and so you need not pay attention to the words of men.⁶⁶

At this point we return to Gaul (France) and examine the work of Hilary of Poitiers (c. 310 – c. 367). In his work *On the Trinity*, he explicitly refers to the Spirit as the Paraclete, referencing John 15:26, 16:12-15:

(20) Nor will I now infringe upon anyone's liberty of thought in this matter, whether they may regard the Paraclete Spirit as coming from the Father or from the Son. The Lord has left nothing uncertain, since He spoke as follows in the same discourse: 'Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when he, the Spirit of truth, has come, he will direct you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he will have heard he will speak, and the things that are to come he will declare to you. He will glorify me, because he will receive of what is mine and will declare it to you.'⁶⁷

He goes on to repeat the identification:

There is also a reference to the Spirit Paraclete in the Spirit of God, not only by the testimony of the Prophets, but also by that of the Apostles, when it is said: 'But this is what was spoken through the prophet: And it shall come to pass in the last days, says the Lord, that I will pour forth of my Spirit upon all flesh. And their sons and daughters shall prophesy.' And we are taught that these words were completely fulfilled in the Apostles, when all of them spoke in the languages of the Gentiles after the Holy Spirit had been sent.⁶⁸

It is particularly in Book II that the identification is clear, in referring to John 16:

(33) But, let us now hear from the Lord's own words the service that He renders to us. He says: 'Many things yet I have to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.' 'It is expedient for you that I depart. If I do go I shall send the Advocate to you.' And again: 'And I will ask the Father and he will send you another Advocate to dwell with you forever, the Spirit of truth.' 'He will direct you in all

⁶⁶ Ibid., p. 103.

⁶⁷ McKenna, Stephen, *Saint Hilary of Poitiers: The Trinity* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1954, 1968, 2002), pp. 290-291.

⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 294.

the truth. He will not speak on his own authority, but what ever he will hear he will speak, and the things that are to come he will declare to you. He will glorify me, because he will receive of what is mine.’ These words, which we have borrowed from any places, were spoken to prepare the road for our understanding, and in them are included the will of the donor, as well as the character of and the requisites for the gift, in order that the gift of the Holy Spirit, which is, as it were, the pledge of His assistance, might throw light upon the difficult article of our faith, the Incarnation of God, since our human weakness cannot comprehend the Father and the Son.⁶⁹

No other possible explanation can be given than that Hilary identifies the Spirit with the Advocate. The same equation is found in Book VIII, referring to John 15:26:

Furthermore, let them listen to the Son as He testifies about the unity of the Father with Him: ‘When that Advocate has come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will bear witness concerning me.’ The Advocate will come and the Son will send Him from the Father, and He is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father.⁷⁰

If we cross the Alps, we encounter the work of Ambrose of Milan (c. 339 –397), specifically his work *De Spiritu Sancto - On the Holy Spirit*. Therein, he refers to John 15:26 and states:

For the Lord in the Gospel said: ‘When the Paraclete shall come, whom I will send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father, he shall give testimony of me.’ So the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, and bears witness of the Son.⁷¹

In Chapter IV, he refers to John 14:16, 17, explicitly equating the Spirit with the Paraclete:

(58) Him then whom the Apostle called the Spirit of life, the Lord in the Gospel called the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, as you have it: ‘And I will ask the Father, and he shall give you another Paraclete, that he may abide with you for ever. The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, nor

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 61-62.

⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 289.

⁷¹ Deferrari, Roy J., *Saint Ambrose: Theological and Dogmatic Works* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), p. 45.

knoweth him.' You have, then, also the Paraclete Spirit, the same called both the Spirit of Truth and the invisible Spirit. How, then, do certain men think the Son visible in His divinity, when the world cannot see even the Spirit?⁷²

So, Ambrose clearly identified the Paraclete as God the Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity. In Chapter 11, referring to John 15:26, he repeats this identification, distinguishing the Spirit from the angelic order, emphasizing His deity:

(116) The Spirit indeed also is said to have been sent, but the Seraph to one, the Spirit to all. The Seraph is sent to minister; the Spirit works a mystery. The Seraph performs what is ordered; the Spirit divides as he wishes. The Seraph passes from place to place, for he does not fill all things, but is himself also filled by the Spirit. The Seraph descends with a passing according to his nature, but we cannot indeed think of this with respect to the Holy Spirit, of whom the Son of God said : 'When the Paraclete shall come, whom I shall send you from the Father, the Spirit of truth, who proceedeth from the Father.'⁷³

In Chapter XIV, Ambrose references John 14:26:

(134) But since the name of the Father and of the Son is one, accept that the same name is that of the Holy Spirit also, for the Holy Spirit also came in the name of the Son, as it is written: 'But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things.' For He who came in the name of the Son, surely also came in the name of the Father, for the name of the Father and of the Son is one.⁷⁴

In the same chapter, he again refers to John 14:16, 17, and 14:6:

(137) And so one Paraclete is the Son, another Paraclete the Holy Spirit, for John also called the Son a Paraclete, as you have it: 'If any man sin, we have an Advocate [Paraclete] with the Father, Jesus Christ.' And so just as there is unity of name, so also there is unity of power; for where the Paraclete Spirit is, there also is the Son...

(139) Moreover, just as we show that the Son is named the Paraclete, so, too, we show that the Spirit is called the Truth. Christ is the Truth; the Spirit is the Truth; for you have it in John's epistle: 'That the Spirit is Truth.' Not only is the Spirit

⁷² Ibid., p. 56.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 77.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 84.

called the Spirit of Truth, but also Truth, just as the Son is proclaimed Truth, who says: 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.'⁷⁵

There are more examples from Ambrose's work, but the preceding quotes are sufficient evidence to demonstrate his position. From Italy we now cross the Mediterranean to North Africa, to conclude our study with Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430). His most relevant work on this subject is obviously *De Trinitate – On the Trinity*. In Book I he refers to both John 14 and 16, and identifies the Spirit as the Advocate, and as a member of the Trinity, and thus cannot be a prophet:

...the Son alone suffices because He cannot be separated from the Father and the Holy Spirit. For what is the meaning of these words: 'If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate to be with you forever, the Spirit of truth whom this world cannot receive' that is, he lovers of this world? For 'the sensual man does not perceive those things that are of the Spirit of God.' But still it may seem as if the Son alone were not sufficient on account of the words that were said: 'I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate.' Furthermore, in another place, the latter is spoken of in such a way as if He alone were wholly sufficient: 'When the Spirit of truth shall have come, he will teach you all the truth.'

... no one, except the Holy Spirit, teaches even the Son about those things which are of God, as a superior teaches an inferior, since the Son attributes such great power to Him as to say: 'Because I have spoken these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I speak the truth; it is expedient for you that I depart. For if I will not go the Advocate will not come to you.'⁷⁶

Later, he quotes from John 14:16-23:

But Scripture opposes this carnal concept, for shortly before these words it had said: 'And I will ask the Father and he will give you another Advocate that he may be with you forever.' Consequently, He will not depart when the Father and the Son come, but will be with them in the same mansion forever, because He neither comes without them nor they without Him. But in order to intimate the Trinity, the names of the persons are also given, and while certain things are predicated of each one separately, this is not to be understood as excluding the

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ McKenna, Stephen, *Saint Augustine: The Trinity* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1963), pp. 26, 27.

others, on account of the unity of this same Trinity, and the one substance and Godhead of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.⁷⁷

In the following quote, Augustine emphasizes the deity of the Spirit, His being a member of the Trinity, and refers to Him as the Advocate on the basis of John 16:7 and 14:25-26.

(25) But what has been prepared by His Father has also been prepared by the Son Himself, because He Himself and the Father are one. From the many modes of expression in the divine books we have already shown that what is said about each one in this Trinity is likewise said about all of them, on account of the inseparable activity of the one and the same substance. As He also says about the Holy Spirit: ‘When I shall go, I shall send him to you.’ He did not say ‘we shall send’ but spoke thus as if the Son only were going to send Him and not the Father, while He declared in another place: ‘These things I have spoken to you while yet dwelling with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will declare all things to you.’⁷⁸

It is clear from these quotations that Augustine certainly identified the Johannine Paraclete with the Holy Spirit, and that he held to the deity of the Spirit, thereby excluding any human figure from being the Paraclete. We referred earlier to how some have misinterpreted Carson’s article quoted above, where he refers to Augustine having some doubts about the interpretation of John 16:1-7. Carson is referring not to the *identity* of the Παράκλητος, but rather His function in relation to conviction of sin in the passage. The passage in Augustine is in his *Tractates* on John 94:6, which reads:

6. But that which follows, “And when He is come, He will convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, indeed, because they believe not on me; but of righteousness, because I go to the Father, and ye shall see me no more; and of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (vers. 8–11); as if it were sin simply not to believe on Christ; and as if it were very righteousness not to see Christ; and as if that were the very judgment, that the prince of this world, that is, the devil, is judged: all this is very obscure, and cannot be included in the present discourse, lest brevity only increase the

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 37.

obscurity; but must rather be deferred till another occasion for such explanation as the Lord may enable us to give.⁷⁹

So, nothing about the identity of the Advocate. This is obvious from *Tractate LII: Chapter XII. 27–36*, where Augustine states:

4. But when He says, “I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete,” He intimates that He Himself is also a paraclete. For paraclete is in Latin called *advocatus* (advocate); and it is said of Christ, “We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.” But He said that the world could not receive the Holy Spirit, in much the same sense as it is also said, “The minding of the flesh is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God; neither indeed can be;” ...save in an invisible way, the Holy Spirit cannot be seen.

5. “But ye,” He adds, “shall know Him; for He shall dwell with you, and be in you.” He will be in them, that He may dwell with them; He will not dwell with them to the end that He may be in them: for the being anywhere is prior to the dwelling there. But to prevent us from imagining that His words, “He shall dwell with you,” were spoken in the same sense as that in which a guest usually dwells with a man in a visible way, He explained what “He shall dwell with you” meant, when He added the words, “He shall be in you.” He is seen, therefore, in an invisible way: nor can we have any knowledge of Him unless He be in us.⁸⁰

In *Tractate XCIV* on John *Chapter XVI. 4–7*, Augustine again identifies the Paraclete with the Spirit:

2. The Comforter then, or Advocate (for both form the interpretation of the Greek word, paraclete), had become necessary on Christ’s departure: and therefore He had not spoken of Him at the beginning, when He was with them, because His own presence was their comfort; but on the eve of His own departure it behoved Him to speak of His coming, by whom it would be brought about that with love shed abroad in their hearts they would preach the word of God with all boldness; and with Him inwardly bearing witness with them of Christ, they also should bear witness, and feel it to be no cause of stumbling when their Jewish enemies put them out of the synagogues, and slew them, with the thought that they were doing God service; because the charity beareth all things,¹ which was to be shed abroad in their hearts by the gift of the Holy Spirit.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Schaff, Philip (ed.), *NPNFI-07: St. Augustine: Homilies on the Gospel of John; Homilies on the First Epistle of John; Soliloquies; Tractate XCIV* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, originally published 1888), p. 628.

⁸⁰ Ibid., p. 564.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 625.

We could continue to quote Early Church Father after Early Church Father, but that would be tedious in the light of the clear evidence already presented that the Early Church definitely identified the Paraclete as God the Holy Spirit, and not some human being. This is important, since some Muslims appear to have misunderstood what is perhaps a poorly wording passage in the paper by Montazery and Karimpur:

In earlier times, some Muslim scholars who could not read the Gospels in their original Greek language and, thus, only had access to its Syriac and Arabic versions, thought the Syriac word “Paraqlita” or the Arabic “Faraqlit” meant Muhammad or Ahmad. They thought the Christians had not translated it in order to hide its real meaning and to give another interpretation for it (mostly as the Holy Spirit). The oldest Christian document which introduces Paraclete as the Holy Spirit is a letter attributed to Emperor Leo III (d. 741 CE), who sent it to the Muslim caliph ‘Umar II (d. 720 CE) in the eighth century CE. Some of the material is probably from the late eighth or early ninth centuries (Hoyland 1997, 499).⁸²

Probably, the authors mean that this is the ‘oldest Christian document which introduces Paraclete as the Holy Spirit’ in an official communication to a Muslim ruler, which it may well be, but it is definitely not the oldest Christian document which identifies the Paraclete as the Spirit. They go on to quote the article by Arthur Jeffery, where he states this:

THERE is a persistent tradition in the Eastern Christian Churches, often referred to by Oriental Christians even at the present day, to the effect that early in the VIIIth century there was an exchange of letters on the question of the respective merits of Christianity and Islam, between the Umayyad Caliph ‘Umar II (717-720) and the Byzantine Emperor Leo III, the Isaurian (717-741), in which the Emperor gloriously refuted the claims of Islam. If this is so, it will represent one of the earliest documents in the Muslim-Christian Controversy known to us. Carl Güterbock rightly states that the beginnings of literary discussions concerning Islam among the Greeks can be traced back to the middle of the VIIIth century, when Leo III was succeeded by his son Constantine V (741-775), but he begins his account of the Byzantine polemicists with John of Damascus (†754) and his pupil Theodore Abū Qurra (c. 825). A polemical epistle of Leo III

⁸² Montazery and Karimpur, ‘The History of the Idea of a Literal Connection between the Words “Ahmad” and “Paraclete” in the Qur’an and the Gospel of John’, p. 115.

to ‘Umar must have been written before 720, and would thus be earlier than any known Byzantine tractate on this controversy.⁸³

Obviously, Jeffery stated that this was ‘one of the earliest documents in the Muslim-Christian Controversy known to us’, not that it was the earliest Christian reference to the Paraclete being the Holy Spirit.

4. Παράκλητος used of supposed prophets?

Apparently, some Muslims have claimed that alleged prophets in the second century identified themselves as the Paraclete, and Christians did not rebut their claims by arguing that the Paraclete is the Holy Spirit. This obviously refers to the Montanists, who began in Phrygia, hence the derogatory name given to them by their critics “Cataphrygians”, who emphasized the continuation of the charismatic gifts of the Spirit listed in 1 Corinthians 12/14, whereas in North Africa they were more of a holiness movement. They began c. 172, but the origins are unclear. Ataie refers to this: “...according to Christian history, several charismatic Christian “prophets” and preachers, such as Montanus of Phrygia (d. circa late 2nd c. CE) and his female colleagues Prisca and Priscilla, claimed to be the Paraclete, or rather *inspired* by the Paraclete.”⁸⁴ He does not elaborate or provide any evidence.

It is obvious that the Montanists *were* widely condemned (the term “catholic” here should not be anachronistically understood as meaning Roman Catholic, but rather has the sense of ‘mainstream orthodoxy’):

Anti-Montanist writings were passed from one province to another (including to Rome, to Syria and possibly to Gaul). Clergy supported one another in their attempts to trounce the Prophets and their followers. Montanus had arranged gatherings in Pepuza but the catholics were convening elsewhere to assess the threat. Prophylactic letters were circulated, like that from Serapion, warning any

⁸³ Jeffery, Arthur, ‘Ghevond’s Text of the Correspondence between ‘Umar II and Leo III’, *The Harvard Theological Review*, Vol. 37, No. 4 (Oct., 1944), p. 269.

⁸⁴ Ataie, Ali J., *Authenticating the Johannine Injil: Sunnite “Polemirenic” Interpretive Methodological Approaches to the Gospel of John* (Berkeley: Graduate Theological Union PhD dissertation, 2016), pp. 435-436.

who might not know otherwise that here was a phenomenon which had already been widely condemned.⁸⁵

So, their claims were indeed rebutted. Part of the problem is that their leading figure, Montanus, may have given prophecies in the first-person singular without prefacing them with “Thus says the Lord (or the Spirit)”. It is equally possible that critics misunderstood them:

Hippolytus and Eusebius' Asian sources agreed that Montanus was revered (*Refut. omn. haer.* viii.19; x.25; *HE* v.16,8; cf. Epiphanius *Pan.* xlviii.3 and Tertullian *De jej.* i). And in Epiphanius (*Pan.* xlviii. 11,5-6) we find the first association of Montanus and the Paraclete... Hippolytus is our earliest source to link the women and the Paraclete (*Refut. omn. haer.* viii.19). The accusation, however, was not that Montanus (already dead) had identified himself as the promised Paraclete. That accusation, like the others, came later - in Origen (*De princ.* ii. 7,30); in Eusebius (*HE* v. 14); in the *Dialexis*, in the mouths of the Montanist and the Orthodox; as well as in Didymus (*De Trin.* iii.41, 1 and 3); in Basil of Caesarea (*Ep.* clxxxviii.i) and in Germanus of Constantinople (*Ad Antimum* v). In early sources Montanus seems to be just the mouthpiece of the Spirit.⁸⁶

So, it may be that the critics either misunderstood what had happened in Montanist prophecies, or simply engaged in exaggerated polemical denunciation of them. Trevett continues:

Certain of Montanus' claims were cited to show his blatant self-aggrandisement and heresy. However, these belong to late sources and reflect contemporary theological discussion on the nature of the Trinity rather than claims original to the Prophecy... For example, in the *Dialexis* we read ‘I am the Father and I am the Son and I am the Paraclete’ (cf. Didymus *De Trin.* iii.41,1) or ‘I am the Father and the Son and the Spirit’ (or Holy Spirit elsewhere in this source).⁸⁷

The late date of the quotes should be noted, but at any rate, it is clear that Montanus *did* indeed equate the Paraclete with the Spirit, and that he prophesied in the name of the

⁸⁵ Trevett, Christine, *Montanism: gender, authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1996, 2002), p. 54.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 79.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

members of the Trinity – perhaps failing to add “Thus says the Lord” before his ecstatic pronouncement, which led to misunderstanding that he claimed to be the Paraclete.

What is certain is that the New Prophecy movement was condemned, and any claim to actually be the Paraclete was refuted. We should focus on second century figures, like Irenaeus, who was explicit in his denunciation of them, and so we repeat in an extended form our earlier quote from him in *Against Heresies*, 3:11:9:

Others, again (the Montanists), that they may set at nought the gift of the Spirit, which in the latter times has been, by the good pleasure of the Father, poured out upon the human race, do not admit that aspect [of the evangelical dispensation] presented by John’s Gospel, in which the Lord promised that He would send the Paraclete; but set aside at once both the Gospel and the prophetic Spirit. Wretched men indeed! who wish to be pseudo-prophets, forsooth, but who set aside the gift of prophecy from the Church...⁸⁸

The second century Muratorian Fragment from Rome, presenting a canon of Scripture, denounces the Cataphrygians:

The last lines of the MF’s catalogue of heretics (ll. 84–85) reject the Montanists under the label of “Cataphrygians.” Ambrosiaster himself refers to the Montanists as “Cataphrygians” in Comm. in Rom 2:16. Line 84 does not refer to Basilides, the Alexandrian gnostic teacher, but to Basil of Caesarea (“Asia” – Caesarea Mazaca in Cappadocia) who condemned Montanus for baptizing converts with an unorthodox Trinitarian formula (Ep. 188).

In light of these observations, the passage might be reconstructed as follows:

We do not receive anything in its entirety of the Arian Fotinus, who lived under Valentinian, or of the one (i.e., Donatus) under Miltiades, who (i.e., the Donatians) also wrote (pl.) a book of psalms for Parmenianus, [and] together with Basil, the Asian, [we do not receive anything in its entirety] of the founder of the Cataphrygians.⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Schaff, Philip, *Ante-Nicene Fathers 01: The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus* (Grand Rapids: Christian Classics Ethereal Library, originally published 1885), pp. 1090-1091.

⁸⁹ Rothschild, Clare K., *The Muratorian Fragment: Text, Translation, Commentary* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022), p. 326.

It follows that the group were condemned by mainstream Christians in the very century that the former emerged. Somewhat later, Cyril of Jerusalem, in *Catechesis XVI On the Holy Spirit (1)*, rails against heretics who apparently claim that they were the Paraclete or Holy Spirit:

(6) For the heretics, impious always, have sharpened their tongues against the Holy Spirit, and have recklessly uttered abominations, as Irenaeus has recounted in his books against the heretics. Some have even said that they themselves were the Holy Spirit; the first of these was Simon the magician, mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; for when he was cast out he did not hesitate to teach such heresy. The so-called Gnostics, impious men, uttered other falsehoods against the Holy Spirit, and the wicked Valentinians still others. The accursed Mani had the audacity to say that he was the Advocate sent by Christ. Others again have asserted that there is one Spirit in the Prophets, and another in the New Testament; so diverse is their error, or rather their blasphemy. Abhor such men, therefore, and shun the blasphemers of the Holy Spirit, for whom there is no pardon.⁹⁰

It is clear from this that the Early Church did indeed condemn anyone who claimed to be the Paraclete. Cyril goes on to condemn the Montanists and Manichaeans:

(8) Abominate the Cataphrygians also and Montanus, their ringleader in evil. and his two prophetesses, Maximilla and Priscilla. This man, who was out of his mind and truly mad (for otherwise he would not have said such things), dared to say that he himself was the Holy Spirit... Montanus, I repeat, went so far as to call himself the Holy Spirit, though he was a monster of impiety and cruelty, and subject to inexorable condemnation.

(9) Not otherwise was the nefarious Mani, a veritable garbage bin of all heresy; reaching the lowest depths of perdition, he collected the worst features of all the heresies, and developed and preached a more novel error. He did not hesitate to assert that he was the Advocate whom Christ had promised to send. Now the Savior, in promising Him, said to the Apostles: "But wait here in the city" of Jerusalem "until you are clothed with power from on high." What follows? Did the Apostles, dead two hundred years, wait for Mani, "until they should be clothed with power"? Will anyone dare to assert that they were not filled with the Holy Spirit from Pentecost on? For it is written: "Then they laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit." This happened many years before Mani, once the Holy Spirit descended on the day of Pentecost.⁹¹

⁹⁰ McCauley & Stephenson, *The Works of Saint Cyril of Jerusalem* Volume 2, pp. 78-79.

⁹¹ Ibid., pp. 79-80.

Again, it is clear that Cyril saw the infilling of the Apostles by the Spirit as the fulfilment of the promise of Jesus to send the Advocate, centuries before the coming of Mani. It follows that the Early Church would have equally rejected claims that any purported prophet even more centuries later could be the Paraclete.

CONCLUSION

It is incredible that anyone would be so crass as to claim that the Paraclete is not to be equated with the Holy Spirit. It is also unimaginable how anyone could claim that the Paraclete was not supernaturally experienced by the Apostles in their lifetimes. The mind boggles that anyone could claim that the Early Church did not equate the Paraclete with the Spirit, given the mass of evidence to the contrary. As for not denouncing those who were understood – rightly or wrongly - as claiming that the Paraclete was some would-be prophet, again, the evidence of Church History speaks for itself. Most definitely, Christians have always considered that the Paraclete is, as Jesus identified, the Holy Spirit, and vice versa.