

HIDDEN TREASURES

By J. A. Huffman, D.D.

THE SPIRIT'S METHOD—
CONVICING CONCERNING SIN

It is of the utmost significance that Jesus not only introduced the personality of the Holy Spirit, emphasizing the dispensational aspect of His work, announced Him as the administrator of His own testament, but also outlined His method of procedure—all this in so brief a preachment: "And he, when he is come, will convict the world." There is no other course for the third person of the Trinity to pursue.

That the members of the Trinity should understand the successive ministries of each and be capable of announcing the person, coming, and work of the successor, is no occasion for surprise. Hence Jesus' great announcement found in John 16:8-11.

Literally translated, verse 8 reads: "And that one having come, he shall convict the world concerning sin, concerning righteousness and concerning judgment."

The first word which attracts our attention in this brief passage is the Greek word *elengcho*. The King James Version translates the word, "reprove," making the sentence to read: "He will reprove the world." The American Standard Version employs a stronger and more correct word to translate *elengcho*, and most individual translators follow the American Standard Version. It is largely upon this word, and its significant meaning, that the method of the Spirit's ministry is predicated, therefore very careful study of the word itself is desirable.

The word "convict" which is the best possible translation of the Greek *elengcho*, is a legal term which has much meaning included in it. In the first place, it suggests the work of the sheriff, who apprehends the wrongdoer, and brings him into the custody of the law. In the second place, it suggests the office of the prosecutor, who arraigns the criminal at the bar of justice. In the third place, it suggests the duty of the judge, who pronounces, upon the apprehended and arraigned wrongdoer, the verdict of guilt or acquittal.

But after telling us that the Holy Spirit will "convict the world," our Lord continues to list the things concerning which the Holy Spirit will convict. "He will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Whatever else we may learn concerning the Holy Spirit, here is given His method of working. He will place His finger upon three salient facts, and upon these he will focus his ministry. Everything which He has ever done or ever will do in His ministry of grace has focused, and must continue to center, upon these three major points—sin, righteousness, and judgment. A tremendously important task is His!

Christ further leaves us under the impression that the Holy Spirit's ministry will not only be in relation to the three things mentioned, but will also be in the order in which He places them: sin first, righteousness second, and judgment third. This point is of such importance that it will be returned to when further light can be thrown upon it.

At first glance, the statement that the Holy Spirit will convict in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment appears very satisfactory, and apparently without need of explanation. It may be just about what we should have expected Jesus to say regarding the Holy Spirit's work. But Jesus knew that

such an announced program needed clarification, lest it might be accepted as a matter of fact, and not taken with the full and serious meaning which it involves, hence His explanation in John 16, verses nine, ten, and eleven.

Concerning Sin

Concerning sin, because they believe not in me (verse 9).

But what does unbelief have to do with sin? Let it be noted here, that the term sin is in the singular, and comprehends more than if written in the plural, "sins." Here is an instance in which a thing in the singular is not less, but more than in the plural. "Sins" represent the symptoms of a spiritual malady which is deep-seated and deadly, the name for which is "sin." As a disease is inclusive of itself and all of its symptoms, so is sin inclusive of its own deadly self, and all its outward manifestations. It is not an accident that Jesus used the word "sin" in the singular.

There is one cause for sin, in its beginning and in its perpetuation—unbelief. It cost the first sinner his Eden, and equally so, every sinner since. Why the murderer, the drunkard, the adulterer, the gambler, the liar, the thief, the profane person? One answer, and only one—unbelief.

In the last analysis, there is only one damning sin, one sin which will stand against man in the day of judgment and will also separate him, now and here, from all that is good in this world and in the next—the sin of unbelief. Even the sin against the Holy Spirit is basically, and in deepest reality, this sin.

It is true that few people analyze their own convictions and struggles so as to understand them; not even the genuinely penitent, much less those who are only sorry that they have been caught. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit, in convicting the sinner, puts His finger upon the one sin back of all his sins—unbelief. This is the method of the Holy Spirit.

It is evident that sin in the singular, here defined as unbelief, stands for all the moral and spiritual malady of the human race, and until completely remedied, both as to its symptoms and as to disease, itself, through the blood of Christ, the Holy Spirit will continue to convict concerning it. A doubt back in Eden, when man gave ear to a question raised concerning the goodness and the integrity of God, has caused all the evils that can be listed under the category of sin, and God never will be satisfied until all unbelief is driven from His universe. (All Rights Reserved)

IF YOU WANT TO BE LOVED

- Don't contradict people, even if you are sure you are right.
- Don't be inquisitive about the affairs of even your most intimate friend.
- Don't under-rate anything just because you do not possess it.
- Don't believe that everybody else in the world is happier than you.
- Don't conclude that you have never had any opportunities in life.
- Don't be rude to your inferiors in social position.
- Don't repeat gossip, even if it does not interest the crowd.
- Learn to hide your aches and pains under a pleasant smile.
- Learn to attend to your own business.

—The Friend.

THE GOD OF IMPOSSIBILITIES

J. B. Chapman, D. D.

Which is easier, to forgive the sins of the

transgressor or to heal the paralytic? The answer is, I think, both are equally difficult and equally easy. Both are impossible with men, but both are easy with God. Men who accounted Jesus as but a man were logically correct in concluding that He blasphemed when He announced that He had forgiven one who had sinned against God. But since He was and is God, He can do the work of God in both the moral and physical realms.

One has remarked that His contemporaries instinctively came to ask Jesus to do things which were accounted impossible. A servant was incurably sick, would not Jesus come and heal him? A daughter was dead, would not Jesus come and bring her back to life again? The multitudes were hungry in the desert, would not Jesus feed them without opening a fish market or founding a bakery? There is no way to magnify the work they asked Him to do: they were just such works as all agreed were impossible. That is, they were such works as men could not do, but it was consistent to bring the impossible to God. Every such request was also a confession; for it said, "O Master, here is a work as none but God can do. But Thou art God, please come and do this." Such prayer was not the wild cry of fanatics, but the normal prayers of intelligent people who realized they had met the Limitless in Jesus Christ.

But how many are the impossibilities which press me! I need pardon for my guilt, cleansing from my defilement, comfort in the dark and lonely hours of my bereavement, hope in my starless night, life in death, and a permanent house when my tent falls down. All these things are impossible. I realize they are so when I talk to men about them. Sooner, say they, may an Ethiopian change the color of his skin and a leopard dispose of his spots than that a sinner shall become a saint and all the moral pollution of a human soul be purged away. Death, they tell me, is the end of life, and eternity is but a name. And so I know men cannot help me. The things I need are impossible with men. I must bring my needs to Christ. O Christ, pardon my guilt. Sanctify my inmost nature. Give me abiding comfort for my poor distressed heart. Be Thou my life, and assure me with a hope that anchors me safe to that which is within the veil.

Is anything too hard for Jesus? Did any ever leave Him disappointed? Nay, He breathes the atmosphere of the impossible as naturally as men breathe that of what they say can be done. At His word the paralytic carries the bed that formerly carried him, and the trusting soul stands upon the mountain of sin which formerly stood upon him. Christ is the Lord of impossibilities.

HIDING BEHIND THE WIDOW'S MITE

A prosperous merchant was approached for a contribution for a charitable cause. "Yes, I will give you my mite," he responded.

"Do you mean the widow's mite?" asked his friend.

"Certainly."

"I shall be satisfied with half that much," suggested the solicitor. "Approximately how much are you worth?"

"Seventy thousand dollars."

"Then," said the friend, "Give me your check for \$35,000; that will be half as much as the widow gave, for she gave, as you remember, all that she had, even her living."—Radio Evangelist.