

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN A SINNER

BY
L. R. SHELTON, SR
1898-1971

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L. R. SHELTON

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INTRODUCTION

By: Mrs. L. R. Shelton, SR

Reprinted from a portion of her introduction to Bro. Shelton's book entitled BIBLE DOCTRINES.

When God saved Pastor Shelton on January 9, 1942, he had been preaching for twenty-five years, and was pastor of the First Baptist Church of Algiers for fifteen years. He was especially strong in the doctrines of salvation. After God saved him, he set about to find the answer, reexamining the doctrines of God's Word especially with respect to a sinner's salvation, with one goal in mind: "How does God save sinners? How did God deal with me to bring me to Christ?" As a result, the theme of his messages became the out-flowing of practical and experimental salvation in the light of God's Word. He gave his testimony in each message, and God honored it by bringing lost sinners under conviction and settling and establishing him in the doctrines of salvation.

The reaction of the religious world to Bro. Shelton's salvation and testimony was to accuse him of preaching false doctrine on the ground of their interpretation of the term "repentance," as preaching WORKS for salvation; however, later the denomination withdrew fellowship from him and the church, not on the ground that he preached false doctrine: "We know he's preaching sound doctrine" (professor of theology), but on the ground that "his message disturbs people, and is unwholesome and embarrassing" to the denomination. Yes, it is embarrassing before the religious world to be awakened to the fact you are a lost sinner by the Holy Spirit, because you feel the whole world can see through you when God lays your heart bare to its own total depravity and guilt. Not only is it embarrassing to the sinner, who will turn on the messenger unless God's effectual grace holds him, but it is embarrassing to the preacher to expose his own heart in a testimony in order to be true to the hearts of his hearers. Unless a preacher is humbled in the dust of repentance himself, it is impossible for him to describe his own depraved heart in order to preach for the salvation of other souls and be true to sinners.

As a result of the opposition and criticism, in addition to his desire to discover how God dealt with him, and how He deals with sinners for salvation, he was led to restudy the teachings of God's Word. In connection with his Bible study, he sought out the writings of the great spiritual leaders of the past to see what they believed and how they were saved. He had the works of such men as Spurgeon, Whitefield, Jonathan Edwards, Bonar, etc., in his library, and he gleaned the used book stores for many others; these were the same old divines of the past that the present day religious leaders recognize as great men of God. To his glad surprise, he found that they were saved as

he had been, and believed the same doctrines. He came to the conclusion that Baptists of today have drifted away from the practice of sound doctrine.

Mrs. L. R. Shelton

SALVATION, AN INWARD WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HEART OF THE SINNER

There is such an ignorance among religious circles of God's way of salvation, what it is, and how He saves a sinner that the average church member can't tell you what he believes, much less what God's Word says about it. This is the result of setting aside the Holy Spirit's work in a sinner's salvation and degenerating to the level of reason and human mental ability and persuasive words of man's wisdom. Do you know why there is no hope for the Laodicean church age, that is, Christendom, in the end of the age before Christ comes? It is because the church has rejected the Holy Spirit. Man has set himself up as the supreme authority in the stead of God's verbally inspired Word, and relegated the Holy Spirit to the scrap-heap of superstition, thereby extinguishing the only LIGHT on the way to Heaven and destroying the WAY back to God, which is the Lord Jesus Christ. That is why there is such amazing spiritual blindness overspreading the hearts of men and women everywhere.

Before the sinner can be saved, there must be the work of the Holy Spirit to "guide you into all truth. . . he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." (John 16:13-15) The sinner must first be AWAKENED by the Holy Spirit before he can be enlightened, according to Eph. 5:14, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee LIGHT." Second, he must be ENLIGHTENED before he can be convinced or convicted: "And when he is come, he will reprove (convince) the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Third, the sinner must be CONVINCED before he can be wounded to death by the "sword of the Spirit." (Rom. 6:3-4) "So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death." Fourth, the heart of the sinner must be WOUNDED and BROKEN before it will turn from sin to the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation (Psa. 38:8-9), "I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of

my heart. Lord, all my desire is before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee." Fifth, the heart of the sinner must TURN to Christ (Joel 2: 13), which is repentance, and RUN AFTER Him (Song of Solomon 1: 4), SEEKING Him with all the heart (Psa. 69: 32), "Your heart shall live that seek God," and (Jer. 29: 13), "Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." That is faith. You don't know that you are repenting and believing; all you know is your whole heart is running after Him, whom your soul loveth, as One that you must have or perish. So then we see that salvation is an inward work of God in the hidden recesses of that heart by God's Holy Spirit. Now, my friends, if you do not believe that, I do not have a message for you, and God is silent to you, for He has no other way of speaking to men's hearts.

When once the Holy Spirit AWAKENS a sinner, that is, makes him alive by the Word of God, He begins to ENLIGHTEN him by showing him from the Word what he is by nature, who he is by nature, and the judgment he is under; and the sinner begins to meditate upon what the Holy Spirit has shown him. He is convinced or convicted of his condition, because he sees written upon the walls of memory the very same things that the Holy Spirit is pointing out to him from the Word. As the Holy Spirit continues to CONVICT him, there comes a separation from everybody and everything of the world; he is shut up to himself, and shut up with God and His Word. Here is where the WOUNDING begins to take place, as the sinner is wounded by the Word in the hands of the Holy Spirit. His ego is wounded, his pride is wounded, his self-confidence is wounded, his self-righteousness is insulted. Not only is he wounded from within, but he is wounded from without, as his loved ones and friends don't understand him. David said, "My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my sore; and my kinsmen stand afar off." (Psa. 38: 11) Jeremiah said, "I was a derision to all my people; and their song all the day." (Lam. 3: 14) Again David said, "But mine enemies are lively, and they are strong: and they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied. They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries; because I follow the thing that good is." (Psa. 33: 19, 20) But as that sinner "kisses the Son" (Psa. 2: 12) and runs after Him, seeking Him with all his heart as the Holy Spirit draws him, that heart is broken and contrite and bows to the rod; and when the all-seeing eye of God sees that everything in the heart is broken at the feet of Christ, He reveals Him to him out of the volume of the Book. So from beginning to end, the Holy Spirit leads the sinner to the Saviour, and does all in that sinner's heart that is required for him to be brought into the chambers of the King.

This generation knows nothing about such Holy Spirit conviction (I'm speaking of Christendom as a whole), and when a sinner, whether in the pulpit, the pew, or the world, begins to be separated unto God by Holy Spirit

conviction, no one understands him. His religious friends, including the pastor, are baffled at his case. His loved ones want to put him in a mental institution and try to cure his mental ailment, because they think he has lost his mind. His friends pity him and try to persuade him that he is affected by too much religion, that he is going to lose his mind and they will use every method in the world to turn him aside. His enemies will laugh at him, call him crazy, make fun of him, criticize him, and watch him to see how they can take advantage of his condition. They watch his words and try to trip him up. Satan is past master at trying to stop Holy Spirit conviction; he knows that if he can stop conviction, that sinner will never be saved. Our only hope is that the Holy Spirit is greater than Satan, and He will not let the sinner go until He gets him to Christ. That's my only hope, and if I didn't have that hope, friend, I would quit preaching, because I can't convict a sinner, I can't keep him under conviction, and I can't get him to Christ!

The worst enemy to the Gospel that we face today is the unsaved religionist, usually a preacher who doesn't know what to do with an awakened sinner. He is constantly crying, "Peace, peace," when there is no peace. The average preacher will tell an awakened sinner that he is all right, he is saved, and the only thing he needs to do is get into the church and go to work, when that poor sinner knows he is lost, and knows that all his religious duties are just so much kindling wood to burn him in Hell. He'll keep saying, "But you don't understand - I'm a lost sinner!" The most deadly enemy of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ today (let me repeat it!) is an UNSAVED RELIGIONIST who knows nothing about Holy Spirit conviction. The only salvation he knows anything about is just a decision for Christ. This is not an inward work of the Holy Spirit, but merely a mental assent to the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of

God, and to facts about Christ and the Bible. There is no Holy Spirit conviction about that! There's no deep Bible repentance about that! It is a decision that the sinner makes for himself, which disturbs nobody and leaves no testimony for Christ that is effective, and it seals everything he touches for Hell. Now that's the battleground, and that's the situation we face today in preaching the Gospel for the salvation of sinners.

I do not confine God to any one way of acting in saving a lost soul. I do not believe that everyone who is saved has to undergo the same degree of Holy Spirit conviction, but I do insist on the fact that salvation is an INWARD WORK OF GOD in the heart by the Holy Spirit. Before you, or anyone else, can ever say that you are saved (whether you are under long Holy Spirit conviction or short Holy Spirit conviction), you must undergo certain things that I am going to lay down here at this time. You may say what you please--you can believe it or disbelieve it--but I'll stake my destiny upon what

I am going to say today as being true according to God's Word. Now, I'm that positive. Someone said once, "I don't like your positiveness." Well, Satan doesn't either. He likes this pussy-foot stuff, this maybe-so, think-so, hope-so, and all that. He likes for you to dress up the simple truth of God's Word in an abundance of eloquent, persuasive words of man's wisdom, which only lulls the consciousness of sin by tickling the intellect. But, brother, I am just as positive about these truths as I am plain in stating them, that SALVATION IS AN INWARD WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT WROUGHT IN THE HEART OF THE SINNER.

That is our subject at this time: "SALVATION, AN INWARD WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN THE HEART OF THE SINNER," and our text is found in John 16:7-11. Let's read together, "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; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of SIN, and of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and of JUDGMENT: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." "When he is come (the Holy Spirit), he will REPROVE (convict, convince) the world of SIN, and of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and of JUDGMENT." Now, no preacher in the world can convince a sinner that he is a sinner and needs a Saviour. You can convince him that he ought to join the church, that it is the manly thing to do, and live a better life. You can convince him that he ought to give his heart to Jesus, his hand to the preacher, hit the sawdust trail, and make a profession of faith. You can convince him that he ought to live a better life and turn over a new leaf. But you cannot convince him that he is a sinner, that he is lost, Hell-bound, Hell-deserving, and that he needs a Substitute. You cannot convince a sinner and work in that sinner's heart the salvation of God. Let me tell you, preacher, that is the work of the Holy Spirit. The inward work in the heart of a sinner has to be wrought there by the Holy Spirit, who alone can take the "Word of God (which) is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword," and divides asunder the soul and spirit. . . and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart. (Heb. 4:12) You and I cannot do it: we can preach the Gospel under the power of the Holy Spirit, but we cannot do that work.

Now, let's read our text again, "And when he (Comforter) is come, he will reprove the world of SIN, and of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and of JUDGMENT," Every sinner, before he is united to Christ by "faith of the operation of the Holy Spirit," is in the world, of the world, for the world, and with the world in God's judgment upon the prince of the world, Satan. During His earthly life, walking with His disciples for three years and a half, Christ first CALLED His

disciples, and then He "REPROVED" them of SIN, of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and of JUDGMENT, so that He could tell the Father in John 17:6-8, "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me OUT OF THE WORLD: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word. . . I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." I've heard many individuals say, "Oh, if I could have been with the disciples and heard Christ teach them," but that is what happens to you under Holy Spirit conviction, my friend, because Christ said, "If I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." If you will not have the Holy Spirit's convincing work, you would not have had Christ's if you had walked with Him on earth! In this Scripture we have Christ's own analysis of the work of bringing a sinner out of the world and bringing him unto the Father through His mediatorial work. And if you ever get saved, you will experience certain things that Christ laid down here, which we will look at more in detail at this time.

"He will REPROVE" (which means, CONVINCe, or "bring by argument to belief beyond a doubt"--demonstrate a thing as existing or as being of a certain character). In other words, the Holy Spirit puts the sinner's life and character to a proof, exposing, laying bare before God his moral condition in God's eyes, and his judicial standing before God's justice. Read the life of Christ with this in mind, and see how He reprov'd the world, especially the religious world, of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. This is necessary work, because no sinner who is a child of Satan, a citizen of his kingdom, which is the world, will want to give up his citizenship as long as he believes in his country. Not until his eyes are opened to behold "the Heavenly country" will he declare plainly that he seeks that country. (Heb. 11:13-15) So God's elect are "lost" in the world, and the Holy Spirit has to seek them out and bring them home to the Father's house. There are three things He must convince them of before they will go with Him, forsake the world and all it holds, and seek Christ, the "Prince and Saviour" of the heavenly country: SIN, because they believe not on Christ; RIGHTEOUSNESS, because He has gone to the Father, and been exalted at His right hand as Lord, to whom every knee shall bow (Phil. 2:9-11); JUDGMENT, because the "prince of this world" is already judged, and all who remain in the world under his dominion will be judged with him. These three facts are brought home by the Holy Spirit through the powerful and effectual arguments set forth in God's Word.

Now, let's look at the sinner's reaction when the Holy Spirit calls him out of the world and convinces him of his moral and judicial standing as a citizen of Satan's kingdom. First, he loves the world and the things of the world, which

are the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (1 John 2:15-17) The world sees no moral wrong in these things; they laud them to the skies, and all their motives and ambitions revolve around the world system. But God sees them as they are, morally corrupt, depraved, nothing good or profitable, abominable, and stench in His nostrils. Therefore, the first thing the Holy Spirit convinces the sinner of is SIN. Why? "Because they believe not on me." If you do not believe on Christ, that is, if you are not vitally united with Him so that His ways are your ways, and His thoughts your thoughts, then you have no covering for your sins; they are upon you, exposed to the eyes of Almighty God. The first thing the Holy Spirit does is to sweep away all false faith, which is false assurance, and leave you standing under the burden of your SINS. You see first your actual transgressions, as the Holy Spirit puts His finger on particular acts, thoughts, or deeds and words that you know about, and He lets you see what God thinks about them. A true sight of your actual transgressions will make you weep over your condition, and mourn and bewail your sins in the sight of a holy God. If this has never taken place, you cannot say that you are saved. The Holy Spirit does this by holding up the mirror of the Law, writing in the sinner's mind the Law, and every action is weighed in the balances and found wanting. What a wretched state to be in! Any individual who makes a joke of the sins he committed in the past, or the kind of life he lived before he was saved, has never been saved, according to Rom. 6:21, "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are NOW ASHAMED? for the end of those things is death."

In the Gospel you learn that "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3), and you try to lay hold of that by faith (and you may get temporary peace by doing so), but you soon find that you are still in unbelief no matter what you do. You try to clean up your life, or you try to apply the blood, but you are only left with an uneasy feeling that maybe it is not all well with your soul. The uneasiness of soul drives you on in search of peace, but you seem to get farther from peace (because you want peace and not the PRINCE OF PEACE), until finally you see and feel and know and acknowledge your guilty distance from a holy God. Here you learn what a grievous thing it is to depart from God, to shut Him out of your life, your plans, your ambitions and purposes in life. You feel your alienation from God, "cut off from the life that is in God." You come to see now that it is because of your guilt that can't be appeased by anything that you can do, sin that can't be washed even with nitre, because it is the very warp and woof of your existence, your very being, which you inherited from your father Adam. Look within that heart, and you see and feel all the hell of lust in your bosom, all the pride, malice, revenge, hatred, and rebellion. The fountain from which all your thoughts and actions flow is polluted from within, and you

wonder how you happened to become so wicked. My friend, if you have never felt the misery of this inward corruption, and seen that God might justly curse you for it, you have never been saved. When it dawns in upon your heart (and this takes place only as the Holy Spirit presses home the truth of God's moral Law), all you can do is fall at the feet of Christ and acknowledge it, confessing that God is just and holy, and He would be just in casting you out of His presence. Remember, that God's glory and justice is honored just as much by passing your just sentence upon you as it is by Him passing your sentence of death upon Christ. When you see yourself like this, when you are convinced by the Holy Spirit that you are such a sinner, you cannot help but see that all your best religious duties and performances are nothing but the "motions of sin" in your members, and therefore an insult to the holiness of God. They are but filthy rags of self-righteousness, which nauseate a holy God. Not until then will you give up your last idol, which is self righteousness, and plead for His pardon and cleansing. Now you turn to the righteousness of Christ and try to lay hold of Him by faith, but you cannot. The unbelief of your soul plagues you by day and by night--you're cut off from God and can't believe, can't get to Him, can't lay hold of Him. If you have never been truly convinced of SIN, BECAUSE YOU BELIEVE NOT ON Him, then you have never sought Him with all your heart until you found Him, and are still in sin and unbelief.

Why can't you believe? Why can't you lay hold on Christ by faith? Christ said, "Whosoever believeth on me hath everlasting life"; why can't you believe Him? Did you notice that next statement, that the Holy Spirit convinces the world "OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, because I go to my Father"? Yes, you are convinced of your sin by the Holy Spirit, and you are pointed to the righteousness of Christ which will cover your sin. But notice the words, "because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more." Christ is hidden in the bosom of the Father, and you can never find Him until the Holy Spirit brings you to Him. You will cry after Him, you will long after Him, you will cry, "O where can I find Him?" But notice that Christ, who died for our sins according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose again for our justification, was also exalted by God the Father at His right hand, and He has "given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." Here is where your will is crossed, because you will bow to the Lordship of Christ, or all your tears and convictions are just sentimental longings to escape Hell or ease your conscience. If your will has never been crossed, and broken by Almighty Power, you cannot say that you know the Lord Jesus Christ; He is still hidden from your eyes in the bosom of the Father,

because God only reveals Christ to a broken heart.

Now, let me tell you something right here: when every sinner gets to the place that God crosses his will, here is where he realizes that his will is held captive by Satan: he cannot break; in fact, he will not break, and what is more, he does not want to break. You say, "Brother Shelton, oh tell me, what can I do in the condition I'm in! I can't bow my will to His." Your only hope is to plead with Him to break that will anyway, anyhow, and regardless of the cost, because if He doesn't, the Holy Spirit convinces you that as a child of Satan you are under the judgment with Satan, and that he is already judged. It is now or never, and that is where many sinners fall under the judgment of God, where God becomes silent to them. But, praise the Lord, He is able to deliver any poor captive sinner from Satan's clutches of unbelief and self-will, and put him in his right mind, sitting at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, learning of Him. Now, if you have never been convinced of JUDGMENT and Satan's captive power over you, then you do not know what it means to be delivered into the kingdom of the Son of God. May the Holy Spirit do His work of convincing the world of SIN, of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and of JUDGMENT at this time.

L. R. Shelton, SR

THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADING THE SINNER TO CHRIST

When once your eyes are opened to see GOD'S WAY OF SALVATION as He lays it down in His Word, you marvel that the religious world can be so blind as to think that a lot of good works can overbalance your sins, or that the preacher can illuminate a sinner's heart, open his eyes of spiritual understanding, raise that dead spirit to spiritual life. Can you think of it? Man, who is himself a creature of death, man who will one day lay down that mortal frame in surrender to death and the grave, will stand up in the pulpit, in the classroom, and pretend to lead sinners to salvation, which is a resurrection from death! My friend, all any man can do, whether he is saved or lost, is to dress up an old corpse with a little believingism and delay putrefaction by a high standard of self-righteousness, which freezes all his dead sensibilities to the wooing, thawing work of the Holy Spirit. Yes, my

friend, when the Holy Spirit breathes upon your self-righteousness, all you can see is sin and putrefaction, death, decay, and judgment, and oh the stench in the nostrils of God, until you cry to be delivered from yourself--delivered from YOURSELF! "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

We showed you last week that salvation is the inward work of the Holy Spirit in convincing the world of SIN, of RIGHTEOUSNESS, and of JUDGMENT. When the sinner is convinced of sin and cries after the righteousness of Christ, try as he will, he cannot believe or lay hold of Him. We left you with this thought: the reason you cannot lay hold of Him, the reason you can't believe Him is that HE IS HIDDEN IN THE BOSOM OF THE FATHER. (John 1:18) He said, "The Holy Spirit will convince of righteousness" - why? "Because I go to my Father, and YE SEE ME NO MORE." (John 16:10) But He said, "The Holy Spirit will convince the world of RIGHTEOUSNESS." After He convinces of sin, and the sinner is convinced, that is, kindly admits the truth (which is repentance), then the Holy Spirit convinces or reveals Christ. Now, no preacher can brush aside the Holy Spirit and pull Christ down from the right hand of the Father and reveal Him to a sinner's heart. I don't care how hard you try to pray or read yourself up into a frenzy. Neither do you tell the Holy Spirit when, how, where, or if, or why, or anything else about saving you, or revealing Christ to your heart. You reverence Him, you stand in awe at His sovereign majesty, you say "Yes" to Him in everything, perchance that He will reveal Christ to your heart.

Our subject today is "THE HOLY SPIRIT LEADING THE SINNER TO CHRIST." Last week we showed you how He used the Word to open and cleave asunder the sinner's heart, laying it bare before God and the sinner until he sees, from the Word, what has been hidden all the while from his eyes--what he had hidden from himself, what Satan had concealed from him. Let's notice today how the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to lead the repenting sinner to Christ. You can't believe in, or upon Christ until He is revealed to your heart, so let's see how Christ is revealed through the Written Word in the hands of the Holy Spirit. When John the Baptist was in the wilderness baptizing those who came to him, the Pharisees got all stirred up and wanted to know who he was. Was he the Christ? John answered, "No," but following the baptism of the Lord Jesus Christ, the next day, John exclaimed, "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD, WHICH TAKETH AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD." (John 1:29) The Holy Spirit has declared to the world that Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God, but they all rejected Him. But notice that "two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus." (John 1:37) What was the difference? Of the Pharisees Christ said, "hearing, they hear not, and seeing, they perceive not." The revelation of the Lamb of God went

home in power to only two hearts out of that multitude, two of John's disciples, two who had been given the effectual call, two who were convinced of sin, two who had been brought to repentance (which John's baptism signified).

These two beheld "THE LAMB OF GOD, which taketh away the sin of the world." Now turn to Acts 2:22-23, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know: him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by WICKED HANDS have CRUCIFIED AND SLAIN." Peter, on the day of Pentecost, stood up and declared boldly under the power of the Holy Spirit: "Him, . . . ye have taken, and by wicked hands have CRUCIFIED AND SLAIN." Behold the Lamb, slain. He brought home to their hearts the terrible sin of murder. There is a first-degree murder charge recorded in Heaven against every sinner out of Christ. In the death of Christ the world committed deicide in the fact that they put to death their God, Christ, the Son of God, and God is holding the world responsible for the death of His Son. I know the Bible says that He was delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and they could have had no power over Him except that He was delivered to them by the Father to do what was in their hearts to Him. Therefore God permitted the death of Christ on the cross to reveal the hatred and the enmity and rebellion of the human heart against God. God permitted the human race to take its natural course in the death of Christ to carry out His determined purpose regarding the salvation of the elect, but before any sinner ever gets saved he will mourn after Christ whom he has slain, and cry, "Guilty! I'm guilty!" That is the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to the sinner as the slain Lamb, and let him see that he is the guilty one, he killed the Son of God, that Christ was the "fit man" approved of God, and he must have Him or go to Hell. No wonder men began to cry, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" You will want Him so much that you are willing and ready to surrender everything in the world just to know Him, to have Him as your Substitute.

Peter always drove this truth home whenever he preached; the Holy Spirit led him, and anointed and filled him to preach it in power and conviction. Listen to Acts 3:14, "But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and KILLED the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses." Brother, that truth needs to be driven home to the hearts of men and women everywhere. You take the death of the Son of God so lightly; many of you use His name in vain and couple it with profanity until we are facing the most profane generation in all of the world's history. That's an alarming situation we face, even in the

religious world. Now let's read Acts 4: 10, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye have CRUCIFIED, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole." Listen to Peter as he continues, "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we MUST BE SAVED." (vs. 11-12) Do you see how the Holy Spirit takes the Word and reveals the Lamb slain, on the one hand, laying the guilt upon the hearts of sinners as the "chief of sinners," the "son of the Man-slayer," or Satan! My friend, whether you realize it or not, as the child of your father the devil, you are guilty of Man-slaughter, "because he was the man-slayer from the beginning." (John 8: 44) On the other hand, the Holy Spirit shows you that He is the only Lamb that you can offer to God for your sins, the only name under Heaven whereby you must be saved, because Phil. 2: 10-11 says, "That at THE NAME OF JESUS every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue shall confess that JESUS CHRIST IS LORD, to the glory of God the Father." The JESUS whom you crucified has been made "Lord and Christ" - "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, BOTH LORD AND CHRIST." (Acts 2:36) The Holy Spirit convicts "of sin, because they believe not on me," and He convicts "of righteousness," because God has made Him LORD AND CHRIST. So the work of the Holy Spirit in revealing Christ to your heart is to bring you to bow to Him as Lord: He has to convince you that He is Lord and Christ until you bow kindly at His feet and "kiss the Son." Until this takes place, Christ is not real to your heart, faith cannot be laid hold on, and you can have no assurance of salvation, no peace in believing, no union with Christ and no fellowship with the Father.

Now that is the condition of the average church member today; he has a little knowledge of the historical facts about Christ, but Christ has never entered into his heart and life as the living Lord. That is why the average church member takes salvation so lightly, the reason sin is minimized and even made a virtue of. There is no preaching with conviction in the average pulpit; therefore, there is no repentance in the pew, and Christ is on the outside knocking for entrance. Have you ever seen that you have a first-degree murder charge hanging over your head, filed in the Court of Heaven by God the Father for the murder of His Son? If you have not my friend, it will be one of the most startling revelations to your heart when you wake up before the Great White Throne Judgment. That is what happens to a sinner under conviction; he's been awakened to this fact, he knows the Blood Avenger is after him, and unless you flee to Christ for salvation and bow

to Him, the Blood Avenge will over take you and slay you.

It is a solemn thing you face at this moment, and it is startling when the Holy Spirit shows it to you, that you are under a first-degree murder charge. If you ever come to realize it, if the Holy Spirit ever opens your heart, you will wonder, "How could I be so wicked? how can I be so guilty?" You know you deserve punishment throughout eternity, and you have no argument against the judgment of God. Your mouth is shut, and you say "Amen" to your sentence. You see it is your sins, your enmity, your self-will that thrust the spear in His side and nailed His hands and feet to the cross. It was your contempt that placed the mock robe on His back, and the crown of thorns upon His brow. You spit in His face; you mocked and jeered, you made your boasts, and you wielded the leather whip with the metal-studded thongs until "his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men," and "many were astonished" at His inhuman appearance. (Isa. 52: 14) In the presence of the slain Lamb, all the little sentimental preaching goes out of the window, and you see the awfulness of your transgressions and the nature of your sinful heart; and the gulf between you and God widens until you all but despair that you will ever come to know Christ. If it were not that conviction is sweetened by the cross of Calvary, you would despair. In the presence of the slain Lamb, sin becomes exceeding sinful, self-righteousness becomes as fading fig leaves and filthy garments; and all your religious duties, all your repentance and faith need to be repented of, and you can't even believe the promises of God. Oh, how hopeless and helpless you are, and at the mercy of a sovereign God to damn you or raise you up a new creature, if He should choose to have mercy on you and apply His death to you as your Substitute!

But thank God, the Holy Spirit never leaves a sinner there! It is He who has opened his eyes, and lets him see himself as he is, and it is He who will bring him to Christ and reveal Christ to his heart. When all else has fled away, and he is left with only one plea, that Christ can save him on the basis of the Sacrifice, which is so complete and perfect as to satisfy justice for even a sinner as he, then in that sinner's eyes Christ becomes the One altogether Lovely, the One to be sought as life itself, One whom his soul must have. He runs after Him, cries after Him, longs after Him, by day and by night. Here he begins to mourn for the way he has treated Him, hurt Him, grieved Him, insulted Him, resisted Him. The Holy Spirit continues to point out to that sinner that God permitted Him to be delivered, that He lay down His own life. Why? because God loves sinners. It dawns on him that God loves sinners. This is set forth in Zech. 12: 10, "And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall LOOK UPON ME whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn

for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." It is God that pours out the "spirit of grace and of supplications" upon the sinner. The Holy Spirit "with" the sinner in conviction so moves upon that heart to SEE himself as he is, and to SEE Him whom he has pierced, that he sees it was his sins that put Christ to death. Then the Holy Spirit moves upon that heart to MOURN for Him, not for himself, but for Christ. Mourning for yourself, or the condition you are in, or the judgment you are under and the Hell you will spend eternity in is NOT REPENTANCE: it is remorse. Repentance MOURNS FOR HIM (Christ), whom you have pierced. Oh, how He suffered! Oh, how He was insulted! Oh, what shame and disgrace He endured - my shame and disgrace that I put upon Him. Oh, how He loved sinners! Oh, how meek that He opened not His mouth! Oh, how tender He is! "His goodness and mercy leadeth thee to repentance." Yes, God would be just in sending me to Hell; I ought to go to Hell. Oh, I want Him honored! I want to please Him, regardless of what happens to me. "For the joy that was set before him (He) endured the cross, despised the shame." (Heb. 12:2). Oh, that He might have the joy that was set before Him! Yes, the sinner mourns, he grieves for Christ, and he longs after Him.

Now remember, the sinner is at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the dust of repentance. On the one hand, he sees that he doesn't deserve to be saved; on the other hand he hopes for mercy. He asks the Lord, "If it is consistent with Your justice and the death of Christ, if it is in the realm of Your will, would You pardon me?" His will is broken, and there is such a hunger after Christ, such a desire, an intense desire, to get to Christ, to know Him, that it eclipses everything else in this life or the world to come, but he is submissive at His feet. "Whatever You want, Lord, that is what I desire." In the quietness of the hour, when all your being ceases its arguing, and stops surging, but rests in His will, then - and then only - will and can the Holy Spirit reveal "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" for sinners. Slowly God's purpose of grace in and through and by and for Christ and the sinner is lifted up in the Word, and now you know - you know that you are that sinner, you know that Christ is that Lamb slain as a Sacrifice for you; you know that God has given Him to you, and has given you to Him and that the Holy Spirit has brought you to Him. The written Word becomes the living Word in your heart, and the entire Scriptures unfold and burn in living reality and in the newness of life. Christ is the ever-present, indwelling Lord and Saviour of your heart. This is the climax to conviction. Now, if you have never seen yourself as THE SINNER, and been brought to REPENT, which is to acknowledge your guilt and mourn after Christ, whom you have crucified and slain, until you sought Christ with all your heart and found Him (which is

FAITH), then you do not know Him as a living reality. He is above everything and everybody in the world, yea, more than your own life; He's the beginning and the end, and He is everything in between, too. If Christ is not the Darling of your heart, then He has not taken second place, - and never will!

Let me bring out this thought - if Christ is not above everything else, He is not worth having. If you do not give Him the honor that His Person, His Position, and His Majesty demand, do you think that He should condescend to reveal Himself to a little worm of the dust that you and I are? No, sir! Do you think that a holy God would offer His Son to a corrupt, murderous reprobate like you and me for us to choose whether we will accept or reject Him, whether we will condescend to love and embrace Him or spurn and reject Him? A thousand times, NO! Get this, now! God NEVER permits a sinner to reject Christ! Never! He will remain hidden in the bosom of the Father until the time clock ticks off the moment for His REVELATION, when He comes in glory with all His holy angels and His saints to take vengeance on them who know not God and do not the truth! You will never get one glimpse of Him until you want Him so badly, when there is such a hunger in your heart and cry after Him, until you WILL RECEIVE Him, you WILL ACCEPT Him, you will be glad to receive Him. And you will praise Him and praise Him throughout eternity for a chance to accept Him. Now, don't get uneasy my friend, it won't happen to you unless you want God to offer Him to you, and you will accept Him. Some folks are afraid to come near me; they run from me, and don't know where to put themselves if they have to meet up with me accidentally. Well, I told some folks in a meeting that they needn't be afraid, because it isn't caught that easily. Salvation just doesn't rub off on you against your will. You will seek Him with all your heart.

This truth is brought out in Song of Solomon 3:1, where we feel the heartthrob of a seeking sinner: "By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth: I sought him, but I found him not," Listen again to Song of Solomon 5:6, "I opened to my beloved; but my beloved had withdrawn himself, and was gone: my soul failed when he spake: I sought him, but I could not find him; I called him, but he gave me no answer." Song of Solomon 5:8, "I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him, that I am sick of love." When a sinner falls in love with Christ, he wants Him - just Him, not His gifts, but he wants Him and he would wade through Hell to get to Christ, Job was made to cry out, "O that knew where I might find him!" (Job 23:3) That is every sinner.

Let me show you the end of those who will not repent: the end of the believer's mourning is he finds Him, "My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand. . . ," but in Rev. 1:7, at His revelation in glory, we find these words, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see

him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth SHALL WAIL because of him. Even so, Amen." If you are not a MOURNER after Christ, you will be a WAILER because of Him. I can almost hear the long wails of despair and remorse down the corridors of eternity, and oh, to think that they may come from the lips of some of you sitting here before my voice, who have one ray of hope, and that is, that the Holy Spirit will come upon you in conviction and mourning after Christ now!

L. R. Shelton, SR

How helpless guilty nature lies,
Unconscious of its load!
The heart, unchanged, can never rise
To happiness and God.

Can aught, beneath a power divine,
The stubborn will subdue?
'Tis thine, almighty Spirit! thine,
To form the heart anew.

'Tis thine, the passions to recall,
And upward bid them rise;
To make the scales of error fall,
From reason's darkened eyes;

To chase the shades of death away,
And bid the sinner live;
A beam of heaven, a vital ray,
'Tis thine alone to give.

Oh, change these wretched hearts of ours,
And give them life divine;
Then shall our passions and our powers,
Almighty Lord, be thine.

- Anne Steele