“A Dog Returns to His Own Vomit”
2 Pet. 2:20-22

Introduction:
A. A fallen Christian is not a pretty picture. (Text)
   1. All know brethren in this condition.
   2. Has turned from only thing that can make him free (John 8:32)
   3. Need to be restored, if possible — some impossible (v. 14; cf. Heb. 6:4-6; 1 Tim. 4:2)
B. A fallen Christian places responsibilities upon two parties: The Faithful and the Fallen.

Discussion:
I. The Responsibilities of The Faithful Christian.
A. To try to bring fallen to repentance. (cf. Heb. 6:6; Rev. 2:5,6,16,21,22; Jas. 5:19,20).
B. To deal with each one according to the circumstances. (cf. Jude 21,23).
   1. Gently with some.
      a. Those who are fainthearted and/or weak. (1 Thess. 5:14).
      b. Those who are “overtaken in a fault”¹ (Gal. 6:1-5).
         1) Not premeditated, persistent sinner.
         2) Needs gentle support of spiritual to overcome the sin and its effect upon him.
   2. Sharply with some. (2 Cor. 13:10).
      a. With sharp words of warning for unruly. (1 Thess. 5:14; Tit. 1:13).
      b. Followed by sharp acts of discipline for impenitent. (1 Cor. 5:5-13).
         1) Should give time for fallen to heed words. (Rev. 2:21; cf. Warn Unruly in 1 Thess. 5:14 then Withdraw from Unruly in 2 Thess. 3:6ff).
         2) Should admonish factious then reject. (Tit. 3:10; Rom. 16:17)
   4. Publicly with some. (Gal. 2:14; 1 Tim. 5:20).
C. To forgive all who repent. (Luke 17:3; 2 Cor. 2:7).

II. The Responsibilities of the Fallen Christian.
A. He must repent. (Acts 8:22-23; 2 Cor. 7:9)
   1. It is not enough just to be sorry.
   2. It is not enough just to just quit practicing the sin.
B. He must confess sin and reveal his repentance. (1 John 1:9; James 5:16; Lk. 17:4).
   1. To “confess” is not to reveal but literally to speak the same thing - plead guilty as charged.
   2. To confess to the offended parties.
      a. It may be just God. (1 John 1:9,10).
      b. It may be another person or two. (Luke 17:4)
      c. It may be many people - the church, public knowledge.
   3. To not confess leaves problem - offend party cannot know if repented.
      c. Passing of time nor reformation is no substitute for confession.
C. He must ask God's forgiveness. (Acts 8:22).
D. He may ask others to pray for him also. (Acts 8:24; Jas. 5:16)

Conclusion:
A. Indeed, the picture of one who goes on in sin is not pretty. (Heb. 10:29ff).
B. How beautiful it is when one repents, confesses and asks forgiveness.

¹ Overtake: To take one before he can flee .i.e., surprise. (See Thayer).