

The Spirit Convincing of Sin

by Andrew Murray

The Holy Spirit comes to us to work through us, and we must yield our whole life and being to Him in order to be filled with His power and to convince the world of its sin.

Scripture: John 16:7

Topics: "Conviction of Sin", "Holy Spirit"

Description

Andrew Murray emphasizes the vital role of the Holy Spirit in convincing the world of sin, highlighting that the Spirit first must dwell within believers to effectively reach others. He explains that the Spirit's work in us is essential for our testimony to be powerful and convincing, as it aligns our hearts with God's perspective on sin. Murray urges believers to yield their lives to the Holy Spirit, allowing Him to cultivate a deep conviction of sin within them, which will then flow out to the world. He stresses the importance of self-sacrifice and unity among believers in the mission to reveal the reality of sin and the need for redemption through Christ. Ultimately, Murray calls for a deeper awareness of the Spirit's indwelling presence, which empowers believers to be instruments of conviction and transformation in the world.

Transcript

If I go, I will send the Comforter unto you ; and He, when He is come, will convince the world in respect of sin. John 16: 7-8

The close connection between the two statements in these words of our Lord is not always noticed. Before the Holy Spirit was to convince the world of sin, He was first to come into the disciples. He was to make His home, to take His stand in them,, and then from out of them and through them to do His conviction work on the world. He shall bear witness of me, and ye shall also bear witness.' The disciples were to realize that the great work of the Holy Spirit, striving with man, convincing the world of sin, could only be done as He had a firm footing on earth in them. They were to be baptized with the Holy Ghost and with fire, to receive the Power from on high, with the one purpose of being the instruments through whom the Holy Spirit could reach the world. The mighty, sin convicting power of the Spirit to dwell in them and work through them: it was for this our blessed Lord sought to prepare them and us by these words. The lessons they teach are very solemn.

1. The Holy Spirit comes to us, that through us He may reach others. The Spirit is the Spirit of the Holy One, of the redeeming God: when He enters us, He does not change His nature or lose His Divine character. He is still the Spirit of God striving with man, and seeking his deliverance. Wherever He is not

hindered by ignorance or selfishness, He looks out from the heart as His temple for the work He has to do on the world around, and makes it willing and bold to do that work; to testify against sin, and for Jesus the Saviour from sin, He does this very specially as being the Spirit of the crucified and exalted Christ. For what purpose was it that He received the Spirit without measure? 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor. He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives! It was this same Spirit--after Christ through Him had offered Himself unto God, and through Him as the Spirit of Holiness had been raised from the dead--whom He sent down on His Church, that now the Spirit might have a home in them, as He had had it in Himself. And no otherwise and no less than in Himself would the Divine Spirit in them pursue His Divine work, and as a Light shining in, and revealing, and condemning, and conquering the darkness, as 'the Spirit of burning and the Spirit of judgment,' be to the world the power of a Divine conviction and conversion. Not from heaven direct so much, as the Spirit of God, but as the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church, would He convince the world. 'I will send Him to you, and when He is come, He will convince the world.' It is in and through us that the Spirit can reach the world.

2. The Spirit can only reach others through us by first bringing ourselves into perfect sympathy with Himself. He enters into us to become so one with us that He becomes as a disposition and a life within us; and His work in us, and through us in others, becomes identical with our work.

The application of this truth to the conviction of sin in the world is one of great solemnity. The words of our Lord are frequently applied to believers in reference to the continued conviction of sin which He will ever have to work within them. In this sense they are, indeed, most true. This first work of the Spirit remains to the end the undertone of all His Comforting and Sanctifying work. It is only as He keeps alive the tender sense of the danger and shame of again sinning, that the soul will be kept in its low place before God,--hiding in Jesus as alone its safety and its strength. As the Holy Ghost reveals and communicates the Holy Life of Christ within, the sure result will be a deeper sense of the sinfulness of sin. But the words mean more. If the Spirit through us, through our testimony, whether by word or walk, is to convince the world, He must first convince us, of its sin. He must give us personally such a sight and sense of the guilt of its unbelief and rejection of our Saviour, such a sight and sense of each of its sins, as being at once the cause, the proof, the fruit of that rejection, that we shall in some measure think and feel in regard to the sin as He does. There will be then that inner fitness in us for the Spirit to work through us, that inner unity between our witness and His witness against sin and for God, which will reach the conscience and carry conviction with a power that is from above.

Alas! how easy it is in the power of the flesh to judge others, in the spirit which sees not the beam in our own eye, or which, if we are indeed free from what we condemn, yet does it with a secret, 'Stand by, I am holier than thou.' We either testify and 'work in a wrong spirit and in our own strength, or have not the courage to work at all. It is because we see the sin and the sinfulness of others, but not in a conviction that comes from the Holy Spirit. When He convinces us of the sin of the world, His work bears two marks. The one is the sacrifice of self, in the jealousy for God and His honour, combined with the deep and tender grief for the guilty. The other is a deep, strong faith in the possibility and power of deliverance. We see each sin in its terrible relation to the whole; we see the whole in the double light of the cross. We see sin unspeakably hateful in its awful guilt against God and its fearful power over the poor soul: we see sin condemned, atoned, put away, and conquered in Jesus. We learn to look on the world as God looks upon it in His holiness: hating its sin with such an infinite hatred, and loving it with such a love, that He gives His Son, and the Son gives His life, to destroy it and set its captives free.

May God give His people a true and deep conviction of the sin of the world in its rejection of Christ, even in the midst of its profession of believing in Him and serving Him, as the fitting preparation for the Spirit's using them in convincing the world of sin.

3. To obtain this conviction of sin, the believer needs not only to pray for it, but to have his whole life under the leading of the Holy Spirit. We cannot too earnestly insist upon it, that the many different gifts of the Spirit all depend upon His personal indwelling and supremacy in the inner life, and the revelation in us of the Christ that gave His life to have sin destroyed. When our Lord spake that word of inexhaustible meaning, 'He shall be in you,' he opened up the secret of all the Spirit's teaching, and sanctifying, and strengthening. The Spirit is the Life of God; He enters in, and becomes our Life; it is as He can sway and inspire the life that He will be able to work in us all He wills. It is desirable and useful to direct the attention of the believer to the different operations of the Spirit, that he may neglect or lose nothing through ignorance. But it is still more needful, with each new insight into what the Spirit can work, to get firmer hold of the truth : Let the life be in the Spirit, and the special blessing will not be withheld. Would you have this deep spiritual conviction of the sin of the world such an affecting sense of its terrible reality and power, its exceeding sinfulness, as will fit you for being the man through whom the Spirit can convince sinners, just yield your whole life and being to the Holy Spirit. Let the thought of this wondrous mystery of the nearness, the Indwelling, of the Holy God in you quiet your mind and heart into lowly fear and worship. Surrender the great enemy that opposes Him--the flesh, the self-life--day by day to Him to mortify and keep dead. Be content to aim at nothing less than being filled with the Spirit of the Man whose glory it is that He gave Himself to death to take away sin, with the whole being and doing under His control and inspiration. As your life in the Spirit becomes healthy and strong, as your spiritual constitution gets invigorated, your eye will see more clearly, your heart feel more keenly, what the sin around you is. Your thoughts and feelings will be those of the Holy Spirit breathing in you; your deep horror of sin, your deep faith in the redemption from it, your deep love to the souls who are in it, your willingness like your Lord to die if men can be freed from sin, will make you the fit instrument for the Spirit to convince the world of its sin.

4. There is one more lesson. We are seeking in this little book to find the way by which we all can be filled with the Spirit. Here is one condition: He must dwell in us as the world's Convincer of sin, I will send Him unto you, and He will convince the world.' Offer yourself to Him to consider, and feel, and bear the sins of those around you. Let the sins of the world be your concern, as much as your own sin. Do they not dishonour God as much as yours ? Are they not equally provided for in the great redemption ? And does not the Spirit dwelling in you long to convince them too ? Just as the Holy Spirit dwelt in the body and nature of Jesus, and was the source of what He felt, and said, and did, and just as God through Him worked out the will of His holy love; so the Spirit now dwells in believers: they are His abode. The one purpose for which there has been a Christ in the world, for which there is now a Holy Spirit, was that sin may be conquered and made an end of. This is the great object for which the baptism of the Spirit and of fire was given, that in and through believers He might convince of sin, and deliver from it. Put yourself into contact with the world's sin. Meet it in the love and faith of Jesus Christ, as the servant and helper of the needy and the wretched. Give yourself to prove the reality of your faith in Christ by your likeness to Him: so will the Spirit convince the world of its unbelief. Seek the full experience of the indwelling Spirit, not for your own selfish enjoyment, but for this one end, that He can do the Father's work through you as He did through Christ. Live, in unity of love with other believers, to work and pray, that men may be saved out of sin: 'then will the world believe that God hath sent Him.' It is the life of believers in self-sacrificing love that will prove to the world that Christ is a reality, and so convince it of its sin of unbelief.

The comfort and success with which a man lives and carries on his business depends much upon his having a suitable building for it. When the Holy Spirit, in a believer, finds the whole heart free and given up to Him as His home, to fill it with God's thoughts of sin and God's power of redemption, He can through such a one do His work. Be assured that there is no surer way to receive a full measure of the Spirit than to be wholly yielded to Him, to let the very mind of Christ in regard to sin work in us. 'He took away sin by the sacrifice of Himself,' through the Eternal Spirit. What the Spirit was in Him, He seeks to be in us. What was true of Him, must in its measure be true of us.

Christians ! would you be filled with the Holy Spirit, seek to have a clear impression of this : the Holy Spirit is in you to convince the world of sin. If you sympathize thoroughly with Him in this, if He sees that He can use you for this, if you make His work in this matter your work too, you may be sure He will dwell in you richly, and work in you mightily. The one object for which Christ came was to put away sin; the one work for which the Holy Ghost comes to men is to persuade them to give up sin. The one object for which the believer lives is to join in the battle against sin ; to seek the will and the honour of his God. Do let us be at one with Christ and His Spirit in their testimony against sin. An exhibition of the life and Spirit of Christ will have its effect : the holiness, and the joy, and the love, and the obedience to Christ will convince the world of its sin of unbelief. The Presence of Christ in us through the Spirit will carry its own conviction. And just as Christ's death, as His sacrifice for sin, was the entrance to His glory in the power of the Spirit, so our experience of the Spirit's indwelling will become the fuller just as our whole life is more given up to Him for His holy work of convincing the world of sin.

Blessed Lord Jesus! it is by the Presence and Power of the Holy Spirit in Thy people that the world is to be convinced of its sin in rejecting Thee, and that sinners are to be brought out of the world to accept of Thee. It is in men and women full of the Holy Ghost, testifying in the power of a holy joy to what Thou hast done for them, that the proof is to be given that Thou art indeed at the right hand of God. It is in a body of living witnesses to what Thou hast done for them, that the world is to find the irresistible conviction of its folly and guilt.

Alas! Lord, how little the world has seen of this. We do call upon Thee, in deep humiliation, Lord Jesus, make haste and rouse Thy Church to the knowledge of its calling. Oh that every believer in his personal life, and all Thy believing people in their fellowship, might prove to the world what reality, what blessedness, what power there is in the faith of Thee ! May the world believe that the Father hath sent Thee, and has loved them as He loveth Thee.

Lord Jesus, lay the burden of the sin of the world so heavy on the hearts of Thy people, that it may become impossible for them to live for anything but this; to be the members of Thy body, in whom Thy Spirit dwells, and to prove Thy presence to the world. Take away everything that hinders Thee from manifesting Thy presence and saving power in us. Lord Jesus, Thy Spirit is come to us to convince the world: let Him come and work in ever-growing power. Amen.

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