

## **THOUGHTS ON 1 JOHN CHAPTERS 1 & 2**

By Hector C. MacLeod (1920-2010) engineer, Baptist pastor, Gideon, attended Millar Memorial Bible College, Saskatchewan, Canada, father of (10).

This in-depth research of I John 1:9 came about as a result of a home Bible Study. Everyone in the study was requested to research the New Testament and come back the following week with every Scripture in the New Testament that teaches confession of sin to God. I must say it surprised every one of us to learn that there is only one scripture verse in the entire New Testament that commands confession of sin to God. One of our researchers had a Bible program in his computer and was able to bring up every scripture verse on confession very quickly. He obtained a computer print out for each of us, showing every verse on confession in the Bible. That computer print out quickly proved that only one verse indeed (in the N. T.) called for confession of sin to God.

### ***An Incredible overemphasis on one verse***

Take special note of the following facts - 1 .The Holy Spirit chose to limit teaching on confession of sin to God, by employing one single verse in the New Testament. 2. Paul, the chosen teacher and Apostle to the Gentiles, never mentions the word confess with respect to sin in all of his Spirit breathed writing. 3. With the exception of the lone verse in 1 John, the remaining Spirit inspired writers of the New Testament are totally silent on the subject. In view of the above facts we can only come to the inevitable conclusion that confession of sin to God has been subtly shifted from the sinner to whom it is strictly applied, blown out of all proportion, and falsely applied to born again Christians who are already saved to the uttermost and totally forgiven of God for ever and ever. It is our prayer that the Spirit of God will release you, as He has many of us, as we researched deeper and deeper into His blessed truth that inevitably sets men free. We believe you will have to agree that, that one lone verse (1 John 1:9) has been misinterpreted and misapplied resulting in dreadful bondage and robbing God's dear people of the constant joy He commands and longs for them to have at all times. (Phil. 4:4). Think of the troubled believers who honestly wonder if they have really confessed all to God. Their cry rings out incessantly. How will I fare if I fail to confess my sins to God as a result of ignorance, sickness or neglect? The sad part of it is, they can find no answer to release them from their bondage anywhere in the entire new Testament. If they, for instance, research all the inspired scriptures written by the specially chosen apostle Paul, the questions will remain to haunt them, as confession of sin is nowhere to be found in the extensive teaching of the apostle.

### ***The glaring absence of confession In the New Testament***

Surely it is incredibly significant that the apostle John alone (in one lone verse) was led of the Holy Spirit to speak of confession of sin to God. We may search as we will through the Spirit breathed teaching of Paul, Peter, James, Jude, Matthew, Mark and Luke, but we will never find a word about confession to God for our sins. It should go without saying that the latter inspired writers were also specially chosen of God to reveal His perfect will to us. They covered great and glorious truths that inevitably set men free. They sounded out profound truth respecting our relationship and responsibility toward God, but never a word about confession of sin to God on the part of a believer. Their silence on confession of sin to God becomes all the more glaring when we consider how frequently the Holy Spirit used the following words of truth He wanted to impress upon our minds –

'Believe' is used one hundred and fifteen times in the New Testament.

'Faith' 'trust', 'receive', are used seventy five times.

'Salvation', 'save', 'saved', are used one hundred and six times.

Believers are said to be **IN CHRIST** over one hundred and thirty times.

### ***Where did believers confession originate?***

Since none of the last referenced writers (*i.e. Paul, Peter, James, Jude, Matthew, Mark, and Luke*) ever mentioned confession of sin to God on the part of believers, why is that teaching so widespread? Who would want believers to be forever occupied with themselves and their sins, instead of "looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of (their) faith" Heb. 12:2? Who would not want our glorious Lord to receive all the glory for His finished work on the Cross? Does not scripture positively state that believers are "sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" Heb. 10:10? and "by one offering He has perfected forever them that are sanctified" Heb. 10:14. Do believers who are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus once for all and perfected forever by Him, need to confess their sins to God who has declared them perfect before Him in love? Do not the scriptures plainly teach that "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself?" Are we to rule out positive language when it comes to scripture truth? Satan the arch enemy of God and man would certainly have us think so.

### ***Serious points to be considered***

Prayerfully consider the following points with your Bible as the final authority, not some commentary of man, or even this booklet:

1. Is 1 John 1:9 for the born again Christian or for those who have not yet come to God for salvation?
2. If 1 John 1:9 is indeed for the Christian it is most incredible that the apostle Paul never once told the sinning saints in Corinth, Galatia, or anywhere else that they must confess sins of which they were guilty.
3. 1 John 1:9 is the only verse in the entire New Testament that calls for confession of sins in order that God may forgive. It is most interesting to note that warnings are sounded out frequently by scholars and teachers to never build a Bible doctrine on one verse of the Bible. Since confession of sins to God to obtain forgiveness is not found anywhere else in the New Testament, is it not amazing how widespread that rule is broken today? False cults are especially in-famous for building doctrine on one verse of the Bible.
4. Why is 1 John 1:9 the only verse in the New Testament that calls for confession to God for forgiveness? Does not the answer lie in the fact that the apostle John does not address his letter (1 John) to Christians only, whereas Paul, for instance, in every case starts off by addressing his letters strictly to the saints of God? When we consider the dead silence on confession in all the letters of Paul it is very evident that John includes in his letter instructions to a company of adherents who have never been born again.

5. If indeed a born-again Christian has to confess his sins to be forgiven (according to 1 John 1:9) would not every New Testament church be exhorted again and again to be obedient to that most important and critical command? If confession is for the born-again Christian and he fails to obey, the consequences are most frightening to say the very least.

6. As there was no direction whatsoever given by Paul for Christians to confess their sins to God, the early Church must have been at least 60 years without that instruction, as 1 John 1:9 was not written until A D 90-95. All the inspired letters (written much earlier) were distributed among the churches, and not a single word can be found in any of them respecting confession of sin to God on the part of born again believers.

7. The apostle Paul, by the Spirit, makes it crystal clear that he received the rounded out gospel directly from God. Fourteen years later, he compared what he had received with Peter, James and John (Gal 2:9). They probably spent many sessions together, and were many days comparing notes. After the sessions were over, Paul reported by the Spirit that they added nothing to what he had already received from God (Gal 2:6). Surely they must have compared notes on the supposed critical necessity of born-again Christians to confess their sins to God. How could they skip a doctrine that has such an incredible bearing on every born' again Christian? We need to ask ourselves why did not Paul proclaim that critical doctrine over and over again. He was appointed by Almighty God "a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the gentiles" 1 Tim. I :11. Paul's instructions apply to multiplied thousands of saints in the Church of God down through the centuries. However, confession of sins to God on the part of the born-again Christian is foreign to the writing of the chosen apostle. He rather teaches the opposite. Paul's God-given instruction to the born again Christian is very clear "reckon (count as true) ye also yourselves to be **dead** indeed unto sin, but **alive** unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." It should be most obvious that those who are obedient to that command are never expected to confess their sins. One would have to have a split personality to count on both. "For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints." I Cor. 14:33.

8. Consider one instance (and there are many) where the apostle Paul had to confront carnal Corinthians regarding the heathen practice of going in to harlots (1 Cor. 6). If there was ever a time when confession of sin to God was required, here is a critical case. How does the chosen apostle handle it? Why, we may ask, does he not instruct the guilty ones to confess their sins to God immediately? Do we not teach today that this has to be the first move every born again Christian must make in order that they be forgiven and restored to lost fellowship? Why did the chosen apostle of God led of the Holy Spirit, rather tell them that "he that is joined to Christ is **one** Spirit, and know ye not that your body is the temple (nahos - Holy of Holies) of the Holy Spirit who is in you, and ye are not your own, you are bought with a price?" 1 Cor.6: 19, 20. If 1 John 1:9 is for the Christian surely Paul was seriously remiss. Would not we rather have told them that they were living with unconfessed sin in their lives and were totally out of fellowship with God? We need to be reminded that our great God chose Paul to be the apostle to the gentiles. He never told them any such thing. The Spirit of God used Paul almost exclusively to instruct born-again Christians with regard to their conduct. It is most evident that He never gave the apostle Paul the modern day doctrine of continuous confession of sin to God for forgiveness. Paul never once instructed believers to confess their sins. The teaching we propagated today respecting Christian confession, is foreign to the Spirit breathed writings of the apostle. We should also be reminded that the apostle Paul was chosen of God to write the greater part of the New Testament. His inspired words will abide forever, (see 1 Thes. 2:13).

9. The letter to the Romans is regarded by Bible scholars and teachers as the most complete and rounded out revelation to the church in the New Testament. Paul had never been to Rome, therefore his letter to that church had to include every vital truth for Christian conduct so miraculously imparted to him by Almighty God. Paul addressed his letter "to all in Rome who are loved by God and called to be saints" Rom. 1:7 NIV. Take special note that Paul never once remotely hinted that confession of sin was necessary on the part of God's saved people. Confession of sin for forgiveness on the part of born again believers is totally foreign to the epistle of Paul to the Romans.

10. A teaching that goes hand in hand with 1 John 1:9 states that a Christian loses fellowship with God the moment he sins. I would exhort those who read this paper to be good Bereans, and search the inspired writings of the apostle Paul to see if this teaching can be substantiated. It can be stated most emphatically beforehand that there is not the remotest hint in the inspired writing of the apostle that a born again Christian can be out of fellowship with his God who is **one Spirit** with him (1 Cor. 6:17). On the contrary when he confronted the Corinthians and the Galatians with the sins they were guilty of, he revealed the greatest truths that pertained to their unity with their Saviour that can be found in the New Testament.

After careful prayer and consideration of the above ten points, may we compare 1 John 1:9 with other Scriptures in the New Testament? A simple comparison of Scripture with Scripture will quickly determine to whom it applies.

*'That which we have received and heard declare we unto you (the gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth) that ye (who have not received the Saviour might do so in order that you) also may have fellowship with us: (For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?' 2 Cor. 6:14. We should be aware that righteousness is something only God can give a human being, righteousness is not something that we do, righteousness is what we are, or are not, 1 Cor. 1:30) and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3.*

### ***Fellowship with God a once for all call of God***

***May we never fail to understand that, to have fellowship with God and His people, we must be called by God Himself into that fellowship. The Corinthians were told in no uncertain terms that they "were called (by God Himself) into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" 1 Cor. 1:9. It is most evident that the ones John addressed were not saved, otherwise (like the Corinthians) they too would already be called of God into the fellowship of His Son. They were Saints by God's calling, and fellowshippers by God's calling.***

***We should seriously consider what the apostle Paul declared to the Corinthians- "And brethren could not speak unto you as spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ...for ye are yet carnal: for there is envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal and walk as men ?" 1 Cor. 3:1, 3. What more appropriate place than here, could be found to teach confession for forgiveness. Did Paul miss the Spirit's leading here? or is confession only necessary when greater sins than envying, strife and divisions are committed? Did the Corinthians lose fellowship with God as a result of the afore***

**mentioned sins? If indeed they did, could there be a more important place to tell them so? To these very same people the apostle, by the Spirit, distinctly declared, "God is faithful by whom ye are called Into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" I Cor. 1:9.**

**If John was addressing born again believers in 1 John 1:9 they too would be" called by God into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord" I Cor. 1:9. God is certainly no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).**

Following on in 1 John 1:6, "If we (human creatures) say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness we lie (as a child of God is delivered from the power of darkness and is translated into the Kingdom of God's dear Son Col. 1:13. Note-only those born from above have been translated into that kingdom of light. Those who are still walking in darkness are liars because they have not received the Saviour who alone can effect that translation. Believers are clearly told that they "were once darkness but now ye are light in the Lord" Eph. 5:8 "ye are all sons of light and sons of the day; we are not of the night nor of darkness" 1 Thes. 5: 5. The apostle John could not use that positive language in 1 John because he was not addressing Christians exclusively as Paul was), and do not the truth (for true Christians cannot have real fellowship with liars). "But if we (human creatures) walk in the light as He is in the light (it proves we are not liars but born again Christians and) we have fellowship one with the other, and the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us (**keeps on cleansing us - Greek**) from ALL SIN."

### **Enter the Gnostics**

History records that Gnostics (a cult group in the early church) joined themselves with true believers. The Encyclopedia Britannica states that Gnosticism was **"a movement of religious syncretism (or fusion of different and previously independent beliefs), which maintained itself side by side with genuine Christianity as the latter was gradually crystallizing into the ancient Catholic Church "**. J. Vernon McGee writes- **"Gnosticism was the basic philosophy of the Roman Empire. One of their heretical teachings was that Jesus was merely a man when He was born. He was just like any other human being at His birth, but at His baptism, the Christ came upon Him, and when He was hanging on the cross, the Christ left Him. John refutes this teaching in no uncertain terms when (addressing the unsaved gnostics) he declared in his gospel record, "The Word was born flesh. " and here in his first epistle, he emphatically declares that after Jesus came back from the dead, he was still a human being John says "we handled Him" (I John 1:1) - He was still flesh and bones.'** The first chapter of I John in its entirety evidently addresses those who needed true salvation in order to be delivered from that cult, "to open their eyes, and to turn them from **darkness to light, (the inevitable result of receiving the Gospel cp. I John 1:6)** and from the power of Satan unto God, that they might receive **forgiveness of sins**, and an inheritance among them who are **sanctified** faith that is in [Christ]" Acts 26:18. Note-turning from **darkness to light, forgiveness of sins**, and **sanctification** is received in one package and is a work of God in its entirety.

### **Born again Christians singularly addressed**

**We should be careful to note that John immediately singles out born again Christians as we move into the second chapter of his letter. Note the great contrast - to the unsaved**

Gnostics he declares, "confess your sins in order to be forgiven" (I John 1:9). To the born again Christian (I John 2:1,2) He declares, if anyone sin (not a word about confession) we have an Advocate (a Lawyer) with the Father to handle it for us, and further on in the chapter he singles out the new born babes in Christ and declares "your sins **are forgiven you** for His name's sake" I John 2: 12.

### ***The Truth is a Person, Jesus our Lord***

I John 1 Verse 8. "If we (*human creatures*) say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves (*and could never be saved with that attitude "for Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" Luke 5 32*), and the truth is not in us" (*we have not received Him who is the truth therefore He is not in us and we are not saved*). "He that hath the Son hath life, he that hath not the Son hath not life" I John 5:12. Since salvation is Christ in the Christian, surely it **could never be said of a Christian** that the truth is not in him as "he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit" (I Cor. 6:17.) and believers "are hidden with Christ in God" Col. 3:3 and **nothing** can separate us. Rom. 8:35-39

Verse 9. (*However*) "If we (*human creatures*) confess our sins (*as the publican did 'God be merciful to me a sinner'*) He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and cleanse **us from ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.**" (*and we go down to our house justified Luke 18:13, 14. Those who are justified, are clothed with God's righteousness and are called into the fellowship of His Son as were the Corinthians.*)

When we come to God initially as the publican did, (**saying that we have sin**), God forgives us for sins past, present and future - for all of our sins were future until the very moment we see Him face to face.

### ***Giving thanks always, results in Inevitable joy***

All that God desires of us now (**as forgiven and constantly being cleansed sinners**) is to continually thank Him profusely for what He has done on our behalf. Note what He says to the born again Christian "Let the peace of God rule in your hearts . . .and be ye THANKFUL" Col. 3 :15-17. "Whatever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, GIVING THANKS." "Be filled with the Spirit...GIVING THANKS ALWAYS AND FOR ALL THINGS unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" Eph. 5:18, 20. "Rejoice evermore" 1 Thess. 5:16; "rejoice in the Lord always, (*he leaves no room for confession*) and again I say rejoice" Phill. 4:4.

### ***Confession of sin the Initial act of the sinner***

When we take into account the above noted Scriptures it should be obvious that I John 1:9 is for the sinner who, like the publican, repents for the **first time**. He is then instantly forgiven and goes back to his house justified - just as if he had never sinned. He is "sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption" Eph. 1:13, and is called into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ (I Cor. 1:9). Further proof that I John 1:9 refers to ones outside of Christ is found in I John 1 :4 Amp. "We are now writing these things to you so that our joy (**in seeing you included**) may be full and your joy may be complete." Do not miss this declaration. The Apostle clearly

indicates that he is addressing individuals who are not included in the household of faith. He points out to them, that when they confess that they are indeed sinners and receive the Saviour, his joy will be full as will be theirs. (See original Greek on this verse)

### ***Justification an incredible truth often ignored***

"Those whom God has called unto salvation **He justified**, that is, He takes away the guilt and penalty of their sins and bestows upon them a positive righteousness, even Jesus Christ Himself in whom the believer stands forever innocent, uncondemned, and righteous in point of law." Romans 8:30 in Wuest's translation. Surely the one who is now forever innocent, uncondemned and righteous, need never go back again to confess and ask for forgiveness? To do so would demonstrate that he or she never accepted God's truth in Romans 8:30. The forever forgiven sinner needs only to **thank God for Calvary** every time he sees sin raise its ugly head.

The forgiven justified sinner is never told to confess (why would he need to confess if already forgiven and justified?) or try to fight or overcome sin. He is rather instructed to "walk in the Spirit in order that he not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Gal. 5 :16).

We should take special note again that God's word to the redeemed and justified sinner is not to confess his sins, but rather to put off "anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth ...and put on as the elect of God, **holy and beloved** (Since God addresses His children as holy and beloved why would those who are made Holy by God confess their sins? There could be only one reason. They refuse to believe God's infallible word that He has made them holy in Christ Jesus and has "perfected forever them that are sanctified" Heb. 10:14) tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long suffering, forbearing one another and forgiving one another. . . **even as Christ forgave you.**" Col. 3:12-13

### ***God's marvelous basis for forgiving others***

***God commands us to forgive others because He has forgiven us. He bases our forgiving others on the fact that He has already forgiven us. (see Eph 4:32) If we insist on a repeated confession of our sins in order to be forgiven, we destroy God's basis for our need to forgive others. Stop and meditate on that fact. It's truth will loose shackles of those who may be bound in this particular. And more importantly we will quit trying to destroy God's great new covenant basis for our forgiving of others who offend us.***

### ***The wonderful harmony of God's established truth***

When we recognize that 1 John 1:9 is for the sinner coming to God for the first time, a flood of scriptures fall into harmony. The Apostle John in 1 John 2:2, 3 singles out those who came to God in accord with 1 John 1:9. He addresses them as "my little children". He declares "If anyone sin, (*our ears are wide open now as this is directed exclusively to God's children. Will He command us to confess that sin? No, hear what He does indeed say.*) we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous one." 1 John 2:1. Praise God! our advocate, who watches and knows every move we make, goes to bat for us, pleading the blood that He shed for us on the cross. ***We could never know how dreadfully we sin according to God's***

**estimation of sin**, but He has already taken care of that at the old rugged cross where He suffered, bled and died in our place. When I know I fail him miserably, I can only come with a heart of profound thanksgiving for all that He did, and is doing on my behalf He recognizes and takes care of my miserable failures long before they come to the forefront of my poor finite mind. How comforting and how wonderful to know that "He saves to the **uttermost** those that come to God by Him, seeing He ever lives to make intercession for them." Heb. 7:25.

Note the continued harmony of the word as the Apostle John continues to address specifically God's children. "Your sins **are** forgiven you for His name's sake." 1 John 2:12. That has to include sins of the believer, past, present and future. If it did not include sins of the future, that particular promise would be invalid by the time it reached the believers to whom it was addressed. Why? Because they sinned while the letter was in transit.

In 1 Cor. 6:11, the believer is informed that "ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified". In Hebrews, the believer is told, "By one offering He **hath perfected forever** them that are sanctified." If 1 John 1:9 was for the believer, how could those scriptures harmonize? Those whom God has perfected **forever** surely need never go back to the Lord in confession. The cross and the ongoing cleansing take care of that. The ones whom He has perfected forever need only to go on thanking Him for "putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Heb. 9:26.

### ***Believers to count on the fact of their death with Christ***

In Romans chapters 5 to 7 God goes into lengthy details regarding the whole sin question since the fall of Adam. The responsibility of the Christian respecting sin is thoroughly covered in every detail, but never once does the Apostle give instruction to the born again Christian to confess sins to God. His teaching is the contrary. "Likewise reckon (count on the fact) ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" Rom. 6:11. William R. Newell comments on this verse as follows. "***We are not told to die to sin: because we are in Christ who did die to it; and therefore we also are DEAD to it, in His death; and reckon it so. This should make the believers task simplicity itself. The only difficulty lies in BELIEVING these astounding revelations! That we should be dead to sin, and now alive unto God as risen ones, sharing that newness of life (verse 4) which our Lord began as "the first-born from among the dead, " is at first too wonderful for us. We see in ourselves the old self-life, the flesh - and straightway we forget God's way of faith, and turn back to our "feelings". We say, "Alas, if I could escape from this body, I would be free ". But that is not at present God 's plan for you and me. We WAIT for the redemption of our body. This body is yet unredeemed. Nevertheless, we are to RECKON ourselves dead unto sin and alive unto God (Not dead to sin, notice, through prayers and strugglings, nor dead to sin in our feelings or consciousness; but IN THAT DEATH UNTO SIN WHICH CHRIST WENT THROUGH ON THE CROSS, and which we SHARED, and IN THAT LIFE which He now lives in glory it has pleased God to call for our faith, both in connection with salvation and with deliverance. Therefore, if we would obey and please God, let us follow His methods! Let us learn to RECKON OURSELVES DEAD, - that Christ's death to sin was our death; and is the present relation of us who are IN Christ, unto sin. The path of faith is always against appearances, - or, if you will, against human consciousness. God says certain things; and we, obeying the "law of faith", say the same things, like Abraham, not regarding our own body, which says the contrary thing. (The record of Abraham's attitude (Rom. 4:19) is an Incredible Illustration for us. Do not miss***

**It.) Facts are facts; and these are what God reveals to us. Appearances, or "feelings" are a wholly different thing from facts! God says, " You died to sin: reckon yourself dead!" obedient souls do so, and enter the path of deliverance in experience. Doubting souls fall back on their "feelings and turn back to prayers (of confession) and struggles, avoiding FAITH. " Every time we come to God confessing our sins (as born-again believers) we are in effect, demonstrating that we will **not** obey His command to "reckon ye also yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but **alive** unto God through Jesus Christ, our Lord." Rom. 6:11. Those who insist on a continued confession to God, consider themselves very much alive to sin. It cannot be otherwise, unless we twist and distort the straightforward language of the Holy Spirit. I would strongly suggest that we meditate long upon Romans 6:11. It is an enormously strong pill for the flesh to swallow, because it involves it's death. Paul himself expressed the same truth in Gat. 2:19, 20 "For through the law I died to the law, that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and delivered Himself up for me" NAS. Paul reckoned himself dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. What was true of Paul is true of every born-again Christian with no exceptions whatsoever. That is why Paul never taught believers to confess their sins to God. That teaching so widespread today, nullifies the great liberating truths of Romans chapter 6, Col. 3:3, 4 etc. Oh. how we need to lay hold on the glorious truth that is forever settled in heaven, "ye are dead, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ **who 18 our life**, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" Col. 3:3, 4.**

### ***Believers counted righteous through death with Christ***

Take special note of another Spirit breathed revelation from Romans 6:7 "For he that hath died (with Christ Col. 3:3,4) hath been declared righteous (or freed) from sin. W. R. Newell comments " ***We must seize fast hold on this verse. Let us distinguish at once between being justified from SINS - from the guilt thereof-by the blood of Christ, and being justified from SIN • the thing itself. "Justified from sin " is the key to chapters six, seven and eight! It is the consciousness of being sinful that keeps saints back from the glorious life Paul lived. Paul shows absolutely no sense of bondage before God; but goes on in blessed triumph! Why? He knows that he has been justified FROM ALL GUILT by the blood of Christ; and he knew that he was also justified, cleared, from THE THING SIN ITSELF; and therefore (though walking In an, as yet, unredeemed body), he was WHOLLY HEAVENLY in his standing, life and relations with God! He knew he was as really justified FROM SIN ITSELF as from SINS. The conscious presence of sin in his flesh only reminded him that he was IN CHRIST; • that sin had been CONDEMNED JUDICIALLY, as connected with flesh, at the cross; and that he was JUSTIFIED as to sin, because he had died with Christ, and his former relationship to sin had WHOLLY CEASED! Its presence gave him no thought of condemnation, but only egered his longing for the redemption body. "Justified from sin" -because, "he that hath died Is justified from sin". Glorious facts May we have faith to enter Into It as did Paul.***

***It is the deep-seated notion of Christendom that GRADUALLY we become saints, - GRADUALLY worthy of heaven, so that sometime, - perhaps, on a dying bed, we will have the right to "drop this robe of flesh and rise".***

***But Scripture cuts this Idea off at once, by the declaration that we DIED, and that we are now, here, JUSTIFIED FROM sin I "Giving thanks to the Father, who MADE us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light". The saints in light are those in glory, and they are there FOR ONE REASON ALONE; the work of Christ on the cross. How unspeakably sad our little faith! And I am speaking of true believers, certainly.***

It is most obvious why Paul **never** taught born again believers to confess their sins. He, by the Spirit, revealed the glorious truth that one is instantly justified the moment one trusts Christ. If Paul taught believers to confess sins, he would be talking riddles.

***The scriptures are always consistent, never speak in riddles***

To teach Justification on the one hand and the need for confession on the other hand would be sheer nonsense. Hear this word from the notable Bible teacher of days gone by, H. A. Ironsides. We quote, "*Peter is never said to have preached justification, but forgiveness and remission. Paul adds Justification. When God forgives through the risen, glorified Jesus, He not only forgives but He justifies. It is impossible for an earthly Judge to both forgive and to justify a man. If a man is justified, he does not need to be forgiven. (Take special note of that) Imagine a man charged with a crime going into court, and after the evidence is all in he is pronounced not guilty, and the Judge sets him free. Someone says as he leaves the building, "I want to congratulate you: It was very nice of the Judge to forgive you. " "Forgive nothing! He did not forgive me; I am justified. There is nothing to forgive. "*

Those who totally accept God's infallible word that He **Justifies** the ungodly (Romans 4:5) accounting them righteous by simply believing, could never go back to Him confessing their sins and asking for forgiveness, but rather thank Him profusely for the great and glorious fact of their justification.

***God only sees believers clothed In Christ***

In 1 John 4:17, we have an incredible revelation given to us. "As He is, so are we **in this world.**" If we believe that great truth, how could we go on confessing sins that were paid for at Calvary? We are as He is because "He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." He is now in us and we are in Him. I Cor. 1:30 NAS. "But by His doing **you are In Christ Jesus**, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption."

If we as forgiven sinners, go to God confessing our sins, God would have every cause to say "what sins? Do you not believe *My* word that you are washed, you are sanctified, you are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God. (I Cor.6: 11 ) Do you not believe that my Son hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself? (Heb. 9:26) Do you not believe that you have been delivered from the power of darkness and have been translated into the kingdom of my dear Son, in whom you have redemption through His blood, even the **forgiveness of sins?** (Col.1:13-14). Do you not believe *My* word in Ephesians that you are to forgive one another even as God for Christ's sake **HAS FORGIVEN** you? Eph. 4:32. You are told again and again in *My* word that you **are forgiven**, cleansed and made holy. Why don't you rather accept my eternal truth and thank Me for making you faultless?"

## ***Believers to live in keeping with their high and holy calling***

It is most significant that everywhere in the New Testament where Christians were living like the world, the inspired writers **never** instructed them to confess their sins. But note this - they rather remind them of their lofty position in Christ Jesus our Lord. Here are some examples:-

The Apostle Paul declared "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid." Rom. 6:1, 2. Instead of instructing them to confess their sins, He reveals some of the greatest truths found in the word. "Ye are dead to sin". "You have been baptized into Jesus Christ", "You were buried with Him." "You were raised with Him." "Yield yourselves therefore unto God." "Sin shall not have dominion over you," etc. Rom.6:3-4: Col. 3:1: Rom. 6:13; 6:14. In view of the above referenced scriptures, would we not have to try to resurrect our sins in order to confess them? Do we sin as Christians? **Yes**. Did Christ pay the penalty for them? **Yes**. Does His blood keep on cleansing us? **Yes**.

The Apostle Paul never once told carnal Corinthians to go to the confession box. If any Christians needed to run to God in confession, they certainly did, as their sins were varied and many. As an answer to their strife and division, he did not command them to get on their knees before God in humble confession, but of all things he rather declared "We are labourers together with God: ye are God's cultivated field." I Cor. 3:9.

To the ones taking their brethren to law, he did not command them to go to God in confession, but rather revealed to them that they will one day "judge the world" and again, "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" 1 Cor. 6:2-3.

This was referred to earlier but it bears repeating. To the Corinthians who were practicing the heathen custom of going in to harlots, he never once stated that confession to God must be made immediately, but rather revealed the incredible truth that "He that is joined to the Lord is **one spirit**" and "Don't you know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit?" I Cor. 6:17,19. There is only one possible way we as believers can be holy in our walk. That one and only way is by yielding the members of our body to God. (Romans 6:13) He who alone is Holy (Rev. 15:4) will then manifest His holiness through our yielded members. Any attempt at holiness on our own stinks in the presence of God. We are carnal sold under sin (Romans 7:14), therefore "the flesh profiteth nothing, it is the **SPIRIT** that giveth life". John 6:63.

Since the only righteousness that can satisfy our holy God could never be attained by a performance of fallen man, God Himself in mercy, clothes the believer with His own righteousness. The believer receives the gift by a simple act of faith. Righteousness is strictly a gift received from God. Romans 5:17 clearly states "they who receive abundance of grace and **the gift of righteousness** shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ."

### ***Only God's righteousness can satisfy God***

Righteousness, therefore, is not a performance. Righteousness is something only God can give His sinful creatures. Righteousness is not what we do, it is what we are, or are not. The very, very best we can produce in righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight (Isa. 64:6).

## ***Millionaires Ignorant of their great wealth***

True accounts are told of millionaires caught digging in garbage pails to find scraps of food to keep them alive. They were totally ignorant of the millions of dollars gifted to them until someone hunted them down and informed them of their vast wealth. These true stories illustrate in an incredible way, how the Apostle Paul, led of the Spirit handled the carnal Corinthian situation. The Apostle informed them of the vast and inexhaustible wealth they were in possession of in Christ their Lord. The millionaires referred to in this story, did not become less wealthy because of their conduct so out of keeping with their wealth. The carnal Corinthians were never told they were less wealthy because of their bad conduct that was so out of keeping with their wealth. Like the millionaires, they needed to be informed by an honest witness who knew of the inexhaustible resources, and incredibly high position that was theirs in Christ.

The righteousness a believer possesses is given by God's grace alone. It is THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD imputed by God the instant the believer receives it. (I Cor. 1:30; 2 Cor. 5:21). The most contemptible notion entertained by the believer is the notion that he is capable of a performance that needs to be added to the righteousness God has freely imparted to him. Think of what a terrible insult it is to the all inclusive, matchless pure, and altogether holy righteousness of God. What a terrible insult also to the work our blessed Saviour accomplished on the cruel cross in order that He clothe us with that righteousness.

All who believed at Corinth (carnal Corinthians, their conduct was atrocious) were emphatically informed, at the outset of the letter, that they were sanctified, justified and saints by God's calling, I Cor.1:1, 2. We are informed in Romans 11:29Amp, "God's gift and His call are irrevocable - He never withdraws them when once they are given, and He does not change His mind about those to whom He gives His grace or to whom He sends His call." It should go without saying that what was true of the Corinthians is true of all believers for all time. Paul's Spirit directed approach to the carnal Corinthians is in exact keeping with how an honest person (who knew of his wealth) would approach a millionaire digging in a garbage pail. He would immediately inform him of his incredible wealth,

With the same positive language the Corinthians were informed that they were called (by God) into the fellowship of His son. These same carnal Christians (I Cor. 3:1, 3) were also informed that "He that is joined to the Lord is **one spirit**" ( 1 Cor. 6: 17). The letter to the Hebrews reveals a similar incredible truth. "He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of **one**" Heb. 2: 11. In the letter to the Colossians, all believers are told "You are dead and your life is hidden with Christ in God" Col. 3:3. In view of the above Scriptures, where does anyone find authority to teach that it is possible to be out of fellowship with our great and wonderful God who Himself called us into that fellowship? (I Cor. 1:9) Where pray tell me, is there a Scripture that declares we can be in and out of fellowship with our great God depending on our faulty walk? Could one be out of fellowship with God who is one spirit with Him? (I Cor. 6: 17) Could one be out of fellowship with one's own life? The word of God positively declares that Christ is our life (Col. 2:4 and Gal. 2:20). If indeed we can be out of fellowship with God and need by confession to be forgiven and restored, why didn't Paul, the chosen apostle of God, teach the carnal Corinthians that supposed truth? Why didn't Paul teach the Galatians the same? Could the Corinthians undo the fact that they were saints by God's calling? (I Cor. 1:2) Could the Corinthians undo the fact that they were called by God into fellowship with His son Jesus Christ? ( 1 Cor. 1: 9). If indeed they could undo the one, surely they could also undo the other. The same word is used for 'calling' in both instances.

**W. R. Newell elaborates on the great eternal truths referenced above. They need to be sounded from the housetops in order that believers who are now in bondage might be set free. *"// God announces the gift of righteousness apart from works, why do you keep mourning over your bad works, your failures? Do you not see that It Is because you still have hopes in these works of yours that you are depressed and discouraged by their failures? If you truly saw and believed that God Is reckoning righteous the UNGODLY who believe on Him, you would fairly hate your struggles to be "better", for you would see that your dreams of good works have not at all commended you to God, and that your bad works do not at all hinder you from believing on Him • that justifieth the UNgodly!***

***Therefore, on seeing your failures, you should say, I am nothing but a failure, but God Is dealing with me on another principle altogether than my works, good or bad, - a principle not Involving my works, but based only on the work of Christ for me. I am anxious. Indeed, to be pleasing to God and to be filled with His Spirit, but I am not at all justified, or accounted righteous, by these things. God, In justifying me, acted wholly and only on Christ's (sacrifice) on my behalf.***

***Therefore, I have this double attitude: first, I know that Christ Is In Heaven before God for me, and that I stand In the value before God of His finished work, that God sees me nowhere else but In this dead, buried and risen Christ, and that His favor is toward me in Christ, and is limitless and eternal* (that is why the need to confess sins is foreign to every letter addressed specifically to believers in the New Testament).**

***Then, second, toward the work of the Holy Spirit in me, my attitude is, a desire to be guided Into the truth, to be obedient thereto, to learn to pray in the Spirit, to walk by the Spirit, and to be filled with a love for the Scriptures and for the saints and for all men.***

***YET NONE OF THESE THINGS JUSTIFIES ME! I had justification from God AS A SINNER, not as a Saint! My saintliness does not increase it, nor praise God, do my failures decrease it.***

I hope you have not missed the glaring contrast between the teaching of the inspired Apostle and the teaching that sadly abounds today. An honest appraisal of the Apostle's Holy Spirit inspired instruction to the Corinthians has to conclude that he was not taught in our modern day schools. He never taught that a believer can be in and out of fellowship. He never mentioned confession of sin. When addressing the carnal Corinthians he rather reinforced the great truth of their eternal unity with our loving and great God.

### ***Error substituted for liberating truth***

When born again Christians sin today, in a similar manner to the Corinthians, they are taught the opposite. They are taught that their fellowship with God is broken and cannot be restored until they confess their sins to God. The Apostle Paul however, could reinforce the great truth of the eternal and unchanging standing and state of the **carnal** Corinthians because it is a work of God in it's entirety. God can righteously clothe all who believe because of the finished work on the cross, the on-going cleansing of the precious blood, and the work of intercession continually

being undertaken on their behalf. God dealt with the Corinthians on the amazing principle revealed to us in Romans 2:4. "It is the goodness of God that leadeth us to repentance." I am sure that the revelation of God's great goodness quickly moved the carnal Corinthians to a positive repentance. "For by grace are ye saved through faith and that **not of yourselves** it is the **gift of God** not of works lest any man should boast". Eph. 2:8, 9.

### ***Fellowship strictly a calling by God***

The Spirit of God, through Paul, never taught the Corinthians or any other group of believers that they could lose fellowship with God, even though they were living a life of carnality. Where do we get the authority to teach that carnal Christians are out of fellowship with God? Certainly not from the word of God. If Christians could get out of fellowship by bad conduct, and had to confess their sins in order to be restored to fellowship, the letters to the Corinthians and to the Galatians would repeatedly give that instruction. But such instruction is **foreign** to the inspired epistles of God's appointed apostle Paul who was given the rounded out truth of the gospel. Read Galatians 1:8, 9 it's consequences are most serious indeed. Here is where **you would be wise to test** what you have been taught (if you are a teacher of the word it is far more serious). Place yourself in the Apostles shoes and confront the carnal Corinthians. Your reaction can quickly be tested by the word of God. Suppose you have been fully informed that the Corinthians are sinning before God, (as was the apostle Paul) how would **you** greet them? If you are teaching truth, your answer will correspond with 1 Cor. 1:2-9. How did you fare on that one? Did you have difficulty telling them they were still in fellowship, despite their carnality (v.9)? Did you inform them that Christ is their only righteousness? (1:30) What will you teach them in view of the envyings, strife, and divisions among them? (3:4). Did you tell them they were out of fellowship with God, and needed to confess their sins, or did you inform them as did the Spirit led Apostle "ye are God's field, ye are God's building"? (3:9). "Therefore let no man glory in men for ALL THINGS ARE YOURS whether", etc. Did you pass the test thus far? You will be wise to continue through the Corinthian letters, to see if your thinking and teaching corresponds to that of the Spirit directed Apostle. If not, you may need to renounce the error you are entertaining.

### ***A guilt complex only God's accepted truth can remove***

There is a very deep guilt complex entrenched within the human conscience as a result of the fall. Adam and Eve demonstrated that guilt complex immediately after the fall when they began to make fig leaves to cover themselves and when they ran for the trees when God came to rescue them. (Gen. 3). Confession of sin to God is really just another type of self effort on the part of the one God has already clothed with His own righteousness. We are reluctant to accept the finality of the work done on the cross on our behalf. Self effort does not die easily. Ongoing confession of sin to God provides at least some satisfactory ground for it's performance.

A notable example of the deeply entrenched notion that we can perform for God was demonstrated by those who came to Jesus and asked Him "what must we do to work the works of God?" His reply should silence forever the false notion that God needs a performance (other than simply believing) on the part of man. His reply will ring down through the ages of eternity. Do not miss the finality of it. ***"This is the work of God that you believe in (rely on trust in) him whom He has sent"*** John 6:28, 29.

## **God's covering alone adequate**

When God sacrificed innocent animals to provide Adam and Eve with a covering, they could know ever after that they were totally acceptable in His presence. The covering He provided for them had nothing whatsoever to do with any effort on their part. Having received that initial covering provided by God, whether they did better or worse in the succeeding years of their lives, God's covering remained. When they subsequently sinned they could stroke God's covering and thank Him that it remained, for they knew that it was provided by the blood shedding and death of an innocent one. It was a constant reminder to them that a covering of **God's** provision alone made them acceptable in His sight. Since His covering was sufficient to make them acceptable after the **terrible sin of the initial fall**, they could rest assured that it was abundantly adequate to maintain that acceptance in the succeeding years of their lives. The magnitude of Adam's sin at the initial fall could not be repeated, the consequences of it are so great and so terrible that no human creature on earth could ever grasp it . Nevertheless, our great loving God went forth to seek Adam and Eve, He forgave them freely and clothed them with a covering that made them fit once again to stand in His Holy presence. What a glorious demonstration of God's loving and infinite grace. The covering that was provided Adam and Eve is but a shadow or type of our Lord Jesus Christ who died in our stead, **took away** our sins and clothed us with the gift of His righteousness which alone fits us to stand faultless before His throne.

**C. H. Macintosh comments on the Genesis account. "Unto Adam, also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them. " We have here, in figure, the great doctrine of divine righteousness set forth. The robe which God provided was an effectual covering, because He provided it; just as the apron was an ineffectual covering, because man had provided it. Moreover, God's coat was founded upon blood-shedding; Adam's apron was not. So also now, God's righteousness is set forth in the cross; man's righteousness is set forth in the works • the sin stained works - of his own hands. When Adam stood clothed in the coat of skin he could not say he was naked, nor had he any occasion to hide himself. The sinner may feel perfectly at rest when, by faith, he knows that God has clothed him; but to feel at rest till then, can only be the result of presumption or ignorance. To know that the dress I wear, and in which I appear before God, is of His own providing, must set my heart at perfect rest. There can be no true, permanent rest in anything else."**

## **Teaching that requires a believer to confess nullifies positive truths**

When we start with the premise that I John 1:9 is instruction for the born again Christian to confess his sins in order to be forgiven by God, we in effect destroy the great positive truths revealed by the Holy Spirit through the Apostle Paul that we are already totally forgiven, such as:- Justification (God "justifies the ungodly"). Sealing (we are "sealed with the Holy Spirit until the day of redemption"). Perfected ("He has perfected for ever them that are sanctified"). Made righteous for ever ("But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption"). Raised to a new life ("raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus"). Forgiven forever "Therefore, men and brethren, through this man is preached unto you the **forgiveness of** sins, and by Him all that believe are **justified from all things**, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Acts 13:38,39. "In whom we have redemption through His blood, the **forgiveness** of sins, according to the riches of His grace." Eph.1:7. "Be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake, hath **forgiven** you."

Eph. 4:32. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the **forgiveness** of sins" Col. 1:13, 14. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He made alive together with Him, **having forgiven you all trespasses**" Col. 2:13. "Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as **Christ forgave you**, so also do ye" Col. 3:13. "I write unto you, little children, because **your sins are forgiven you** for His name's sake" I John 2:12. In view of the above great and precious promises, is it any wonder that the chosen apostles of God never once taught born again Christians to confess their sins?

Since our great God knows the future as well as He knows the past, we can rest assured that **all of** our sins past, present and future (for all our sins were future when our Saviour died) are totally forgiven. What then can we do? Rejoice and abound in thanksgiving (Col. 2:7) giving honor "unto Him that (loveth) us, and washed us from our sins by His own blood" Rev. 1:5."To Him be glory both now and forever Amen".

### ***Confess your faults one to another***

To round out this study on confession, we should be aware that the word of God **does** teach that. "We are to confess our faults one to another, that ye may be healed" James 5:16. The confession here required, is that of Christians **one to another**. This does not mean to go around broadcasting to everyone all the evil deeds we may have committed in former days: but rather if one has wronged a person, he should go in a frank, humble way and confess the faults to the person who has been injured. We witness this kind of confession in times when God is moving in extraordinary ways in His people, we are bathed in His presence, all sham and hypocrisy gives way to honesty and transparency, we humble ourselves like little children, confessing our weaknesses to one another and making right our wrongs whenever possible. This has a great effect on the church, not only on those who hear the confession, but on the confessor who humbles himself in obedience to the scriptures. This type of confession was practiced by the apostle Paul as revealed in the following scriptures. Romans 7:15-25: 2 Cor 12:9,10. Eph. 3:8: Phill. 3:12-14: 1 Tim. 1:15., etc. The same apostle revealed by the Spirit that we are nevertheless **Justified by the blood of Christ, and perfected forever**.

### **Bibliography:**

- page 3 - Encyclopedia Britannica - Gnosticism page 452
- page 3 - McGee J. Vernon - 1 John page 19
- page 6 - Newell W. R. - Romans, Verse by Verse page 223-226
- page 7 - Newell W. R. - Romans, Verse by Verse page 215
- page 8 - Ironside H. A. - Galatians Ephesians page 71-72
- page 10- Newell W. R. - Romans, Verse by Verse page 129
- page 12- Macintosh C. H. - Notes on Genesis pages 54-55 (first edition 1880)