

Exposition of the Gospel of John CHAPTER 54

CHRIST VINDICATED BY THE SPIRIT

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Transcript

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John 16:1-11

The following is an Analysis of the passage which is to be before us:— 1. Reason why Christ warned His disciples, verse 1. 2. Details of what they would suffer, verse 2. 3. Cause of the world's hostility, verse 3. 4. Christ's tender solicitude, verse 4. 5. The disciple's self-occupation, verses 5, 6. 6. The promise of the Spirit, verse 7. 7. The Spirit vindicating Christ, verses 8, 11. The chapter division between John 15 and 16 is scarcely a happy one, though perhaps it is not an easy matter to indicate a better: John 16:12 would probably have been a more suitable point for the break, for verse 12 obviously begins a new sub-section. In the passage which is to be before us we find the Lord continuing the subject which had engaged Him at the close of chapter 15. There He had been speaking of the hatred of the world—against the Father, against Himself, and against His disciples. Then He had assured them that He would send the Holy Spirit to conduct His cause. The character in which Christ mentioned the Third Person of the Godhead—"the Comforter"—should have quieted the fears and sorrows of the apostles. Now Christ returns to the world's hatred, entering more into detail. Previously, He had spoken in general terms of the world's enmity; now He proceeds to speak more particularly, sketching as He does the future fortunes of Christianity, describing the first chapter of its history. Most faithfully did the Savior proceed to warn His disciples of the treatment which would be meted out to them by their enemies. Strikingly has Mr. John Brown commented upon our Lord's conduct on this occasion. "The founders of false religions have always endeavored to make it appear to be the present interest of those whom they addressed to acquiesce in their pretensions and submit to their guidance. To his countrymen the Arabian impostor held out the lure of present sensual indulgence; and when he at their head, made war in support of his imposture, the terms proffered to the conquered were proselytism, with a full share in the advantages of their victors, or continued unbelief with slavery or death. It has indeed been the policy of all deceivers, of whatever kind, to conceal from the dupes of their artifice, whatever might prejudice against their schemes, and skillfully to work on their hopes and fears by placing in a prominent point of view all the advantages which might result from them embracing their schemes, and all the disadvantages which might result from their rejecting them. An

exaggerated view is given both of the probabilities of success, and of the value of the benefits to be secured by it, while great care is taken to throw into the shade the privations that must be submitted to, the labor that must be sustained, the sacrifices that must be made, the sufferings that must be endured, and the ruin that may be incurred, in joining in the proposed enterprise. "How different the conduct of Jesus Christ! He had no doubt promised His followers a happiness, ample and varied as their capacities of enjoyment, and as enduring as their immortal souls; but He distinctly intimated that this happiness was spiritual in its nature, and to be fully enjoyed only in a future world! He assured them that, following Him, they should all become inheritors of a kingdom; but He with equal plainness stated that that kingdom was not of this world, and that he who would enter into it must 'forsake all,' and 'take up his cross.' Himself poor and despised, 'a Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief.' He plainly intimated that His followers must be 'in the world, as He was in the world.'" The disciples of Christ were to be hated by the world! But it is highly important that we do not form too narrow a view of what is meant by "the world." Satan has tried hard to obliterate the line which separates between those who are "of the world" and those who are "not of the world." And to a large extent he has succeeded. The professing "Church" has boasted that it would convert the world. To accomplish this aim, it has sought to popularize "religion." Innumerable devices have been employed—many of which even a sense of propriety should have suppressed—to attract the ungodly. The result has been the world has converted the "professing Church." But notwithstanding this it still remains true that "the world" hates the true followers of the Lamb. And nowhere is this more plainly evident than in those who belong to what we may term the religious world. This will come before us in the course of our exposition. The closing verses of our present portion announce the relationship of the Holy Spirit to "the world" and it is this which distinguishes the first division of John 16 from the closing section of John 15. In the concluding verses of John 15 the Lord had spoken of the world's hatred, and this still engages Him in the first few verses of chapter 16. But in verse 7 He refers once more to the Holy Spirit, and in verses John 8:11 presents Him as His Vindicator. It is this which has guided us in selecting the title of our present chapter: its suitability must be determined by the interpretation which follows. "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended" (John 16:1). Before the Lord describes in detail the forms in which the world's hostility would be manifested, He paused to acquaint the disciples with His reasons for announcing these things. First, it was in order that they should not be "offended" or "stumbled" or "scandalized" as the word means. To be forewarned is to be forearmed. Christ would prepare His people beforehand by telling them plainly what they might expect. Instead of contending among themselves which should be the greatest, He bids them prepare to drink of the cup He drank of and to be baptised with the baptism wherewith He was to be baptised. It was not that He would discourage them, far from it; He would fortify them against what lay ahead. And how this evidenced the tender concern of their Master. How it demonstrates once more that He "loved them unto the end"! And how gracious of the Lord to thus warn us! Should we not often have stumbled had He not told us beforehand what to expect? "These things have I spoken unto you, that ye should not be offended." That there was need for this warning is very evident. Already the question had been asked, "Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?" (Matthew 19:27). Moreover, that very night all would be "offended" because of Him: "Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad" (Matthew 26:31). But, it may be asked, Why should Christ here forewarn the disciples when He knew positively that they would be offended? Ah! why tell Peter to "watch and pray lest he enter into temptation" (Mark 14:38), when the Lord had already foretold that he would deny Him thrice! Why command that the Gospel should be preached to every creature when He foreknows that the great majority will not believe it! The answer to each of these questions is: to enforce human responsibility. "They shall put you out of the

synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service" (John 16:2). Out of the catalogue of sufferings to which the disciples should be subjected, the Lord selects for mention two samples of all the rest: an extreme torture of the mind and the final infliction upon the body. It is indeed solemn to observe that this persecution of Christ's people comes from the religious world. The first fulfillment of this prophecy was from the Jews, who professed to be the people of God. But Christ identifies them with the world. Their sharing in and display of its spirit showed plainly where they belonged. And the same is true to-day. Where profession is not real, even those who bear the name of Christ are part of "the world," and they are the first to persecute those who do follow Christ. When the walk of the Christian condemns that of the worldly professor, when faithfulness to his Lord prevents him from doing many things which the world does, and when obedience to the Word obliges him to do many things which the world dislikes, then enmity is at once aroused and persecution follows—persecution just as bitter and real to—day, though its forms be changed. "To be 'put out of the synagogue' was more than simply to be excluded from the place of public worship. It cut a man off from the privileges of his own people, and from the society of his former associates. It was a sort of moral outlawry, and the physical disabilities followed the sufferer even after death. To be under this ban was almost more than flesh and blood could bear. All men shunned him on whom such a mark was set. He was literally an outcast; in lasting disgrace and perpetual danger. Those familiar with the history of the dark ages, or who are acquainted with the effects of losing caste among the Hindoos, will be able to realize the terrors of such a system" (Mr. Geo. Brown). Sometimes the degradation of excommunication was the prelude to death. Cases of this are recorded in the book of Acts. We find there mention made of a class called "zealots." They were a desperate and fanatical faction who thirsted for the blood of Christians. "And when it was day, certain of the Jews banded together, and bound themselves under a curse, saying that they would neither eat nor drink, till they had killed Paul. And they were more than forty which had made this conspiracy" (Acts 23:12, 13). That such men were not restricted to the lower classes is evident from the case of Saul of Tarsus, who tells us that in his unregenerate days, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them" (Acts 26:9, 10). How fearfully do such things manifest the awful depravity of the human heart! It has been the same in every age: godliness has always met with hatred and hostility. "Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous" (1 John 3:12). He that is upright in the way is abomination to the wicked" (Prov. 29:27). "They hate him that rebuketh in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly" (Amos 5:10). It is the same now. Faithfulness to Christ will stir up religious rancour. In spite of the boasted liberalism of the day, men are still intolerant, and manifest their enmity just so far as they dare. "And these things will they do unto you, because they have not known the Father, nor me" (John 16:3). Here the Lord traces, once more, the world's undying ill-will to its true source: it is because they are not acquainted with the Father and the Son. Hatred and persecution of God's children are both the consequence and the proof of the spiritual ignorance of their enemies. Had the Jews really known the Father in whom they vainly boasted, they would have acknowledged the One whom He had sent unto them, and acknowledging Him, they would not have mistreated His followers. Thus it is to-day! "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God. And every one that loveth Him that begat loveth him also that is begotten of Him" (1 John 5:1). "But these things have I told you, that when the time shall come, ye may remember that I told you of them" (John 16:4). The Lord had already given one reason (John 16:1), why He had spoken these things to the disciples, now He gives them another: He made these revelations that their faith in Him might be increased when the events should confirm His prophecy. The

fulfillment of this prediction would deepen their assurance in Him as the omniscient God, and this would encourage them to depend upon the veracity of His promises. If the evil things which He foretold came to pass, then the good things of which He had assured them must be equally dependable. "And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you" (John 16:4). "The Lord also tells them why He had not told them at the first. The full revelation was more than their weak hearts could bear. They would be staggered at the prospect. They must be gradually trained to this. Not all at once, but by little and little, as they were able to bear it, He unfolds the scheme of His cross, and of their duties and dangers. The Lord has milk for His babes, and meat for His strong men. And there was as yet no need for this. For He Himself was with them, and by the less could prepare for the greater. He was with them, as a nurse with her children; to lead them on from strength to strength, from one degree of grace and Christian virtue to another. But now that He was about to depart from them, and leave them, as it were, to themselves; to see how they will acquit themselves in that contest for which He has been training them all the while; it is necessary that all the more plainly and fully He should lay before them their future—at first this was not needed. 'Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.' And He was yet with them and could gradually unfold it to them. And there was yet time. But as time goes on, we see Him and hear Him opening page after page of the volume of His secret Providence to their opening minds; till finally, as here, He tells them plainly and fully even of the extremest trials that are coming upon them" (Mr. Geo. Brown). "And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you." But how are we to reconcile this with such passages as Matthew 5:10, 12; Matthew 10:21, 28, etc.? In addition to the solution offered above, namely, that Christ gradually unfolded these things to the apostles, we may point out: First, He had not previously said that the world would do these things unto them; that is, He had not hitherto intimated that they would be hated by all men. Second, previously He had not declared that the reason for this hatred was because of men's ignorance of the Father and the Son. Third, He had not previously predicted that such persecution would proceed from the delusion that the perpetrators would imagine that they were doing God a service! "But now I go my way to him that sent me" (John 16:5). There are some who would connect this first clause of the verse with the end of John 16:4, thus: "And these things I said not unto you at the beginning, because I was with you; but now I go my way to him that sent me." And then after a brief pause, the Lord asked, "And does no one of you ask whither I go; but because I have thus spoken to you, your heart is filled with sorrow." This is quite likely, and seems a natural and beautiful connection. "And none of you asketh me, Whither goest thou?" (John 16:5). In John 13:36, we find Peter asking Christ, "Whither goest thou?" But this was an unintelligent forwardness, for he evidently thought that the Lord was going on an earthly journey (cf. John 7:5). In John 14:5: Thomas said, "We know not whither thou goest," but this was more by way of objection. What the Lord wanted was an intelligent, sympathetic, affectionate response to what He had been saying. But the apostles were so absorbed in grief that they looked not beyond the cloud which seemed to overshadow them. they were so occupied with the present calamity as not to think of the blessing, which would issue from it. They were depressed at the prospect of their Master's departure. Had they only asked themselves whither He was going, they would have felt glad for Him; for though it was their loss, it was certainly His gain—the joy of being with His Father, the rest of sitting down on high, the blessedness of entering again into the glory which He had before the foundation of the world. It was therefore a rebuke for their self-occupation, and how tenderly given! "But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart" (John 16:6). How often it is thus with us! We magnify our afflictions, and fail to dwell upon the blessings which they bear. We mourn and are in heaviness in the "cloudy and dark day," when the heavens are black with clouds and the wind brings a heavy rain, forgetting the beneficial effects upon the parched earth, which only thus can bring forth its fruits for our enjoyment. We wish it to be always spring, and consider not that without winter first, spring

cannot be. It was so with the disciples. Instead of making the most of the little time left them with their Master, in asking Him more about His place and work in Heaven, they could think of nothing but His departure. What a warning is this against being swallowed up by over-much sorrow! We need to seek grace to enable us to keep it under control. "But because I have said these things unto you, sorrow hath filled your heart." It is blessed to learn that the disciples did not continue for long in this disconsolate mood. A very different spirit was theirs after the Savior's resurrection. Strikingly is this brought out in the concluding verses of Luke's Gospel: "And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God." Forty days of fellowship with Him after He had come forth victor of the grave, had removed their doubts, dispelled their fears, and filled their souls with joy unspeakable. "Nevertheless I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you" (John 16:7). Blessed contrast! The disciples, at the moment, had no thought for Him, but He was thinking of them and assured them that though they lost Him for a while, it would be their gain. Though they had failed to ask, their compassionate Master did not fail to answer. Ever more ready to hear than we are to pray, and want to give more than we desire; ready to make allowance for them in their present distress, and thinking always more of the sufferings of others than His own; thinking more now of those He is leaving behind, than of the agony He is going forth to meet—before they call He answers, answers what should have been their request, declaring unto them the expediency of His departure. "Nevertheless" is adversative: I know you are saddened at the prospect of My departure, but My going is needful for you. "I tell you the truth": the personal pronoun is emphatic in the Greek—I who love you, I who am about to lay down My life for you: therefore you must believe what I am saying. I tell you the truth. Your misgivings of heart have beclouded your understandings, you misapprehend things. You think that if I remain with you, all the evils which I have mentioned would be prevented. Alas, you know not what is best for you. "It is expedient for you that I go away": It is for your profit, your advantage. It is striking to note the contrast between our Lord's use here of "expedient" from the same words on the lips of Caiaphas in John 11:50! But what did the Lord mean? How was His going away their gain? We believe that there is a double answer to this question according as we understand Christ's declaration here to have a double reference. Notice that He did not say "It is expedient for you that I go my way to him that sent me?" as He had said in John 16:4. He simply said, "it is expedient for you that I go away." We believe that Christ designedly left it abstract. Whither was He "going" when He spake these words? Ultimately, to the Father, but before that He must go to the Cross. Was not His first reference then to His impending death? And was it not highly expedient for the disciples and for us, that the Lord Jesus should go to and through the sufferings of Calvary? "For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you." "The atoning death of Christ was necessary to make it consistent with the Divine government to bestow on men these spiritual blessings which are necessarily connected with the saving influence of the Holy Spirit. All such blessings from the beginning had been bestowed with a reference to that atonement; and it was fitting that these blessings, in their richest abundance, should not be bestowed till that atonement was made" (Mr. John Brown). "'Unless I go away,' that is, unless I die, nothing will be done—you will continue as you are and everything will remain in its old state: the Jews under the law of Moses, the heathen in their blindness—all under sin and death. No scripture would then be fulfilled, and I should have come in vain" (Mr. Martin Luther). But while we understand our Lord's first reference in His words "If I go not away" to be to His death, we would by no means limit them to this. Doubtless He also looked forward to His return to the Father. This also was expedient for His disciples. "So fond had they grown of His fleshly presence, they could not endure that He should be out of their sight. Nothing but His corporeal presence could quiet them. We know who said, If

Thou hadst been here, Lord, as if absent, He had not been able to do it by His Spirit, as present by His body. And a tabernacle they would needs build Him to keep Him on earth still; and ever and anon they were still dreaming of an earthly kingdom, and of the chief seats there, as if their consummation should have been in the flesh. The corporeal presence therefore is to be removed, that the spiritual might take place" (Bishop Andrews). In other ways, too, was it "expedient" for His disciples that the Savior should take His place on High. It is of a glorified Christ that the Spirit testifies, and for that the Savior had to "go away." Moreover, had Christ remained on earth He had been localized, His bodily presence confined to one place: whereas by the Spirit He is now omnipresent—where two or three disciples are gathered together in His name, there is He in the midst. Again; had the Lord Jesus remained on earth there had been far less room and opportunity for His people to exercise faith. Furthermore, this cannot be gainsaid: after Christ had ascended and the Spirit descended, the apostles were new men. They did far more for an absent Lord, than they ever did while He was with them in the flesh. "But if I depart, I will send him unto you" (John 16:7). "Every rendering of this verse ought to keep the distinction between 'apeltho' and 'poreutho,' which is not sufficiently done in the English Version, by 'going away' and 'depart.' 'Depart' and 'go' would be better! The first expressing merely the leaving them, the second, the going up to the Father" (Dean Alford). We believe our Lord's fine discrimination here confirms our interpretation above of the double reference in His "if I go not away," though we know of no commentator who takes this view. "And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). There is hardly a sentence in this Gospel which has been more generally misunderstood than the one just quoted. With rare exceptions this verse is understood to refer to the benign activities of the Holy Spirit among those who hear the Gospel. It is supposed to define His work in the conscience prior to conversion. It is regarded as a description of His gracious operations in bringing the sinner to see his need of a Savior. So firmly has this idea taken root in the minds even of the Lord's people, it is difficult to induce them to study this verse for themselves—study it in the light of what precedes, study it in the light of the amplification which follows, study the terms employed, comparing their usage in other passages. If this be done carefully and dispassionately, we feel confident that many will discover how untenable is the popular view of it. It should be very evident that something must be wrong if this verse be interpreted so as to clash with Christ's explicit statement in John 14:17, "The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive." What then is the character of the "reproof" that is here spoken of? Is it an evangelical conviction wrought in the heart, or is it something that is altogether external? Almost all the older commentators regarded it as the former. We, with an increasing number of later writers, believe it is the latter. One of the leading lexicons of the twentieth century gives as the meaning of *elencho*, "to bring in guilty; to put to shame by proving one to be wrong; to convict with a view to condemnation and judgment, but not necessarily to convince; to bring in guilty without any confession or feeling of guilt by the guilty one." The general use of the word in the New Testament decidedly confirms this definition. It occurs in John 3:20: "For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved," which obviously means: lest the evil nature of his deeds should be so manifested by the light that excuse or extenuation would be impossible. It is found again in John 8:46, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?": most certainly Christ did not mean, Which of you is able to convince Me, or make Me realize I have sinned. Rather, Which of you can substantiate a charge? which of you can furnish proof of sin against Me? It is rendered "reproved" in Luke 3:19, meaning "charged," not made to feel guilty. So too in Ephesians 5:11; 2 Timothy 4:2. Thus, in each of the above passages "*elencho*" refers to an objective condemnation, and not to a subjective realization of condemnation. In 1 Timothy 5:20 it is rendered, "rebuke". So also in Titus 1:13; Titus 2:15; Hebrews 12:5; Romans 3:19. Clearer still, if possible, is its force in James 2:9, "But if ye have respect of persons, ye commit sin, and are convicted of the law as transgressors." Rightly did Bishop Ryle say in his

comments on John 16:8, "Inward conviction is certainly not the meaning of the word rendered 'reprove.' It is rather refutation by proofs, convicting by unanswerable arguments as an advocate, that is meant." The next point to be considered is, How does the Holy Spirit "reprove the world of sin," etc.? In order to answer this question aright it needs to be pointed out that our Lord was not, in these verses, describing the mission of the Holy Spirit, that is, the specific work which He would perform when He came to earth. We grant that at first sight the words "He will reprove" appear to describe His actual operations, but if everything in the passage is attentively studied, should it be seen that this is not the case. We believe our present verse is similar in its scope and character to Matthew 10:34, "I came not to send peace, but a sword." To send a "sword" was not the nature of Christ's mission, but, because of the perversity of fallen human nature, it was the effect of His being here. Again, in Luke 12:49 He said, "I am come to send fire on the earth." It is the very presence of the Spirit on earth which, though quite unknown to them, reproves or condemns the world. The Holy Spirit ought not to be here at all. That is a startling statement to make, yet we say it thoughtfully. From the standpoint of the world, Christ is the One who ought to be here. The Father sent Him into the world, Why, then, is He not here? The world would not have Him. The world hated Him. The world cast Him out. But Christ would not leave His own "orphans" (John 14:18, margin). He graciously sent the Holy Spirit to them, and, to the angels and His saints, the very presence of the Holy Spirit on earth "reproves", or brings in guilty, the world. The Holy Spirit is here to take the place (unto His disciples) of an absent Christ, and thus the guilt of the world is demonstrated. Confirmatory of what has been pointed out, observe particularly the character in which the third person of the Godhead is here contemplated: "and he shall reprove." Who shall do so? The previous verse tells us, "The Comforter." The Greek word is "paracletos" and is rightly rendered "Advocate" in 1 John 2:1. Now an "advocate" produces a "conviction" not by bringing a wrong-doer to realize or feel his crime, but by producing proofs before a court that the wrong-doer is guilty. In other words, he "reproves" objectively, not subjectively. Such is the thought of our present passage: it is the actual presence of the Holy Spirit on earth which objectively reproves, rebukes, convicts "the world." "Here the Holy Spirit is not spoken of as dealing with individuals when He regenerates them and they believe, but as bringing conviction to the world because of sin. The Holy Ghost being here, convicts the world, i.e., what is outside where He is. Were there faith, He would be in their midst: but the world doth not believe. Hence Christ is, as everywhere in John, the standard for judging the condition of men" (Mr. W. Kelly). But some may object, If this passage be not treating of a subjective work of evangelical conviction, why does the Holy Spirit "reprove" the world at all? what is gained if the world knows it not? But such a question proceeds on an entire mis-conception. We say again, these verses are not treating of what the Spirit does, but mention the consequence of His being here. John 9:39 gives us almost a parallel thought, "And Jesus said, For judgment I am come into this world, that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind." In John 3:17 we are told, "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world." How then are these two passages to be harmonized? John 3:17 give us the mission on which God sent His Son; John 9:39 names one of the consequences which resulted from His coming here. His very presence judged everything that was contrary to God. So the presence of the Spirit on earth judges the world, condemns it for Christ's being absent. "Of sin, because they believe not on me" (John 16:9). The presence of the Divine Paraclete on earth establishes three indictments against "the world." First "of sin." "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not" (John 1:10). The word "knew" here means far more than to be cognizant of or to be acquainted with. It means that the world loved Him not, as the word "know" is used in John 10:4, 5, 14, 15, etc. In like manner, unbelief is far more than an error of judgment, or nonconsent of the mind: it is aversion of heart. And "the world" is unchanged. It has no more love for Christ now than it had when its princes (1 Cor. 2:8) crucified Him. Hence the present tense here: "because

they believe not on me." "Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more" (John 16:10). The personal "I" links up with John 16:7, the last clause of which should be carefully noted: '7 will send him unto you.' The Paraclete is here as Christ's "Advocate." Now the office and duty of an "advocate" is to vindicate his client when his cause permits of it: to do so by adducing evidence which shall silence his adversary. It is in this character that the Holy Spirit is related to "the world." He is here not to improve it, and make it a better place to live in, but to establish its consummate sin, to furnish proof of its guilt, and thus does He vindicate that blessed One whom the world cast out. If it were the subjective work of the Holy Spirit in individual souls which was here in view, it had necessarily read, "He will convict the world... of unrighteousness," because it is destitute of it. But this is not the thought here at all. It is the Spirit's presence on earth which establishes Christ's "righteousness," and the evidence is that He has gone to the Father. Had Christ been an impostor, as the religious world insisted when they east Him out, the Father had not received Him. But the fact that the Father did exalt Him to His own right hand demonstrates that He was completely innocent of the charges laid against Him; and the proof that the Father has received Him, is the presence now of the Holy Spirit on earth, for Christ has "sent" Him from the Father. The world was unrighteous in casting Him out; the Father righteous in glorifying Him, and this is what the Spirit's presence here established. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged" (John 16:11). Had our passage been describing the work of the Spirit in producing conversion this order had been reversed, the "judgment" would have preceded the (un) "righteousness." Let this detail be carefully pondered. If the Spirit's reproof of "sin" means His bringing the sinner to realize his lost condition, and His reproving of "righteousness" means making him feel his need of Christ's righteousness, then wherein would be the need of still further convincing of "judgment"? It does not seem possible to furnish any satisfactory answer! But understanding the whole passage to treat of the objective consequences of the Spirit's presence on earth, then John 16:11 furnished a fitting conclusion. "Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." This is the logical climax. The world stands guilty of refusing to believe in Christ: its condemnation is attested by the righteousness of Christ, exhibited in His going to the Father: therefore nothing awaits it but judgment. The Spirit's presence here is the evidence that the Prince of this world has been judged—when He departs sentence is executed, both on the world and on Satan. "This, therefore, is the testimony of the Holy Spirit to the world. It is heaven's reversal of the world's treatment of Christ. It is the answer of the righteous Father to what the world has done to His Son, and must not be interpreted of Gospel conviction" ("Things to Come," Vol. 5, p. 142). The following questions are to aid the student for our next lesson:— 1. What did Christ mean by "ye cannot bear them now," verse 12? 2. Have the "many things" been said, verse 12? 3. What is implied by the word "guide," verse 13? Meditate on it. 4. What is meant by "he shall not speak of himself," verse 13? 5. Where has the Spirit shown us "things to come," verse 13? 6. To whom was Christ referring in verse 16? 7. Find the verse which records the disciples "rejoicing," verse 22.

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