

HE THAT IS SPIRITUAL

by

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CHAPTER FOUR

"GRIEVE NOT THE HOLY SPIRIT"

THE FIRST CONDITION OF TRUE SPIRITUALITY

CHRISTIANS are appointed to live every moment of their lives with the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. Life for them is a moment by moment vital union with One who is infinitely holy. Sin, therefore, in a Christian, is the very opposite of any true manifestation of the Spirit in the life.

WHAT IT IS THAT GRIEVES THE SPIRIT

Sin destroys spirituality.

It is necessarily so; for where sin is tolerated in the believer's daily life, the Spirit, who indwells him, must then turn from His blessed ministry through him, to a pleading ministry to him. The Bible does not teach that the Spirit withdraws because of sin in the one whom He indwells: He is rather grieved by the sin.

A child of GOD lives either with a grieved or an ungrieved Spirit. It may reasonably be questioned, in the light of GOD's Word, whether the saved person, having received the Spirit, ever lives by the dictates of his conscience. The standards of human conscience must give way to a standard of moral judgment which is infinitely higher. A Christian's manner of life either grieves or does not grieve the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD.

The Apostle Paul writes of the fact that his conscience bore him witness in the HOLY SPIRIT, and it is quite probable that the Spirit uses the conscience as a human faculty; but He as certainly imparts to it the new standard of the infinite holiness of GOD. The injunction to the one in whom the Spirit dwells is, "**And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption**" (Ephesians 4:30).

A true spiritual life must depend then, to a large degree, upon the right understanding and adjustment concerning the issues of sin in the believer's daily life.

About this GOD has spoken explicitly, and it will be found that the Bible teaching on the subject of the sins of Christians is twofold:

- (1) *GOD has provided that the sin of His child may be prevented, * and*
- (2) *He has also provided that the effect of sin, if it has been committed, may be cured.*

* See Chapter Six

It is imperative that this two-fold classification of the purpose of GOD in dealing with sin in His children be recognized.

THE CURE OF THE EFFECTS OF SIN IN A CHRISTIAN

Having sinned, what must a Christian do?

What is the divine condition for the cure of the havoc of sin in the spirituality of the believer?

No attempt should be made here to name sins which hinder the Spirit. He is grieved by any, and all, sin, and He is abundantly able to convince the one in whom He dwells of the particular sin, or sins, which grieve Him. So, also, it is an issue only of known sin; for no person can deal intelligently with unknown sin. This first condition of true spirituality is centered upon definite matters. It is sin that has, by the grieving of the Spirit, become a distinct issue; for the term "**grieving the Spirit**" refers as much to the heart experience of the one in whom He dwells as to the personal attitude of the Spirit toward sin.

The issue is, therefore, a well-defined wrong, about which the child of GOD has been made conscious by the Spirit. Such known sin must be dealt with according to the exact direction of the Word of GOD.

Should spiritual darkness be experienced apart from the consciousness of any particular sin having been committed, it is the privilege of the Christian to pray for a clearer understanding. Physical conditions very often enter into the mental state and when this is true it is most misleading to suppose that a morbid or unhappy state or mind is necessarily a result of sin. If one is conscious of the fact that he is depleted in nerve strength, or is physically depressed, allowance should be made for that fact.

In the Bible, the divine offer and condition for the cure of sin in an unsaved person is crystallized into one word, "**believe**"; for the forgiveness of sin with the unsaved is only offered as an indivisible part of the whole divine work of salvation. The saving work of GOD includes many mighty undertakings other than the forgiveness of sin, and salvation depends only upon believing. It is not possible to separate some one issue from the whole work of His saving grace, such as forgiveness, and claim this apart from the indivisible whole.

It is, therefore, a grievous error to direct an unsaved person to seek forgiveness of his sins as a separate issue.

A sinner minus his sins would not be a Christian; for salvation is more than subtraction: it is addition. **"I give unto them eternal life."**

Thus the sin question with the unsaved will be cured as a part of, but never separate from, the whole divine work of salvation, and this salvation depends upon believing.

In like manner, also, in the Bible, the divine offer and condition of cure for the effects of sin in the Christian's life is crystallized into one word, **"confess."**

The vital meaning of this one word and its bearing on the question of the cure of sin in a child of GOD is an important, though much neglected, doctrine of the Word of GOD.

The way back to blessing for a sinning saint is the same, whether before the Cross, or after the Cross, and the Bible teaching on the restoration of a believer is contained in seven major passages.

THE SEVEN MAJOR PASSAGES

FIRST, CHRIST ALONE CAN CLEANSE FROM SIN (John 13:1-11)

The fact that the sins of Christians must be cleansed by CHRIST alone is revealed in John 13:11.

The passage is at the very beginning of the Upper Room Conversation. A few hours before, CHRIST had given His farewell address to the nation Israel; but in the upper room He is speaking His farewell words to His disciples, not as Jews, but as those who are **"clean every whit."** Of them He also said, **"Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."**

In this conversation He is anticipating the new conditions and relationships which were to obtain after His Cross (John 16:4). It is important to note that His first teaching concerning a Christian's present relationship to GOD was concerning the cleansing of defilement, thus signifying its importance in the divine estimation. The way of salvation has been revealed in the preceding chapters of this Gospel; but beginning with chapter thirteen, He is speaking to those who are saved, and speaking to them of the divine cleansing from their defilement.

He arose from supper, laid aside His outer garments, girded Himself with a towel (the insignia of a servant), poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet. This is a miniature of a much larger undertaking, when He arose from the fellowship with His Father in Heaven and laid aside the garments of His glory and humbled Himself, taking the form of a servant and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, in order that we might be washed with the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5).

In the larger undertaking there is the whole cleansing: in the other there is a partial cleansing which is typified by the cleansing of the feet only of the one who is otherwise **"clean every**

whit."

This two-fold cleansing was also typified by the prescribed cleansing for the Old Testament priest.

When he entered his ministry he was given a ceremonial bath, which was of his whole body, once for all (Exodus 29:4). Yet he was required to bathe his hands and feet at the brazen laver before every ministry and service (Exodus 30:17-21). So the New Testament believer, though once for all cleansed as to his salvation, must also be cleansed from every defilement, and CHRIST alone can make him clean.

SECOND, CONFESSION IS THE ONE CONDITION OF FELLOWSHIP, FORGIVENESS AND CLEANSING (I John 1:1 to 2:2)

I John 1:1 to 2:2 is the second major passage concerning the Father's dealing with His children who have sinned. John, the expert witness with regard to the blessedness of unbroken communion and fellowship with the Father and with His Son, writes these things that we also may have fellowship. "**God is light,**" or perfect holiness. If we should say that we have fellowship with Him and are, nevertheless, walking in darkness (sin), we lie and do not the truth. On the other hand, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship with the Father and with His Son JESUS CHRIST.

Sinless perfection is not demanded by this passage. It is not a command for the Christian to become the light, or what GOD alone is: it is rather that there may be an immediate adjustment to the light which GOD has shed into the life by the Spirit. He has required of us confession. When He convinces us of sin, or is grieved by sin, that sin is to be dealt with at once. The passage goes on to state that there is only one condition for the cure of the effect of sin in the believer's life: "**If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**" (v. 9).

It is not mercy and kindness.

He is **faithful and just to forgive**, and it is all granted on the one condition of confession.

- He is "**faithful**" to His child; for we are dealing always and only with our Father (2:2).
- He is "**just**" because the atoning Blood has been shed to cover the condemning power of every sin (John 5:24).

Thus in perfect righteousness the Father's forgiveness is exercised toward His child.

Divine forgiveness is never an act of leniency.

GOD can righteously forgive only when the full satisfaction of His holiness has been met. The root meaning of the word forgive, in the Scriptures, is *remission*. It represents the divine act of separating the sin from the sinner. Human forgiveness is merely a lifting of the penalty: divine forgiveness is exercised only when the penalty, according to the terms of His infinite righteousness, has first been executed on the sinner, or his Substitute.

This was true in the Old Testament: "**The priest shall make an atonement for his sin that he hath committed, and it shall be forgiven him**" (Leviticus 4:35).

The forgiveness was possible with GOD, only when there had been a full atonement for sin. So in the New Testament, or after the sacrifice has been made at the Cross for us, we are told that the Blood of CHRIST has become the sufficient atonement for our sins. "**This is my Blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins**" (Matthew 26:28). All divine forgiveness whether toward the unsaved or the saved, is now based on the shed Blood of CHRIST. His Blood answers the last demand of a holy GOD.

When we were saved He forgave us "**all trespasses**" (Colossians 2:13). This is judicial forgiveness and means the removal of the grounds of condemnation forever.

There is still parental forgiveness to be exercised toward the sinning child. It is not exercised in order to rescue the child from destruction and condemnation; but it is exercised in order to restore him from a state wherein he is out of fellowship, into the full blessing of communion with the Father and with His Son. It is wholly within the family circle and the restoration is unto the full enjoyment of those blessings. It is not restoration to sonship,- of that the Bible knows nothing. It is restoration to fellowship.

The defilement of a Christian may be forgiven and cleansed on the one condition of a confession which is prompted by true heart-repentance. We are not forgiven our sins because we ask to be forgiven. It is when we confess our sins that we are forgiven. It will not do to substitute prayer for confession, though prayer may be the means of expressing a true sorrow for sin. Multitudes are praying for forgiveness who have made no confession of their sin.

There is no Scripture for the child of GOD under grace which justifies such a substitution.

The truth embodied in this passage cannot apply to unsaved people. They are forgiven as a part of their whole salvation when they believe. The child of GOD is forgiven when he makes a full confession.

THIRD, SELF-JUDGMENT SAVES FROM CHASTISEMENT (I Corinthians 11:31, 32)

The third major passage related to the cure of the effects of sin in the believer's life is found (without reference to the important context) in I Corinthians 11:31, 32: "**For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.**"

The important additional revelation gained from this passage, is in the order it discloses.

The Father is here seen to be waiting for the self-judgment, or confession, of His sinning child; but if the child will not judge himself by a full confession of his sin, then the Father must judge him. When the child is thus judged by the Father, he is chastened. This, it should be noted, is with a definite purpose in view: "**That we should not be condemned with the world.**"

There may be chastisement for the child of GOD; but there can be no condemnation. His wonderful grace as a Father is seen in His willingness to wait until His child has judged himself; but as a righteous Father, He cannot pass over the unconfessed sin of His child. If self-judgment is neglected, He must administer chastisement.

FOURTH, CHASTISEMENT IS THE FATHER'S CORRECTION AND TRAINING OF HIS SINNING CHILD (Hebrews 12:3-15)

The central passage in the Bible on chastisement is found in Hebrews 12:3-15 and should be included as one of the major passages upon the cure of the effect of sin in a Christian's life.

By this Scripture we understand that chastisement is the Father's correction of every child; for He has said, "**whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,**" and, in chastisement, "**God dealeth with you as with sons.**"

Such correction as is accomplished by chastisement has in view "**that we might be partakers of his holiness.**"

Chastisement is more than correction and punishment. The meaning of the word includes training and development. It therefore may be administered by the Father for the teaching, refining and training of the child.

Light is given us in GOD's revelation as to what general form His chastisement may take. It is reasonable to conclude that the Father deals individually with His children and that His ways are manifold.

In I Corinthians 11:30 we read concerning the judgments of the Father because of sin in His children:

"**For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.**" Weakness, sickliness and even death may then be included within those means which the Father may employ with His unyielding child. It must not be concluded that all weakness, sickliness and death among believers is a chastisement from GOD. The passage teaches that chastisement may take these particular forms.

In John 15:1-17 there is teaching concerning the importance of abiding in CHRIST.

This is but another term meaning the life of true spirituality. In this Scripture some of the results of not abiding in CHRIST are disclosed. The branch that does not bear fruit is lifted up out of its place. It does not cease to be a branch; but is evidently taken from this relationship to be "**with the Lord.**" This statement corresponds with the statement that "**many sleep.**"

Failure to abide in CHRIST results, also, in loss of effectiveness in prayer, loss of power in fruit-bearing and service, and loss of joy and fellowship in the Lord.

The very weight of the hand of GOD may be exceedingly heavy. David describes his experience when he "**kept silence,**" or refused to acknowledge his sin: "**When I kept silence, my bones**

waxed old through my roaring all the day long. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me: my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and my iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the LORD; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. For this shall everyone that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found" (Psalm 32:3-6).

The weight of the hand of GOD is like an unceasing ache of the soul. It is none other than a grieved Spirit; but His loving hand may be still heavier in correction if we fail to say as did David:

"I acknowledge my sin unto thee." *

* See also Chapter IV

FIFTH, AN EXAMPLE OF CHRISTIAN REPENTANCE (II Corinthians 7:8-11)

In II Corinthians 7:8-11 an example of true sorrow for sin on the part of a Christian is recorded.

The Apostle, in his first letter to the Corinthians, has been used of the Spirit to convince them of sin, and in this fifth major passage we are given an account of their sorrow for sin and the effect of this sorrow in their lives. Much light is here given on the transforming effect of repentance and confession in a Christian's life. The passage follows: **"For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent: for I perceive that the same Epistle hath made you sorry, though it were but for a season. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worth repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worth death. For behold the selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed with a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge!"**

Such is the transforming power and abiding effect of true repentance and confession in the life of a believer.

SIXTH, THE REPENTANCE, CONFESSION AND RESTORATION OF AN OLD TESTAMENT SAINT (Psalm 51:1-19)

As recorded in Psalm 51, David is the outstanding example of true repentance and confession on the part of an Old Testament saint.

In the Scriptures his sin is laid bare and with it his broken and contrite heart. He was saved (howbeit under the Old Testament relationships); for he prayed, **"Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation."** He did not pray, restore unto me my salvation. He knew that his salvation, which depended only on the faithfulness of GOD, had not failed. He was pleading for a return of the joy which had been lost through sin. He had lost his testimony as well.

Anticipating his restoration he said, **"Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners**

shall be converted unto thee."

Being saved, even though of the Old Testament order, David's way back to GOD was by the way of confession. There are portions of this major passage which, although true of an Old Testament saint, could not be rightly applied to a Christian in this new dispensation of Grace. We need never pray, "And take not thy Holy Spirit from me"; for He has come to abide. So, also, we need not plead for forgiveness and restoration. Since the Blood has been shed on the Cross, the blessings of forgiveness and cleansing are instantly bestowed through the faithfulness and justice of GOD upon the believer who makes a full confession.

SEVENTH, THE THREE-FOLD ILLUSTRATIVE PARABLE IN THE GOSPELS (Luke 15:1-32)

The last of the seven major passages bearing on the cure of the effects of sin upon the spiritual life of a saint, whether of the Old Testament, or the New, is found in Luke 15:1-32. This portion of the Scriptures contains one parable in three parts. It is of a lost sheep, a lost piece of silver, and a lost son.

Though three incidents are told, there is but one underlying purpose.

The particular value of this passage, in the present connection, is in its revelation of the divine compassion as seen in the restoration of a sinning saint. It is the unveiling of the Father's heart. The emphasis falls upon the shepherd, rather than upon the sheep; upon the woman, rather than upon the lost piece of silver; and upon the father, rather than upon either son.

In considering this passage, it must be borne in mind that what is here recorded is under the conditions which obtained before the Cross. It, therefore, has to do primarily with Israel. They were the covenant people of the Old Testament, "**the sheep of his pasture,**" and their position as such was unchanged until the new covenant was made in His Blood.

Being covenant people, they could return to the blessings of their covenant, if those blessings had been lost through sin, on the grounds of repentance and confession. This, according to the Scriptures and as has been seen, is true of all covenant people. Israel's covenants are not the same in character as "**the new covenant made in his Blood**"; but the terms of restoration into the blessings of the covenant are the same in the one case as in the other. The fact of the covenant abides through the faithfulness of GOD; but the blessings of the covenant may be lost through the unfaithfulness of the saint. The blessing is regained, too, not by forming another covenant, but by restoration into the unchanging privileges of the original covenant.

The three-fold parable is about Israelites and was addressed to them.

Whatever application there may be in the parable to Christians under the new covenant is possible only on the ground of the fact that the way of restoration by repentance and confession is common to both covenants. In the parable, therefore, we have a picture of the heart of GOD toward any and all of His covenant people when they sin.

The parable opens thus: "**Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear**

him. And the Pharisees and scribes murmured, saying, This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them." Here is the key to all that follows.

"**Publicans and sinners**" were not Gentiles.

- Publicans were Israelites under the covenant "**made unto the fathers**" who had turned traitor to their nation to the extent of becoming tax-gatherers for Rome.

- "**Sinners**" were Israelites under the same covenant who had failed to present the sacrifices for sin as prescribed by the law of Moses.

An Israelite was counted "**blameless**" before the law when he had provided the required offerings. Thus Paul could say of himself concerning his former position as a Jew under the law: "**Touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless.**" The Apostle is not claiming sinless perfection: he is testifying to the fact that he had always been faithful in providing the sacrifices prescribed in the law of Moses.

The Pharisees and scribes were Israelites who gave their whole lives to the exact fulfillment of the law of Moses. Paul was a Pharisee, "**an Hebrew of the Hebrews.**"

These men were not Christians and should not be judged as such. There is little in common here with Christians. These Israelites were blameless through the animal sacrifices which anticipated the death of CHRIST. Christians are blameless through faith in the Blood of CHRIST which has already been shed. One is a justification by works, on the human side; the other is a justification by faith concerning a finished work of GOD.

The Pharisees and scribes murmured when they saw that JESUS received publicans and sinners and ate with them. He, therefore, spoke this parable unto them. The parable is explicitly addressed to murmuring Pharisees and scribes rather than to everybody, anywhere. And there can be little understanding of the truth contained in it unless the plain purpose for which it is told is kept in mind.

In turning to an interpretation of the parable, some consideration must be given to the well-nigh universal impression that this parable is a picture of salvation. While it is a blessed picture of the heart of GOD, it most evidently has to do with restoration rather than regeneration.

The first division of the parable is of a man who had an hundred sheep.

"**What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them, doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it?"** This is not a picture of ninety-nine sheep and one goat: it is of one hundred sheep, and "**sheep,**" according to the Scriptures, are always covenant people. Israelites were sheep, so, also, are the Christians of this dispensation. JESUS, when speaking of those to be saved through His death, said to the Jews: "**Other sheep I have which are not of this fold**" (John 10:16).

Another important distinction should be noted in this parable:

The sheep, the piece of silver and the son were **"lost"**; but they were lost in such a way as that they needed to be **"found."**

This is hardly the same as being lost in such a way as needing to be saved. The Biblical use of the word **"lost"** has at least these two widely different meanings. **"The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost"**; but in all three parts of this parable, it is seeking and finding, rather than seeking and saving.

The word **"saved,"** it should be observed, does not once appear in this parable. Should this parable be accepted as a teaching in regard to salvation, there is no escaping the error of **"Universalism"**; for this Shepherd seeks until He finds that which is lost. The passage, on the other hand, presents a blessed unfolding of the heart of GOD toward His wandering child who needs to be found rather than to be saved. **"Ninety and nine"** who are safe in the fold to one that is lost is a poor picture of the proportions which have always existed between the saved and unsaved. Were the parable to teach the salvation of a sinner, far better would it have been had it presented **"ninety and nine"** who were lost to one that was safe in the fold. The parable continues:

"And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance."

The sinner here referred to can be none other than one of the covenant sinners of the first verse of the passage and concerning whom the parable was told.

He, being a covenant person, is here pictured by the Spirit as returning on the grounds of repentance, rather than being saved on the grounds of saving faith.

So, again, we could hardly find any class of persons within the church corresponding to the **"ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance."**

Such a case was possible, nevertheless, under the law of Moses, the Apostle Paul being a good example. The very Pharisees and scribes to whom the parable was addressed were of that class. Within the outward demands of the law of Moses, they needed no repentance.

Repentance, which means *a change of mind*, is a vital element in our present salvation; but it is now included in the one act of believing; for fully one hundred and fifty passages in the New Testament condition our present salvation on believing, or its synonym, faith.

The Gospel by John, written especially that we might believe that JESUS is the CHRIST and that believing we might have life through His name, does not once use the word **"repentance."** The unsaved to-day are saved through believing, which evidently includes such repentance as can be produced by those who are **"dead in trespasses and sins."** Repentance means a change of mind and no one can believe on CHRIST as his Saviour and not have changed his mind with respect to his sin, his lost condition and the placing of his saving trust in the One who is **"mighty**

to save."

The second division of the parable is of the woman and the lost piece of silver.

It is the same story of seeking and finding that which was lost. The special emphasis in this division of the parable falls on the joy of the one who finds. It is the joy of the One in whose presence the angels are. The story, again, is of a repenting sinner, rather than of a believing sinner.

The third division of the parable is of "A certain man."

This story is evidently told to reveal the heart of the father. Incidentally he had two sons, and one of them was a "**publican and sinner**," and the other a "**Pharisee and scribe**."

One left the blessings of his father's house (but did not cease to be a son): the other murmured when the sinner was restored.

No greater depths of degradation could be pictured to a Jewish mind than to be found in a field feeding swine. Here we have the Lord declaring, in the terms of His own time and people, that a wandering son may return by confession, even from the lowest depths of sin. It was there, in that field with the swine, that the son "**came to himself**" and purposed to return to his father with a confession, which is only the normal expression of a true heart repentance.

There is no mention of regeneration. Nothing is said of faith, apart from which no soul could hope to be saved into sonship. He was a son and returned to his father as a son. The sentiment, that an unsaved person, when turning to CHRIST, is "**returning home**" as is sometimes expressed in sermons and gospel songs, is foreign to the teachings of the Word of GOD. Sons, who have wandered away, may return home, and, being lost in the state of wandering, may be found. This could not apply to one who has never been a child of GOD. Such are certainly lost but need rather to be saved.

In this dispensation, unsaved people may turn to GOD, but they do not return to GOD.

When the returning son was a great way off the father saw him and had compassion on him and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. The father saw him because he was looking that way.

He had not ceased to look since the hour the son departed. Such is the picture of the Father's heart, expressed, as well, in the searching both by the shepherd and by the woman.

All righteousness would require that this returning boy be punished most severely.

- Had he not dishonored the father's name?
- Had he not squandered his father's substance?
- Had he not brought himself to ruin?

But he was not punished.

The fact that he was not punished unfolds to us of this dispensation the blessed truth that, because of the work of CHRIST on the Cross, the Father can and will receive His child without punishment. The terms of restoration are only a broken-hearted confession. The guilt of the sin has fallen on Another in our stead.

The confession of this son was first toward Heaven and then to his father. This is the true order of all confession. It must be first to GOD and then to those who would be wronged by the withholding of our confession.

Great is the power of a broken-hearted confession. No one would believe that the wandering son, after having been restored, and after resting again in the comforts of that fellowship and home, would immediately ask his father for more of his goods that he might return to the life of sin. Such action would be wholly inconsistent with the heart-broken confession he has made.

True confession is real and transforming in its power (see II Corinthians 7:11).

He was a son during all the days of his absence from home. Had he died in the field with the swine, he would have died as a son. So far as this illustrates the estate of a sinning Christian, it may be concluded from this and all the Scriptures on this subject, that an imperfect Christian, such as we all are, would be received into the heavenly home at death, though he suffer loss of all rewards and much joy, and though, when he meets his Lord face to face he is called upon there to make his hitherto neglected confession.

From these seven major passages it may be concluded that the cure of the effects of sin on the spiritual life of a child of GOD is promised to the one who in repentance of heart makes a genuine confession of his sin.

Sin is always sin in the sight of GOD. It is no less sin because it is committed by a Christian, nor can it be cured in any case other than through the redemption which is in CHRIST. It is because the redemption-price has already been paid in the precious Blood of CHRIST that GOD can save sinners who only believe and restore saints who only confess.

Not one degree of the punishment that fell upon our Substitute can ever fall on saint or sinner. Since CHRIST bore it all for us, believing or confessing is all that can righteously be demanded.

Until confession is made by the one who has sinned, he is contending for that which is evil and thus is at disagreement with the Father. **"Two cannot walk together except they be agreed."** GOD cannot agree with sin. The child can agree with the Father and this is true repentance which is expressed in true confession. Repentance is a change of mind. By it we turn from sin unto GOD.

The blessing does not depend upon sinless perfection: it is a matter of not grieving the Spirit.

It is not an issue concerning unknown sin: it is an attitude of heart that is willing always instantly to confess every known sin. **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."**

The Christian who fully confesses all known sin will have removed one, if not all, of the hindrances to the fullest manifestation of the Spirit.

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption"
(Ephesians 4:30).

~ end of chapter 4 ~
