

Grieving the Holy Spirit--No. 2

by Charles Finney

The Holy Spirit is grieved by our refusal to confess and forsake our sins, self-indulgence, excuses, procrastination, and other forms of disobedience.

Scripture: Proverbs 28:13, Matthew 5:23, Ephesians 4:30, James 4:10

Topics: "Confession and Repentance", "Grieving the Holy Spirit"

Description

Charles Finney emphasizes the grave consequences of grieving the Holy Spirit, urging believers to confess and forsake their sins to maintain a close relationship with God. He explains that neglecting confession, making excuses for sin, procrastination, and self-indulgence all contribute to grieving the Spirit, which can lead to spiritual blindness and abandonment by God. Finney warns that the refusal to heed the Spirit's guidance can result in a hardened conscience and ultimately, eternal separation from God. He calls for a deep self-examination and repentance, reminding the congregation of the importance of living in accordance with the Spirit's leading to avoid the dire consequences of sin.

Transcript

Text. Eph. 4:30.--Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

In continuing this subject, as proposed in my last, I remark.

20. Refusing or neglecting to confess your sins grieves the Holy Spirit. God has said, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall find mercy." And Christ has said, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and again, "If thou bring thy gift to the altar and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, first go and be reconciled to thy brother and then come and offer thy gift." There can be no forsaking sin without confessing it. And as there can be no repentance without forsaking and no forsaking without confessing, it follows that without confession there is no salvation. It is enough to confess secret sins or sins committed only against God and known only to him, to God. But sins against our fellow men must be confessed to them. And refusing or neglecting to do so is to cover sin, in which case we are expressly informed that we shall not prosper. Many people seem to be afraid to confess their sin, or to have others confess, lest religion should be injured thereby. But this is so far from being true, that it is doubtful whether a case ever occurred in which a full and frank confession of sin committed against a human being was not more honorable than dishonorable to Jesus Christ. The more aggravated the circumstances and the deeper the shame of him who confesses, the more striking and honorable is the contrast between the spirit of Christ

and the spirit of the world. It is said that a certain minister in New England, in the transaction of business with an infidel lawyer was thrown off his guard and manifested a spirit of anger which led the infidel to boast in his absence that he had always believed that man to be a hypocrite. But they had been separated only a short time before the minister followed the lawyer to his house and made the most humble and heartbroken confession of his sin. This greatly moved and confounded the lawyer insomuch that he exclaimed with great emotion, as soon as the minister had left the house; "Now I know that there is something in the religion of Christ. That spirit is not of this world. It is the very opposite of any thing that has its origin on earth."

I doubt not that many persons who feel as if they ought to confess, are really afraid to confess, for fear they shall injure religion. I have often heard doubts expressed by wise and good men, in regard to the expediency of confessing sins against our fellow men, so as to have the world or even the Church come into possession of the facts. But with the express declarations of the Bible on this subject what right have we to talk about expediency or in expediency, as if we were wiser than God in regard to the results of doing what he requires? Human expediency would no doubt have concealed the crimes of Moses and David, the Patriarchs, and the disciples, and Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ. But God has recorded them to be read and known of all men. And who does not see and has not felt that this very fact of the inspired writers recording their own and each others faults, is a most unequivocal demonstration of their honest humility and Christ-like spirit?

21. Refusing to forsake your sins grieves the Holy Spirit. I have said there is no forsaking sin without confession. I now say there is no forsaking without restitution, where restitution is in your power. Certainly the man who steals your money does not forsake that sin while he keeps it in his pocket, and refuses to return it. There is and can be no forsaking sin until all has been done, that the nature of the case admits to repair whatever injury has been done by it to God or man. It is not enough to resolve to do it no more. And although confession is indispensable, yet confession is not the whole of your duty. You are bound to make restitution as well as confession, and until you do that, God cannot and has no right to forgive you.

Many individuals abound much in confession, while they live on in their abominable course of conduct. Now remember that God has nowhere said, that he who merely confesseth his sins shall find mercy, but he who "confesseth and forsaketh, shall find mercy." And now do some of you stare at me as if I expected, as if God expected that you would really forsake your sins and sin no more? Be sure this is demanded and expected of you, and your confessions, if you will not forsake, are an utter abomination. Hear that Deacon pray. Perhaps this is the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time he has confessed his lukewarmness, unbelief, and worldly-mindedness without the shadow of a reformation. What do you mean? Are you insulting God and trying to palm off your confessions upon your Maker? What shallow hypocritical confessions are those that are not followed by reformation! Suppose your neighbors and those indebted to you should attempt to satisfy you with confessing often to you, instead of walking right up to the discharge of their duty. How long think you, would you be imposed upon or suffer yourself to be insulted by such confessions as these? And how can you help seeing that your confessions under such circumstances are among your greatest sins? Now when you confess again suppose you should tell God the honest truth, and when you have gone through with your confessions say right out, "O God, I pray thee to accept these confessions instead of reformation, for I protest unto thee, I do not seriously intend to reform." You would be shocked at such language as this and so would those that heard you. But who does not know that this is exactly the truth, and nothing but hypocrisy prevents your seeing and saying it right out! O from how many prayer meetings and closets is the Spirit of God grieved utterly away by abundant confessions,

when there is no forsaking sin.

22. Every kind and degree of self-indulgence that is inconsistent with life, and health, and piety, grieves the Holy Spirit. Some make a god of their belly; and it is astonishing and lamentable to see to what extent the flesh is indulged to the ruin of the soul. Even professors of religion suffer themselves to be slaves to appetite and have not religion enough to keep under their bodies to mortify the flesh, or to exercise that dominion over their appetites, lusts, and passions that might be expected even of a heathen philosopher. Some men use tobacco and complain that the habit is so fixed and overpowering that they cannot abstain from its use. Others use alcohol in some of its forms, and others still indulge in the use of tea and coffee and fashionable narcotics, to the permanent injury of their health, and still persuade themselves that these things are essential to their health. And if they feel languid, and debilitated, and experience a temporary diminution of appetite when they have attempted to abstain from them, they imagine that they cannot do without them. Not understanding as is a matter of fact, that these very symptoms of which they complain, are demonstration that they are permanently injuring their health. Why do you have the headache, when you abstain from tea? Simply because your stomach has been greatly debilitated by its use. It is astonishing to see the amount of self-indulgence, and that too which is greatly injurious both to body and soul which is practiced even by professors of religion. Multitudes of families seem to be given up to the gratification of their appetites. To get something that is good to eat takes up a great part of their time, employs a great portion of their thoughts, and seems to be the principal object for which they live.

23. Endeavoring to excuse your sins grieves the Holy Spirit. It is very common to see persons racking their ingenuity to find excuses for their sins. Some are pleading inability to do any better than they do--others plead their peculiar circumstances,--and others still their dependence on the Spirit of God. In short there is scarcely any plea to which a proud heart can resort to evade the force of truth, which is not resorted to by many, to appease their consciences, and get away from breaking down their hearts before the Lord. Now it should be understood and remembered forever that a spirit that apologizes for sin is not only one of the most odious forms of iniquity in the sight of God, but is the most hardening and self-destroying process that can be pursued. And in just as far as you resort to any excuses and apologies for your sins you confirm yourselves in those sins, grieve the Holy Spirit, and render your salvation impossible.

24. Procrastination grieves the Holy Spirit. God requires you now to humble yourself before him. And every attitude you take that defers obedience to a future time, is direct disobedience and most provoking to God. It is truly wonderful to see to what extent this spirit is cherished. Many pretend to be waiting God's time, as if he, notwithstanding all his requirements, was not really ready to have them do their duty. One of the greatest delusions under which men labor, is that at some future time it will be more convenient for them to attend to the claims of God, than at the present. Could you visit hell to day, and inquire among all the groaning millions of its inhabitants, how they came there, the answer in almost every case would be; procrastination ruined my soul. I never intended to die in my sins; but on the contrary always intended, at a future but not far distant time, to repent. Millions will tell you that they had purposed from time to time to attend to the salvation of their souls, but had continued to defer it until death plunged his arrow into their hearts and they went to hell.

25. Giving wrong instructions to those who are under conviction, and to professors of religion who are inquiring after sanctification, grieves the Holy Spirit. Multitudes give such instructions as directly to counteract the influences of the Spirit, and thus grieve him away from themselves, and from those whom they attempt to instruct. Remember that you take upon you a fearful responsibility when you attempt to aid

the Holy Spirit in conducting the sinner through the labyrinth of his own delusions, and bring him to an acquaintance with Christ. If you tell him one thing while the Spirit tells him another, you will probably ruin his soul, if you do not your own also.

26. Taking sides against God always, of course, grieves the Holy Spirit. "Take heed," said Gamaliel, "lest ye be found even to fight against God." I have already said, that through prejudice, many persons get committed on the wrong side of some important question, and thereby injure their own souls, and the cause of God. Many individuals, on account of personal friendship or personal dislike will take sides against the truth, and plunge their souls into impenetrable darkness. Whenever a question comes up that respects the character or conduct of an intimate friend, or relative, on the one hand, or some enemy on the other, be on your guard lest personal feelings influence you, and you be found to take sides against the truth. Beware lest you shut your eyes against the light, and suffer yourself to be deluded and drawn into an attitude in which God will not go with you. He will have no sympathy with your wrong feelings, nor go with you at all in any of your prejudices. His soul is infinitely upright and honest, and the moment you depart from the same state of mind, your fellowship with him ceases, and a dark cloud hangs between you and the mercy seat. Will you not examine yourselves and see whether something of this kind has not shut you out from God's presence?

27. Remaining in willful ignorance upon any important subject grieves the Holy Spirit. It is amazing to see how many there are who refuse to come to the light on some of the most important subjects that have ever agitated the Church or the world. How many thousands of professors of religion will not examine the subject of the abolition of slavery,--the subject of moral reform--of sanctification--of physiology, &c. and they seem to remain not in accidental, but in wilful ignorance in the midst of all the light that is pouring around them. It is wonderful to see to what an extent ignorance prevails upon so many important questions and especially to witness the manifest resistance of mind indulged in by many when these subjects are brought up.

28. All want of candor in the examination of important questions also grieves the Holy Spirit.

29. The indulgence of feelings of contempt for particular persons, or for their sentiments, and all contemptuous expressions, and all attempts to put down by ridicule, persons, or sentiments, or practices to which we feel opposed, grieves the Holy Spirit. By this I do not mean that things which are really ridiculous may not be treated according to their nature; but that serious and important subjects cannot be treated with contempt or ridicule without grieving the Holy Spirit. Some persons are always disposed to treat all subjects of dress, tight lacing, dietetics, and such like very important subjects, with contempt and ridicule. Now I cannot believe that any person who will indulge in this can enjoy the presence of the Holy Spirit. These certainly are feelings with which the Spirit of God can have no sympathy or fellowship whatever.

30. Making direct resistance to the truth whenever it has a personal application to you grieves the Holy Spirit. To general truth, or to particular truth, or to almost any truth that has no direct bearing upon themselves, they will manifest no opposition. But when they perceive that it means them they manifest the spirit of the Pharisees when they exclaimed, "Thus saying thou reprovest us also."

31. Justifying resistance to the truth on the ground that it is personal grieves the Holy Spirit. I have already said in this discourse, that my object in preaching is to be as personal as I can consistently with the general design of preaching to a popular audience, and as far as possible to "give to every one his portion

in due season." And now if any of you feels disposed to complain if I point out the particular way in which you are grieving the Holy Spirit, or because you suppose that I know you to be rebuked for your particular sin, you are entirely unreasonable. For certainly I do mean and ought to mean to preach about the particular sins of the persons whom I address. Preaching can do you no good except as you feel it to be personal and to mean you. I design to speak in love, but with all plainness, and address myself to every man's conscience in the sight of God. I shall not therefore feel myself convicted of having done wrong, if what I say should be complained of as having a personal application to any one or every one of my hearers, I would that I could so address you that every person should feel that I was telling him all that ever he did. I say the more on this subject because the impression seems to be almost universal that preaching should not be personal, and consequently a kind of public sympathy is excited if anyone complains that the preaching had a personal application to him. And many individuals, if they are pierced by an arrow of truth, instead of repenting before God, go about and complain as if they thought they were abused. They consider themselves rather as persecuted than as being seriously called upon to repent. Their business seems to be rather to repel an injury, than to confess and forsake a fault. By this I do not mean to justify harsh and abusive language or any unreasonable attacks upon the character or conduct of individuals or classes of men either public or private. But I do mean to say, that if when your faults are pointed out in love, if the reproof is not more public than your sin, or the nature of the case demands, you are so far from having any right to complain, that you may be sure you grieve the Spirit of God, if you do not accept the reproof with all thankfulness of heart.

32. Neglecting his solemn visitations and strivings, and attending to other things, grieves the Holy Spirit. Christ is represented as standing at the door of the heart and knocking, and in another place as waiting until his "head is wet with the dew," &c. It is often truly shocking to see how little attention is paid to the manifest presence and agency of the Holy Spirit in professedly religious families. When they are aware that he is striving with some member of the family, and has come to their house on the solemn errand of eternal salvation, they behave themselves with as little solemnity and pay as little attention to his awful presence and majesty as if he were only a servant of servants. Sometimes even the very individual with whom he is striving and with whom he has taken up a solemn labor to bring him to repentance, will neglect attending to his directions, and suffer almost anything to divert his attention from the great subject of his own salvation.

33. Suffering your thoughts and time to be swallowed up in business, amusements, or any thing else, until you have settled the question of your unqualified submission to God, grieves the Holy Spirit. No doubt many an individual has grieved the Spirit entirely away by suffering himself to be engaged with his business or amusement, just at the time when his destiny was trembling on a moment's point.

34. Indulging the fear of men rather than of God grieves the Holy Spirit. How many ministers have grieved the Spirit entirely away by fearing men so much as not to declare to them all the counsel of God. And how often is it the case perhaps, that some of you are pressed by the Spirit up to the faithful discharge of your duty in warning and reproofing those around, you dare not do it for fear of their ill will, and in the greatness of your unbelief, instead of assigning to yourself the real reason for your negligence, you persuade yourself that faithfulness on your part would do no good.

35. Standing out against any reform grieves the Holy Spirit. The world must be reformed in almost everything before it will be right. And benevolence is waking up to push reform into many departments that disturb the slumbers, and severely run across the lusts, the self-indulgence, the pride, and wickedness of both the Church and the world. There is therefore the greatest danger that these efforts at reformation will

find you indulging in some form of sin, and sternly rebuke you. Now I beg of you to be on your guard lest you commit yourself against any manner or degree of reform demanded by the state of the world. As the spirit of reform continues to increase, your danger will increase. And hundreds of thousands, it is to be feared, have already made shipwreck of what little spirituality they had, by suffering themselves to be thrown into a state of opposition to the reforms of the day.

These are some of the ways in which the Holy Spirit is grieved. Let these serve to direct your thoughts to a thorough inquiry in regard to whether in these or in other respects you are grieving the Holy Spirit.

III. The consequences of grieving the Holy Spirit.

1. One of the consequences of grieving the Holy Spirit is to be abandoned by him. If you continue to grieve the Holy Spirit you may expect him to abandon you forever. God's Spirit will not always strive with man. He gave up the Israelites because they vexed and grieved his Spirit. He abandoned the old world for the same reason. And many individuals, and families, and nations, in every age of the world have been given up because they grieved the Holy Spirit.

2. Spiritual blindness. This follows as a matter of course from the absence of the Spirit's influences. Men are naturally blind and deaf to all the great truths which should sanctify their souls. Not that you have not naturally eyes and ears with which to see and hear were you well disposed, but "having eyes you see not, and ears, you hear not." And being unwilling to retain God in your knowledge you blind your own eyes, and deafen your own ears, and harden your own hearts. And when once the Spirit of God has given you up, your blindness though voluntary is as certain and eternal as your existence.

3. A conscience seared as with a hot iron is another effect of grieving the Spirit. This will naturally follow from your great spiritual blindness. A silent or seared conscience is a state of mind to be infinitely dreaded. For if its voice be silenced you may go on in security crying peace and safety until sudden destruction cometh upon you. It is an unspeakable blessing to have a quick and tender conscience--one that will enforce the slightest obligation with great power. But you should by all means, as you would the murder of your own soul, avoid that which will silence your conscience and hush its warning voice.

4. If God abandon you, you will become the confirmed and complete slave of that sin, whatever it be, on account of which he has given you up. If it be some vile indulgence in some form of intemperance--the love of money--the love of pleasure--passion under any form--or infidelity or error--in short whatever sin has been persevered in until God has given you up or the Holy Spirit departed from you, that sin has become your master. It will chain you like a slave, and rule over you with a rod of iron. It will impose on you its galling yoke until you shall be filled with your own ways. How many cases of this kind have come under my own observation, where persons have tempted God by indulging in some form of sin, until he has given them up to its reigning power; and then how feeble are all their efforts to overcome it. Their resolutions are as yielding as air. Every breath of temptation carries them away. And finding themselves all weakness and swept away by temptation as with a flood, they throw up the reins, and drive furiously to destruction.

5. If the Holy Spirit abandon you, you may expect God to "send strong delusions upon you that you may believe a lie, that you may be damned because you obey not the truth but have pleasure in unrighteousness." It is said that an "evil spirit from the Lord troubled Saul," and that a "lying spirit" was suffered by the Lord to deceive Ahab to his own destruction. A man who grieves the Holy Spirit--who is hiding away from the light, receives not the truth, but has pleasure in some form of unrighteousness. It is

remarkable to see in how many ways the providences of God will help a man, in this state, forward to some fatal delusion. Infidel books or lecturers--universalist ministers or publications--wicked companions and associates--and often times the prince of hell, is suffered to delude and lead such a soul into impenetrable darkness, and destructive delusion.

6. Self-disgrace may be and often is a consequence of being abandoned by the Holy Spirit. It is remarkable to see when an individual has grieved the Holy Spirit, how blind he is in regard to the light in which his conduct is and will be viewed by those around him. If this be your case you will probably go from step to step, beginning perhaps with indulgence in levity--next you will discover an irritable spirit, and show that you have no command of your temper--then a spirit of worldly-mindedness may develop itself--next a spirit of licentiousness may be plainly discerned by those around you--then some form of intemperance may get the mastery of you--then a spirit of exaggeration and perhaps of lying may take possession of your soul--and thus in the midst of your blindness wander on until you find yourself deeply disgraced in the eyes of men, and forever lost in the eye of God.

7. You may be left to inflict the deepest disgrace on your family and friends and perhaps ruin many over whom you have influence. "A little leaven leaveth the whole lump." Men naturally have great influence over each other, and with great facility do "evil communications corrupt good manners," because wicked example so falls in with the corrupt state of the human heart. It is exceedingly easy to influence individuals to sin, because they are already so inclined to sin. A slight amount of temptation therefore may lead those around you to follow your example, until all together, at last you sink to the depths of hell.

8. If you are a professor of religion, and the Holy Spirit leave you, you will of course greatly wound and dishonor Christ.

9. You may be given up to Satan "to be led captive at his will." I have already adverted to the case of Saul and Ahab as being given up to Satan for their wickedness. Paul speaks of having delivered a certain man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, and it doubtless often occurs when the Spirit of God has left a man, that Satan takes full possession of his heart. Christ seems to teach this in the following language. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and finding none. Then he saith, I will return into my house whence I came out and when he is come, he findeth it empty, swept, and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Now here it is plainly taught by Christ himself that when the Holy Spirit has left a man, his heart is like a room swept and garnished waiting to entertain the devil, and that he may be expected to take possession, to exert over him at least sevenfold more influence than ever before.

10. If the Holy Spirit leave you, you may expect to become very insensible and blind in regard to the state of your own soul. You may be left to think that you are engaged in religion, and mistake the silence of your conscience for the peace of God, and the absence of all concern about your soul for a good hope through grace. It doubtless has often occurred and I think I have myself seen cases, where persons seem to have the most undoubting assurance of mind that they were in a gracious state, when their temper and conduct manifest any thing else than the [S]pirit of Christ. Christ himself represents some as being in such a state of delusion as to carry their false hopes and delusions to the very bar of God. He represents them as saying, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many wonderful works?" But hear his answer. "Then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

11. If the Spirit leave you, you will have no heart to offer prevailing prayer, and if you attempt to pray, you will find that your mouth is shut, and if opened it will only be opened to mock God. And you will find as a matter of fact, that instead of being benefited you are only hardened by engaging in prayer.

12. You will wax worse, and worse if abandoned of God. This may be true of you and still you not observe it, and yet if you will be honest with yourselves, if any of you have grieved the Holy Spirit away, by comparing your recent with your former experience, you may see that you are waxing worse and worse.

13. If the Spirit leave you, your damnation is certain, God has said. "Woe unto them when I depart from them." If left to yourself, remember that you are as certain of being lost as if you had already been a thousand years in hell.

14. If the Spirit abandon you, all things will work together for your destruction. The very means that should make you better will make you worse. The efforts that God makes to save those around you will only confirm you in your sins. In short all God's providences, with all the influences of his grace which surround you will be but so many stumbling blocks to your poor blinded soul. The Sabbath with its cheerful light and solemn stillness, will rise upon you but to harden your heart. "The sound of the Church-going bell,"--the voice of the living preacher--the song of praise--everything in the sanctuary--every thing within and without yourself, will conspire to work out for you an exceeding great and eternal weight of damnation.

REMARKS.

1. To grieve the Holy Spirit is great presumption. You are in danger every moment you persist in it of being given up forever. Remember there is a point, beyond which forbearance in God would not be a virtue. Long suffering as he is, he will bear with you no longer than is consistent with the public good. When the children of Israel had repeatedly grieved the Holy Spirit in the wilderness until they came upon the borders of the promised land, and were commanded to go up and take possession, through unbelief they began to murmur, and went not up. This one instance of rebellion, added to those that preceded it, was too much for divine forbearance. And God is represented as lifting up his hand and taking a solemn oath "that they should not enter into his rest." Now take heed therefore lest you sin once too much. Are you not convinced from what I have already said that you have often grieved the Holy Spirit? Have you not often done it in many of the ways I have mentioned as well as in innumerable ways I have not mentioned? And now dare you do it again? If you do it may be found to be true that you have grieved the Spirit once too much to be forgiven.

2. From this subject you can see the great forbearance of God. How many of you have grieved the Holy Spirit for days, and for months, and perhaps for years! How wonderful that God should spare you. He sent his ministers--his written word--his providences, and to no effect. Finally he came himself by his own Spirit, and has been abused by you in a thousand ways. And even now perhaps you are indulging some sin that grieves him almost beyond endurance. If you persist you do it at the peril of your soul.

3. You see how to account for the blindness of great multitudes of professors of religion. Many of you can see how to account for your own hardness and blindness of mind, both you who are in and you who are out of the Church.

4. You see why so many persons often pray for the influences of the Holy Spirit and yet do not receive his influences. It may be and doubtless often is because they have grieved him entirely away.

5. Again it may be, and doubtless often is true that many pray for the Holy Spirit who are continually grieving him by the indulgence of some lust or by the neglect of some duty, or in some way doing that or indulging that which is so offensive to the Holy Spirit that he will not abide with them.

6. You can see from this subject, that the Holy Spirit when he comes to many is like the "wayfaring man, that tarrieth but for a night." His visits are short and far between. The fact is their lives, and tempers, and habits are such, that for them to dwell with God or he with them is out of the question.

7. Many ministers seem to have grieved him away. Their ministry seems to be entirely barren. They preach, and pray, and perform other duties without unction, and of course without success. And while they continue their round of efforts, it is plain to the spiritual members of their church that they have not the Holy Spirit. Their conversation during the week is not in heaven. Their preaching on the Sabbath has in it any thing but the spirit, power and demonstration of the Gospel.

Sometimes they seem to be sensible that they have grieved the Spirit. Some years since, a young man who had been several years in the ministry came to me for advice, saying that he had grieved the Holy Spirit when studying Theology, since which time he had never enjoyed his presence, consequently his ministry was barren. His soul was shut out from God, and he felt that he must abandon the ministry, as God had rejected him in consequence of his sin. A christian brother, some months since, related to me another fact, worthy of all consideration by ministers of the gospel. An elderly minister made this confession in a revival of religion, into the midst of which he was providentially brought. Said he, "When I was young and for years after I entered the ministry, the Spirit of God was with me. A divine unction attended my preaching. I was instrumental in promoting several revivals of religion. But finally on account of pecuniary considerations I was led to change my field of labor. For this the Spirit departed from me. After this my ministry was barren and my soul was as the barren heath. The heavens became brass over my head, and the earth iron under my feet. Thus many years have passed over me. Still the Spirit of the Lord has not returned."

8. This subject will enable us to account for the present state of so great a number of the professed ministers of Christ. The barrenness of their ministry--the worldliness of their spirit--their bitterness, and jangling, and prejudice, and every thing that so much wounds and disgraces Christ.

9. Let us all take warning lest any of us while we think we are standing, should suddenly and hopelessly fall. Beloved, let us walk softly before the Lord, and look narrowly into all our ways. Let us see wherein we have been and are grieving the Holy Spirit.

And now let us all go down upon our knees, and confess our infinite guilt, in having, in so many ways and for so long a time, grieved the Holy Spirit, "whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption."

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