

## Letter #4: Are You God's Elect?

July 14, 1854

Dear Mr. Medhurst,

I am glad that you have been able to write to me and state your feelings. Though my hands are always full, it will ever give me joy to receive such notes as yours.

You ask me a very important question, "Are you one of God's elect?" Now, this is a question neither you nor I can answer at present, and therefore let it drop. I will ask you an easier one, "Are you a sinner?" Can you say "yes"? All say "yes"; but then they do not know what the word "sinner" means.

A sinner is a creature who has broken all his Maker's commands, despised His Name, and run into rebellion against the Most High. A sinner deserves hell, yea, the hottest place in hell; and if he be saved, it must be entirely by unmerited mercy. Now, if you are such a sinner, I am glad to be able to tell you the only way of salvation, "Believe on the Lord Jesus."

I think you have not yet really understood what believing means. You are, I trust, really awakened, but you do not see the door yet. I advise you seriously to be much alone, I mean as much as you can; let your groans go up if you cannot pray, attend as many services as possible; and if you go with an earnest desire for a blessing, it will come very soon. But why not believe now? You have only to believe that the Lord Jesus is able and willing to save, and then trust yourself to Him.

Harbour not that dark suggestion to forsake the house of God; remember you turn your back on heaven, and your face to hell, the moment you do that. I pray God that He will keep you. If the Lord had meant to destroy you, He would not have showed you such things as these. If you are but as smoking flax, there is hope. Touch the hem of His garment; look to the brazen serpent.

My dear fellow-sinner, slight not this season of awakening. Up, and be in earnest. It is your soul, your own soul, your eternal welfare, your Heaven or your hell, that is at stake.

There is the cross, and the bleeding God-man upon it; look to Him, and be saved! There is the Holy Spirit able to give you every grace. Look, in prayer, to the Sacred Three-one-God, and then you will be delivered.

I am, your anxious friend,  
C. H. Spurgeon

## **Letter #5: How May I Be Pardoned?**

My dear friend:

Many thanks for your telephone call this morning in which you related briefly how the Lord is dealing with your heart to bring you to Christ for salvation.

I noticed especially in your conversation that you said you were condemned over so many seemingly little things in your life, both of commission and omission. This is a clear indication that you see yourself under condemnation, because every way you turn you see nothing but judgment. You see your whole being-body, soul, and spirit-under condemnation. Therefore, every deed that you do, every word that you utter, and every thought or imagination of your heart is nothing but sin. You feel yourself damned if you do and damned if you don't, because all your works, or religious duties, are works of darkness, works of Satan, dead works, and, as you yourself are under judgment, every expression of your being is under judgment, and you stand guilty before a holy God.

The Holy Spirit is definitely showing you day by day your sins, your sin-nature, your wickedness, your corruptness, your vileness, your uncleanness, and your guilty distance from a holy God. It may sound strange to you for me to say it, but I praise God for it. No individual ever comes to know Christ as his own personal Lord and Saviour until he first comes to know himself under the illuminating, revealing power of the Holy Spirit (II Cor.4:3-6; John 16:7-11).

Now you face this one question – How may I be pardoned, or forgiven, and delivered from sin and its power, and how may I be delivered from the power of Satan who holds me as his prisoner? (II Tim.2:25,26; Col.1:13,14).

One of the first things the average sinner tries to do is to clean up or reform his life, which does not reach the taproot of his old sin-nature. You stand guilty before God. God forgives your sins, not on the basis of what you do or try to do. You may confess all your sins one by one unto God and yet go to Hell. You may make all the restitution that's within your power to make and yet go to Hell.

As Jehovah said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (Ex.14:13; II Chron 20:17). My dear one, stop! Recognize yourself as a guilty, Hell-deserving sinner, one whom God ought to damn in Hell forever. Acknowledge that God is just., and that He has a right to consign you to Hell forever and ever. Acknowledge your condemnation. Acknowledge that the wrath of God abides upon you (John 3:36). Acknowledge that the Judge of all the earth doeth right (Gen.18:25). Acknowledge that God is right, and you are wrong.

Now you are in a position to recognize for the first time your need of a Substitute – your need of a Sin-Offering – your need of Someone to undertake for you. You have no righteousness that God will accept. Therefore, you have nothing to offer God; you have no merit of any kind. You deserve to go to Hell; acknowledge it.

Now, for such a sinner as you, God has provided that Substitute, "the Lamb of God, which taketh

away the sin of the world" (John 1:29,36). Yes, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Triune God, came into the world, born of a virgin, took upon Himself the human form, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross (Phil.2:5-8), and there on the cross He paid to justice all that you owed. Therefore, He paid your sin-debt. He was made sin for you (II Cor.5:21). He bore your sins in His own body on the tree (Isa.53:5,6). He took your place, and the judgment of God that was due to fall on you fell on Him. He paid your sin-debt to the last farthing. That's grace! No wonder Jonah said, "Salvation is of the LORD" (Jonah 2:9). Every sinner who ever looks to Christ and by faith sees his sins on Christ cries in his heart, "Salvation is of the LORD."

But you told me over the phone, "I realize I'm a sinner; I'm guilty; I ought to go to Hell. I realize that Christ died for such a sinner as I, but I can't believe Him. I have no faith." You are right. The Holy Spirit is showing you your old heart of unbelief. Any individual who has never come to see his heart of unbelief, and that he could not trust the Lord Jesus Christ in his own strength, knows nothing of a saving interest in Christ.

As I told you over the phone, just look to Him. As He showed you yourself, He will show you Christ. As you asked Him to show you who you were, now ask Him to show you who Christ is. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Rom. 10:17). Ask God to give you faith to trust Him, to lean upon Him, to rest your whole being upon Christ. Remember, God never teases a sinner.

Remember, too, it was grace that opened your heart; it was grace that taught you to fear, and grace will relieve your fears by showing you that Christ died for you. Look to Him (Isa. 45:22). Ask Him for grace to look to Him, and you will never cease looking by faith until you enter the Pearly Gates to behold Him face to face. Amen.

Your Gospel Preacher,  
L. R. Shelton, Sr.

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### **Letter #6: Did Christ Die For All Men?**

My dear friend:

I received your letter and I note that you are in search of the Savior.

You asked three questions, which I will answer as one, for they are essentially one and the same subject. Yes, I can assure you that Christ died for all men:

"For therefore we both labour and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, WHO IS THE SAVIOR OF ALL MEN, (notice) specially of those that believe" (I Tim. 4:10).

Again, He said He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

In I Cor. 15, we find that "In Adam all die, in Christ all shall be made alive." You are confused on the question of where the sovereignty, election, and predestination of God meets with the free will (really, the responsibility) of man, and "Whosoever will, let him come."

Adam is the federal head of the race, which means that God deals with man as in Adam, because all human beings are sons of Adam, by generation, and not a separate creation. Therefore, when Christ died as the Second Adam, He died as Representative of the human race, and because of His death all men will be resurrected from the dead, some to life (the saved) and some to everlasting shame and damnation (Dan.12:2,3). So God counted all men in Adam as sinners; and Christ died for the race of mankind, of which all are partakers in the common blessings and resurrection of the body. You and I are recipients of His mercy and grace even though we are not yet saved.

So as a result of the death of Christ for ALL MEN, then ALL MEN may come to Christ and partake of the benefits of His death, burial, and resurrection for their redemption. On this basis, God says, "Whosoever WILL, let him come." If you will, you may come to Christ and plead His blood for your sins.

Now here is where election comes in, and the reason men hate it. The awful fact of human nature is that NO ONE WILL COME TO CHRIST OF HIS OWN FREE WILL (which is not free, except to do evil and choose self), according to Rom. 8:7, "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Therefore, the conclusion in Rom.11:32, "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." He is talking primarily about the Jews, but it applies to everyone who hears the truth of the oracles of God and embraces religion or God's revelation. No, you WILL NOT believe, you HAVE NOT believed. Neither would I; neither did I. Because of our enmity against God, we refuse to let Him reign over us, and this is sin against light, and rejection of the death of Christ for our sins. Rev. 18:6, talking about religious Babylon, says, 'Reward her even as she rewarded you, and DOUBLE unto her DOUBLE according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled fill to her double.' Our wilful Christ-rejection demands a double portion of God's wrath, and if God did not intervene to make us willing, all of us would go to Hell, because we all wilfully reject Christ.

But now let's read Isa. 40:1, where God is speaking to sinning Israel, who sinned against revealed truth, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: FOR SHE HATH RECEIVED OF THE LORD'S HAND DOUBLE FOR ALL HER SINS." Christ paid double for the sins of His elect. If God should leave us with the Sacrifice to accept or reject it, you and I, and every son of Adam, would reject the gracious provision for our sin and go to Hell, which we justly deserve. But now God, "concluding all in unbelief," has mercy upon all (whom he chooses). He can have mercy on all, if He chooses, and He does have mercy upon all that He does choose. God's choice is now free by our rejection of His remedy, and He can freely choose whom He will. And He exercises His sovereign right to do so.

Remember, once and for all, salvation is to WHOSOEVER WILL. I remember when I came to the place of "now or never" to choose Christ as Lord and Saviour, and God crossed my will on

the dearest lust of my soul, my own way, I could not will to choose Christ: I could only choose MY way. If it had not been that God MADE ME WILLING (and how He does this I do not know, except He says, "My people shall be willing in the day of my power"), I would have rejected Christ after I was once enlightened, and sinned against light, therefore, guilty of double sin of rejecting Christ. That is what it means to trample underfoot the blood of Christ and spit in the face of the Holy Spirit (Heb.10:29). Notice, "Of how much sorer punishment (second death), suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the BLOOD of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified (or set apart) an unholy (common) thing, and hath done despite unto (spit in the face of) the Spirit of grace?" When the Holy Spirit comes to a sinner to deal definitely with him for salvation, he is set apart by the blood (I Pet. 1:2), and the Holy Spirit deals with him to REVEAL THE SINNER TO HIMSELF as a totally-depraved sinner, who is at the mercy of a sovereign God. To reject Christ is to trample underfoot that blood and insult the Holy Spirit who is revealing his sins, his sin-nature, and his judgment (John 16:7-11); therefore, the sinner is worthy of the second death, or double wrath. Christ paid this double wrath, or the second death for His elect, whom He makes WILLING to come to Christ.

Now, let me face you with one question: it is not whether you are God's elect or not or whether you are predestinated or not. This is in the secret of His counsel. The question you face is only one: ARE YOU WILLING? Do you want Christ above everything else in the world, including your loved ones, your friends, your sins, your own will? If so, then it is God who works in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure (Phil. 2:13), because according to Rom. 3:11, "There is none that understandeth, there is NONE THAT SEEKETH AFTER GOD." If you are a seeker, if you desire Christ, it was not nature that put that desire in your heart: it was grace by the Holy Spirit. No sinner who is not moved by the Holy Spirit wants salvation, or wants Christ. Therefore, why should he be interested in God's election? He isn't; he hates it, because he is not willing to be at God's sovereign disposal.

If you have a desire in your heart, you come on to Christ, for "him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). Let the Holy Spirit reveal yourself to yourself (John 16:7-11), and then He will reveal Christ in you (Gal. 1:16), which is salvation (John 17:3). Look to Christ; trust Him, and the Holy Spirit will bring you to His feet in the dust of repentance, crying, "MY LORD AND MY GOD."

May the blessings of the Lord Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection rest upon you and make you willing to come to Christ. May He put such a longing in your heart for Him, that you will not stop along the way to wonder who is elected. God draws His elect unto Him by cords of love (Jer. 31:3), and you trust Him as a little child (Matt. 18:3).

Your Gospel Preacher,  
L. R. Shelton, Sr.