

When Jesus spoke to the woman of Samaria, he was not presenting the gospel invitation to her alone, but to the thousands upon thousands who should read his words. Jesus traveled up and down the breadth of the land, giving his invitation to the feast. When the sun illuminated the landscape, Jesus said to the vast throng: "I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." He took the opportunity of presenting himself to the people during the feast-days, when they gathered at Jerusalem. The people met together to carry out the instructions given to Moses, to "observe the feast of tabernacles seven days, after that thou hast gathered in thy corn and thy wine;" and Jesus himself stood in the midst of them. The feast of tabernacles was the great holiday of the nation. This feast was preceded by a day of atonement, which occurred on the tenth day of the seventh month, when *every one was to afflict his soul by confessing his sins, both to the Lord and to his brethren. This humiliation was to prepare the way for the celebration of the feast of tabernacles*, which lasted seven days, and was a memorial of the protecting care of God when he led Israel through the wilderness. In the instruction to Moses, he said: "Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the Lord seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath. And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm-trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days. And ye shall keep it a feast unto the Lord seven days in the year. It shall be a statute forever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month. Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths: that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." It was to the celebration of this feast that Jesus came. The Scripture says: "But when his brethren were gone up, then went he also up unto the feast, not openly, but as it were in secret. Then the Jews sought him at the feast, and said, Where is he? And there was much murmuring among the people concerning him: for some said, He is a good man: others said, Nay; but he deceiveth the people. Howbeit no man spake openly of him for fear of the Jews." "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed of him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the Synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." {RH, July 7, 1896 par. 2}

Confession of Sin

To those who desire prayer for their restoration to health, it should be made plain that the violation of God's law, either natural or spiritual, is sin, and that in order for them to receive His blessing, sin must be confessed and forsaken. {GW 216.1}

The Scripture bids us, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." [JAMES 5:16.] To the one asking for prayer, let thoughts like these be presented, "We cannot read the heart, or know the secrets of your life. These are known only to yourself and to God. If you repent of your sins, it is your duty to make confession of them." {GW 216.2}

Sin of a *private character* is to be confessed to Christ, the only mediator between God and

man. For "if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." [1 JOHN 2:1.] Every sin is an offense against God, and is to be confessed to Him through Christ. Every open sin should be as *openly confessed*. Wrong done to a fellow-being should be made right with the one who has been offended. If any who are seeking health have been guilty of evil-speaking, if they have sowed discord in the home, the neighborhood, or the church, and have stirred up alienation and dissension, if by any wrong practice they have led others into sin, these things should be confessed before God *and before those who have been offended*. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." [1 JOHN 1:9.] {GW 216.3}

When wrongs have been righted, we may present the needs of the sick to the Lord in calm faith, as His Spirit may indicate. He knows each individual by name, and cares for each as if there were not another upon the earth for whom He gave His beloved Son. Because God's love is so great and so unfailing, the sick should be encouraged to trust in Him and be cheerful. To be anxious about themselves tends to cause weakness and disease. If they will rise above depression and gloom, their prospect of recovery will be better; for "the eye of the Lord is upon them" "that hope in His mercy." [PS. 33:18.] {GW 217.1}

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Proverbs 28:13.

The *conditions* of obtaining mercy of God are simple and just and reasonable. The Lord does not require us to do some grievous thing in order that we may have the forgiveness of sin. We need not make long and wearisome pilgrimages, or perform painful penances, to commend our souls to the God of heaven or to expiate our transgression; but he that *confesseth and forsaketh* his sin shall have mercy. {SC 38.1}

The apostle says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed." James 5:16. Confess your sins to God, who only can forgive them, and your faults to one another. If you have given offense to your friend or neighbor, you are to acknowledge your wrong, and it is his duty freely to forgive you. Then you are to seek the forgiveness of God, because the brother you have wounded is the property of God, and in injuring him you sinned against his Creator and Redeemer. The case is brought before the only true Mediator, our great High Priest, who "was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin," and who is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities," and is able to cleanse from every stain of iniquity. Hebrews 4:15. {SC 38.1}

Those who have not humbled their souls before God in acknowledging their guilt, have not yet fulfilled the first *condition* of acceptance. If we have not experienced that repentance which is not to be repented of, and have not with true humiliation of soul and brokenness of spirit confessed our sins, abhorring our iniquity, we have never truly sought for the forgiveness of sin; and if we have never sought, we have never found the peace of God. *The only reason why we do not have remission of sins that are past is that we are not willing to humble our hearts and comply with the conditions of the word of truth. Explicit instruction is given concerning this matter. Confession of sin, whether public or private, should be heartfelt and freely expressed.* It is not to be urged from the sinner. It is not to be made in a *flippant* and *careless* way, or forced from those who have no realizing sense of the abhorrent character of sin. The confession that is the outpouring of the inmost soul finds its way to the God of infinite pity. The psalmist says, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken

heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit." Psalm 34:18. {SC 38.1}

True confession is always of a specific character, and acknowledges particular sins. They may be of *such a nature* as to be brought ***before God only***; they may be wrongs that should be ***confessed to individuals*** who have suffered injury through them; or they may be of a public character, and should then be as ***publicly confessed***. But ***all confession should be definite and to the point, acknowledging the very sins of which you are guilty.*** {SC 38.1}

In the days of Samuel the Israelites wandered from God. They were suffering the consequences of sin; for they had lost their faith in God, lost their discernment of His power and wisdom to rule the nation, lost their confidence in His ability to defend and vindicate His cause. They turned from the great Ruler of the universe and desired to be governed as were the

nations around them. Before they found peace they made this definite confession: "We have added unto all our sins this evil, to ask us a king." 1 Samuel 12:19. The very sin of which they were convicted had to be confessed. Their ingratitude oppressed their souls and severed them from God. {SC 38.1}

Confession will not be acceptable to God without sincere repentance and reformation. There must be decided changes in the life; everything offensive to God must be put away. This will be the result of genuine sorrow for sin. The work that we have to do on our part is plainly set before us: "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Isaiah 1:16, 17. "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." Ezekiel 33:15. Paul says, speaking of the work of repentance: "Ye sorrowed after 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! In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." 2 Corinthians 7:11. {SC 38.1}

When sin has deadened the moral perceptions, ***the wrongdoer does not discern the defects of his character nor realize the enormity of the evil he has committed***; and unless he yields to the convicting power of the Holy Spirit he remains in partial blindness to his sin. His confessions are not sincere and in earnest. To every acknowledgment of his guilt he adds an apology in excuse of his course, declaring that if it had not been for certain circumstances he would not have done this or that ***for which he is reproved***. {SC 38.1}

After Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin and escape the dreaded sentence of death. When the Lord inquired concerning their sin, Adam replied, laying the guilt partly upon God and partly upon his companion: "The woman whom Thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat." The woman put the blame upon the serpent, saying, "The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat." Genesis 3: 12, 13. Why did You make the serpent? Why did You suffer him to come into Eden? These were the questions implied in her excuse for her sin, thus charging God with the responsibility of their fall. The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit and will not be acceptable to God. True repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as his eyes unto heaven, he will cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and those who

do acknowledge their guilt will be justified, for Jesus will plead His blood in behalf of the repentant soul. {SC 38.1}

The examples in God's word of genuine repentance and humiliation reveal a spirit of confession in which there is no excuse for sin or attempt at self-justification. Paul did not seek to shield himself; he paints his sin in its darkest hue, not attempting to lessen his guilt. He says, "Many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts 26: 10, 11. He does not hesitate to declare that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." 1 Timothy 1:15. {SC 38.1}

The humble and broken heart, subdued by genuine repentance, will appreciate something of the love of God and the cost of Calvary; and as a son confesses to a loving father, so will the truly penitent bring all his sins before God. And it is written, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 John 1:9. {SC 38.1}

Jer. 3:13 Only acknowledge thine iniquity, that thou hast transgressed against the LORD thy God, and hast scattered thy ways to the strangers under every green tree, and ye have not obeyed my voice, saith the LORD.

Let no man boast that he does not confess the sins that the Lord has pointed out to him. If he makes no confession, ***he receives not forgiveness and pardon from God.*** He must go forth in sorrow, to work in his own strength. The enemy finds him in this position, a subject to be deceived. {LLM 87.2}