

HIDDEN TREASURES

By Dr. J. A. Huffman

The Method of the Spirit—
Convicting Concerning Righteousness

Just as Jesus said of the Holy Spirit, "that He having come, shall convict the world concerning sin," just so He added, "He shall convict the world concerning righteousness" (John 16:8).

One of the words of particular interest continues to be "convict," Greek *elencho*, which is a legal term, and very expressive. To review, its real meaning concedes to him who exercises the prerogative the authority of sheriff, prosecutor, and judge—to apprehend, to bring to the bar of justice and to pronounce judgment.

He shall convict "concerning righteousness, because I go unto the Father" (John 16:10).

The other Greek word of special interest is the one translated righteousness, *dikaisuna*, which, according to Thayer's Greek Lexicon, means: "The state of him who is such as he ought to be; the condition acceptable to God." It also implies "integrity, virtue, purity of life, uprightness, correctness in thinking, feeling and acting."

Righteousness (*dikaisuna*) is the word translated righteousness in Matthew 6:33, where we are commanded to "seek first his kingdom, and his righteousness," with the promise of all other things added. It is also the word used in the Epistle of James (1:20), where it is said, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God."

When it is predicted of the Holy Spirit, that it is His task, His work, to bring about the righteousness of sinful men; by his technique apprehending, prosecuting, and acting as judge, until the sinner entirely unacceptable to God, wrong in his relation, both to God and his fellowmen, is brought into the relation, both to God and men, such as he ought to be, a tremendous assignment is made to Him.

That there is a vital relationship between Christ's return to the Father and all this is evident, else the words of Jesus in relation to the method and work of the Holy Spirit would have no meaning. There must be not only an agency, such as the Holy Spirit, by which this miraculous transformation of deep-dyed sinners into living, shining saints, is brought about, but a means as well. The means must apparently be found in the return of Jesus to the Father. Let us see.

Perhaps it would assist in the quest for the meaning of this statement if we should discover that, as sin is a deadly thing from which man is to be delivered as a result of the ministry of the Holy Spirit, so righteousness is a glorious reality, into which man is to be brought as a result of the same ministry. It is to be a deliverance from something to something.

Jesus Christ came into the world on a program of redemption. That He knew His program in minutest detail, and that He kept it to the letter, is certain. When He was upon the cross, He could truthfully testify, in the presence of His Father, and of man, "It is finished."

From the moment that the catastrophe of sin had occurred, a great gulf had intervened between God and man, heaven and earth. This chasm was spanned by the coming Christ, who came to earth, lived among men, linked himself up, arm in arm with man, and then returned to the Father by the way of Gethse-

mane, Calvary, and the empty tomb. Today He sits at the right hand of the Father, His task of bridging the chasm between God and man is finished. A completion of this circuit was necessary to make redemption a reality. A failure at any point would have invalidated the effort. Even after Calvary's bitter cup had been emptied, if the tomb and death had been able to retain our Lord, there would have been no righteousness provided for man. Only Christ's return to the Father made Christ's righteousness available to man.

Saint Paul, the greatest exponent of the meaning of Christ's death and resurrection, has epitomized the entire matter in these never-to-be-fathomed and marvelous words: "Him who knew no sin he made to be sin on our behalf; that we might become the righteousness of God in him" (II Cor. 5:21). This was what Christ was doing as He completed the circuit, returning to the Father with a finished task. Consequently, whatever demands God makes of those for whom Christ provided righteousness, not exceeding the provision, is perfectly just. If God should say, "Be ye righteous; be ye sinless; be ye holy; be ye perfect," man might answer back to God: "That is exactly what I should like to be, but am not, and cannot be." To this, God can now say: "All that is needed to make you all that I want you to be, is in the hand of the Holy Spirit, whom I have sent to minister to you grace. Let Him minister to you my own righteousness."

Every excuse which man has ever thought he had for not being righteous, is forever removed in the light of Christ's high-priestly achievement and His own profound preaching, concerning the Holy Spirit, "He will convict the world of righteousness, because I go to the Father."

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LETTERS FROM OUR PASTORS

Seal Cove, N. B.

Dear Highway Family:

We wish to give a report of this corner of our work.

We appreciated all who remembered us with cards at the Christmas season. Again we express our thanks to the church for the \$50.00 Christmas gift and several individual gifts from members and friends.

We had the pleasure of having our parents, Mrs. Bessie Martin and Rev. and Mrs. L. T. Sabine, with us over the holiday season. On the evening prior to Rev. and Mrs. Sabine returning home, church members and friends gathered at the parsonage for a social evening followed by refreshments. We enjoy these evenings together.

During the past year the balance of the bathroom fixtures were set up and we are in hopes to have it completed in the near future. Also a well was drilled next to the parsonage which will prove a great blessing when it is connected up and in operation. Our church was redecorated inside and we are in hopes to have some work done at the parsonage.

We appreciate all the co-operation and consideration which is shown in making our surroundings more pleasant. It is a pleasure to labour with these good people and are looking forward to greater results in the salvation and sanctification of precious souls.

Many of our young people are away—to school, in training at hospitals, and at work. We miss their help but we believe God will raise others up to take their places.

We plan to begin special meetings on March 9th with Rev. J. C. Albright, New England District Superintendent of the Church of the Nazarene. Pray for us that God will mightily undertake and stir our community and island.

Yours in His service,

RONALD T. and MRS. SABINE

Island Falls, Maine

Dear Highway Friends:

We are desirous of extending to you greetings from this part of God's vineyard. We are glad to be able to report victory and that we are enjoying the rich blessing of the Lord.

Since we reported through these columns, much has been accomplished here in both of the churches. The Crystal Church has been repainted within, new windows installed, a piano to take the place of the old organ, and the two old wood stoves with extra long pipes have given away to a new coal-wood combination furnace. In order to install the furnace and to store the fuel (wood), it was necessary to enlarge the small space beneath the church. It is planned to insulate the church.

The parsonage has not been excluded from the plans. It is hoped to place the parsonage in a first class condition with added conveniences.

At the Belvedere Church much needed repair was made to the foundation. The walls of the basement were all but ready to fall in, were it not for the temporary props which held them. The walls were placed back into position and securely braced with heavy iron rails and concrete braces and well pointed. Grading around the church was done to insure proper drainage. It is hoped that in the not too distant future the church can be redecorated and insulated.

We are grateful to our Heavenly Father for these material blessings and to those who have helped in any way to make them a reality.

God has not blessed us in a material way only. He has undertaken for us spiritually. Blessings and victories have been ours so that we can truly say, "The ark is coming up the road." You will recall that last spring Brothers N. E. Trafton and R. H. Nicholson aided us in a campaign for souls. We haven't gotten over that victory and never expect to. A whole family was won for the Lord, as well as other individuals for which we praise Him.

A burden for the salvation of souls rests upon the churches. The Holy Spirit is present in our services. Souls are concerned about their welfare. We are looking for and working toward a real spiritual awakening in this place. Praise Him for what He has done but we are expecting greater things from Him any time. Pray that this will be so.

After much prayer and due consideration, we have felt led of the Lord to resign from this field of labor and are open to His leading for the coming year.

We are praying that He will make this ensuing year the best yet for all our churches and work in general.

Yours in Calvary's bonds,

RALPH L. and MRS. SABINE

SELF-FORGETFULNESS

Seldom can the heart be lonely,

If it seeks a lonelier still,

Self-forgetting, seeking only

Emptier cups to fill.

—Frances Ridley Havergal