

Must We Sin?

A Conversation Between Brother Light and Brother Foggy

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First Conversation

Bro. Light: Good morning, Brother Foggy. I am happy to see you. Come in. I have been wishing to have a talk with you about this great salvation I have found in Jesus.

Bro. Foggy: I am a little in a hurry, Brother Light. Besides, I do not know whether it is safe to have a talk with you or not, since you folks claim to be so good.

Bro. L: Why, Bro. Foggy? I do not see why you should be afraid of us. I am sure the Lord has made us harmless as doves. But I remember that is about the way I used to feel. Take a chair.

Bro. F: Well, to tell the truth, I should like to have a talk with you. They tell me that you sanctified folks claim to be free from sin, and I can't believe that, for the apostle Paul confessed that he had sin dwelling in him, and I don't think we can get better than he was.

Bro. L: Well, Bro. Foggy, I admit that in the seventh chapter of Romans the apostle wrote as if he had sin dwelling in him, but let us get the Book and read carefully and see what he meant. That we may understand him better, let us begin with the sixth chapter. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid." Here you see the question is clearly stated and as clearly answered. "God forbid that we should continue in sin" surely implies that we can and must cease sinning. To make the matter still stronger, the apostle asks another question: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" We can no more commit sin and remain saved than a man can carry on business here when he lies dead in the cemetery. Let us read also verses 6, 7, 8: "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if

we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.” Here he teaches that our “old man,” which is the “body of sin,” is crucified, destroyed, and that he who is thus dead to sin is freed from sin and then adds, “If we be dead with Christ,” etc. So you see that we living men are dead to and freed from sin. In verses 10 and 11 he admonishes the Roman brethren, and us as well, to be dead to sin and alive to God, as really as Christ is Himself. Note verses 15 and 18: “What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.” “Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.” Also verse 22: “But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.” These Scriptures declare us free from sin, dead to sin. And in other verses in this chapter the apostle Paul says that we should not “live any longer therein” and that “henceforth we should not serve sin.” In verse 12 he admonishes, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body,” and in verse 14 he says, “For sin shall not have dominion over you.” All these surely teach the opposite of the idea that we have to sin all our lifetime.

Bro. F: It would appear so, but still are we not forced to the opposite conclusion by his words in chapter 7, verses 14 to 25? Please read them. Surely, this does not look as if he claimed to be free from sin, does it?

Bro. L: If we were to take these verses apart from their connection and all the rest of the apostle’s teaching, it would not seem so, but if we take the whole chapter, we can plainly see that Paul did not give that as his experience at the time of writing. Paul was not giving this chapter as his experience as a Christian, but was relating his experience while he was under the law, showing the nature of the law service, as compared with the gospel service. He begins the chapter with, “Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law) ...?” In verses 1-12 he speaks of the law—its nature, its object, its effect—and of the fact that he was married, or bound to it until Christ came, when he became dead to it and was married to Christ. And he says in Gal. 3:24 that the law was a schoolmaster to bring him to Christ. In verses 14-23 he illustrates

his experience while under the law. We know that the apostle did not give that as his experience then, for it would positively conflict with the facts of his life. It is not true at all that the good he wished to do he did not, and that the evil he would not, that he did. Did he not go about constantly doing good? And was not his life pure, holy, and free from evil doings? No, he did not travel about wishing to do good, but instead disgracing his profession and dishonoring the name of Christ by sinful practices. Had this been the case, he would never have said, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ" (I Cor. 11:1), nor, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Phil. 3:17). But his holy life is on record. He himself says, "For to me to live is Christ" (Phil. 1:21). His life was not spotted with the flesh but was in moral quality the life of Christ. Note verse 20: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." That this was not the apostle's experience at the time of writing is positively proven by his words in the preceding chapter. Surely, no consistent preacher, much less an inspired apostle, would advocate freedom from sin, and urge others to attain to this freedom, and yet confess sin in himself. But hear him: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Gal. 2:19,20). No pharisaical big I nor old man of sin lived in him, but all such was crucified and destroyed out of him, and only Christ lived there, so he testifies. The two laws described as being in the same person denote two opposite moral forces. The one is the principle of righteousness; the other, the "law of sin." A similar dual state is mentioned in Galatians: "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other" (Gal. 5:17). This "flesh," or "body of sin," the apostle says, "they that are Christ's [that is, wholly consecrated to him] have crucified . . . with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). The "body of this death" (verse 24), which is the cause of all the trouble, is the same as the "body of sin" in Rom. 6:6, which he says is crucified and destroyed. Consequently, the Roman converts were

“dead to sin” as a fact of salvation, and so he admonished them to “reckon themselves dead indeed to sin” and not to allow sin to reign in their mortal bodies. He would surely not have admonished them to be free from sin, and the very body of sin, if he himself had sin dwelling in him. When he cried out, “Who shall deliver me from this body of death?” he immediately responds, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.” There is, then, no excuse for our having the body of sin in us, since there is deliverance for us, even could it be proved that Paul was not free from it. Passing from the seventh chapter into the eighth, we see that Paul ceases to speak of his law experience and tells of his liberty through Jesus Christ. He takes the witness stand again and tells his own present experience. In verses 1 and 2 he says, “There is therefore NOW no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” To be “free from the law of sin and death” is to be free from that “other law” of indwelling sin described in the preceding chapter. This settles the question. The apostle declares himself free from the condition he pictured to the Roman church. So it is clear that in the seventh chapter Paul was giving the experience he had while endeavoring to serve the law. He loved the law and was zealous for it, but he did not have the power or grace to measure to its demands. He speaks of the law of his mind, which was his inward desire to do good, and says that with his mind he loved the law and consented to it, but that when he would do good, evil was present with him, and that the law of sin in his members overcame him, and he fell into sin. In this chapter the apostle shows that the law was inferior to the gospel—that while the law was good it only condemned sin and did not have the power to deliver from sin. But in the third verse of the next chapter we read, “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh,” and in Heb. 7:19, “The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did.” Whatever reference Paul had to himself in this description evidently referred to the past as in 1 Tim. 1:15—“This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all

acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.” Here Paul speaks of himself as the chief of sinners, which can be understood only as referring to what he had been, and yet he speaks in the form of the present, just as he does in Romans 7.

Bro. F: Well, Bro. Light, I must confess you have brought more Scripture to bear on the subject than I had thought of, and I’m not so sure but that you have the correct view of the matter. But doesn’t the apostle Paul say somewhere that there is “none good,” “none righteous”?

Bro. L: Yes, in the third chapter of Romans, from the ninth to the eighteenth verses, he gives us even a darker picture than the one we have just viewed. I will read it to you. “What then? are we better than they? No, in no wise: for we have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God: they are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips: whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness: their feet are swift to shed blood: destruction and misery are in their ways: and the way of peace have they not known: there is no fear of God before their eyes.”

Bro. F: Well! Well! Bro. Light, that’s pretty bad, indeed. How can you explain these statements, if a person can be free from sin as you say?

Bro. L: That’s easy enough to do. You see, in verse 10 he says, “As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.” So this is written somewhere, and Paul simply quotes it from the Old Testament. To understand just who this is affirmed of, let us turn to the place from which he quotes. Here it is. I will read it. “Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies; make thy way straight before my face. For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; their inward part is very wickedness; their throat is an

open sepulchre; they flatter with their tongue. Destroy thou them, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; cast them out in the multitude of their transgressions; for they have rebelled against thee. But let all those that put their trust in thee rejoice: let them ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them: let them also that love thy name be joyful in thee. For thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield” (Ps. 5:8-12). I will read also Ps. 14:1a, “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works, there is none that doeth good. The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are all together become filthy: there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Have all the workers of iniquity no knowledge? who eat up my people as they eat bread, and call not upon the Lord?” In these Psalms we find the very things that the apostle quotes in Romans 3, and we find they apply only to the wicked, to those who do not seek God, but foolishly say in their hearts, “There is no God.” But in both places we find another class spoken of—a class who “put their trust in God,” “love his name,” and who are termed “the righteous” and “my people.” So you see clearly that when it is said, “There is none good, no, not one,” “none righteous,” “none that seek after God,” etc., only the general mass of unregenerated sinners are those of which is spoken. But the righteous are also brought to view as another class of characters.

Bro. F: Indeed, Bro. Light, I never understood that Scripture before. I have learned one good thing, and that is, when a quotation is made in the New Testament from the Old, we should go back to the original to get a good understanding of the matter. What shall we do with Jesus’ words, “There is none good but one, and that is God”? Does not that mean that all commit sin and that none are holy and pure in this life?

Bro. L: That Scripture also will be plain when we read the connection. I will turn to the place and read it. Here it is: “And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him,

Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother, and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions” (Matt. 19:16-22). You see, the young man was a legalist, a person who thought he could make himself good by his own works; hence he did not ask Christ to save his soul, but wanted to know what good things he could do himself that he might have eternal life. Christ, wishing to convince him that he was on the wrong road to get salvation, told him there is none good, that is, within and of himself, but God. Whatever goodness God’s creatures possess is derived from Him, for He is the source of all goodness. It is true there is none good but one, and that is God. Therefore if the righteous were to lose God out of their hearts, there would be nothing good left in them. But “as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people” (II Cor. 6:16). Yes, “if we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit” (I John 4:12,13). The apostle Paul says in Eph. 3:17 and 19, “That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” and “That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.” There is none good but God, but we, being filled with all the fullness of God, must be good also, yes, “full of goodness” as we read in Rom. 15:14. And David called God his goodness. After Christ had told the young man to keep the commandments, and the young man had stated that he had done so from his youth, he added, “What lack I yet?” Jesus answered, “If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me.” So you see, Bro. Foggy, Christ told the young man how he

could become more than a good man, even a perfect man. When He spoke about people's being good through their own independent works, He said, "There is none good but God," but when He spoke of the result of men's denying themselves and following Him, He taught that they could by His grace become even perfect, and we all know that perfection is a higher standard than goodness. Moreover, the New Testament frequently acknowledges man as good. Of Joseph it is said, "He was a good man, and a just" (Luke 23:50). Of Barnabas it is recorded that "he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith" (Acts 11:24). Jesus says in Luke 6:45: "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh." And Paul, writing to Titus, says that a bishop should be "a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men" (Tit.1:8). These texts are sufficient to show that both Christ and His apostles taught that men in this life are good, yes, "good men." Not, however, by their own graceless works, but by receiving a good treasure in their hearts, even God in them through "faith and the Holy Ghost."

Bro. F: I see clearly that if we were to teach that no one can be made a good man by the grace of God, it would conflict even with what Christ told the young man—that he could be perfect—and also with many other New Testament passages. So I judge that your explanation on the subject is correct. And yet does there not seem to be a contradiction, since Christ said to this young man, "There is none good but one, that is, God," while elsewhere the Word confesses that men are good?

Bro. L: When all the facts are taken into consideration, it is plain enough. In the first instance the Saviour simply casts self-righteousness into the dust, while in the other the grace of God, which takes out of our hearts the evil treasure and puts in the good, is confessed and extolled.

Bro. F: Well, Bro. Light, that all looks plain to me now, and I am glad the Scriptures so beautifully harmonize when we understand

them. But it seems to me I have read somewhere that God only is holy. Do you know what that means?

Bro. L: That is found in Rev. 15:4, which reads, “Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy.” This may be understood just as the last text. God only is holy in an independent sense. We are “partakers of his holiness” (Heb. 12:10), which makes us holy also. Hence He says to us, “Be ye holy; for I am holy” (I Pet. 1:16).

Bro. F: It must mean something like that, or else it would conflict with the many passages in the Old and New Testaments which teach that men should be and were holy in this life. But now I wonder how you can get over this text: “If any man says he lives without sin, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him.”

Bro. L: Excuse me if I must smile a little at that quotation. But can you tell me where to find that text?

Bro. F: Well, I can’t recollect just now where to turn to it.

Bro. L: Are you sure it is in the Bible at all?

Bro. F: Oh, yes, I know it is there. I have surely read it in my Bible more than once. In fact, I have been familiar with those words ever since I was a boy. Why, no longer ago than last Sunday I heard our preacher quote them in his sermon, and you know he is a fine scholar. Then I recollect hearing our presiding elder repeat those words, I would be safe in saying, more than a hundred times. So I know it’s all right.

Bro. L: Well, Bro. Foggy, I too, have often heard such words quoted as Scripture, and I really thought they were in the Bible. But I have found out I was badly mistaken.

Bro. F: What! Bro. Light, you don’t mean to say that they are not in the Bible at all?

Bro. L: Yes, that is just what I mean, Bro. Foggy.

Bro. F: Well, I haven't time to hunt it up now, but I will find it and show it to you. I shall have to go home now, and I'll go over and see our preacher. He has a large library and a complete concordance, and I know we can soon find it.

Bro. L: All right, Bro. Foggy. But let me write down the words before you go. I believe these are the words as you quoted them: "If any man says he lives without sin, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Bro. F: Yes, I believe that is just the way it reads. But hold on, let me think a little. It seems to me I have also heard it quoted this way: "Whosoever saith he liveth and sinneth not, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."

Bro. L: Well, I will write it down both ways, and I tell you, you will find neither in all the Bible. But you hunt until you are satisfied, and I will come over and see you in a few days.

Bro. F: All right, I will. Goodbye.

Bro. L: God bless you, Bro. Foggy. Do not forget to pray to God for wisdom from above. Good day.

Second Conversation

Bro. L: Good morning, Bro. Foggy. How do you do today?

Bro. F: I am well, as usual. How are you?

Bro. L: Thank the Lord, I can say I am well and saved. I came over to see what success you had in finding that Scripture.

Bro. F: Well, I must confess I could not find just what I looked for. But this text is very much like it: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (I John 1:8).

Bro. L: There is quite a difference between this and your supposed scripture. Notice that John does not say, "If any man says he sinneth not, he is a liar," but, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves," etc. One special object of this Epistle is thus announced: "That ye also may have fellowship with us; and truly

our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son” (chap. 1:3). “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full” (verse 4). “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not” (chap. 2:1). We see the apostle purposed to teach them the glorious fullness of joy he enjoyed, so that they also would have fellowship with him. And one object of this higher grace was that they “might know how to possess their vessel in sanctification and honor,” and “sin not.” Surely the “beloved apostle” would not write a letter for the purpose of advancing young disciples to a plane where they would not sin, and in the same letter tell them no one ever attains to such a plane. He says, “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin” (I John 1:7). He also says, in verse 9, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” The meaning is plain. The seventh and ninth verses positively teach that the blood of Jesus Christ “cleanseth us from all sin,” and from “all unrighteousness,” if we but confess our need of it, while the intervening verse simply guards us from saying that we “have no sin” prior to this all-cleansing work of grace. The tenth verse refutes another false position—that some have never sinned. Such an assumption makes God a liar, because both facts and His Word declare “all have sinned.”

Bro. F: Indeed! I am compelled to think that John did not mean to say in that eighth verse that nobody can be free from sin, when in the verses just before and after he says that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin and from all unrighteousness.

Bro. L: You are right in that conclusion. Besides, let us read farther on in the same Epistle. In the second chapter and sixth verse he says, “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.” In the second and the third verses of the third chapter he says: “Behold, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” Surely, the inspired apostle is very far from teaching

that we must all be sinners in this life after conversion, when he commands us to walk even as Christ did and declares that we shall be like Him when He comes, even “pure as he is.” But he does not stop here. “And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil” (verses 5-10). This does not sound much like the false saying, “If any man says he lives without sin, he is a liar,” does it Bro. Foggy?

Bro. F: Well, I must say it makes out quite a different case.

Bro. L: It is truly strong language, but it is the very Word of God. The man of God is righteous, even as He is righteous who was manifested to take away our sins, and in Him is no sin at all. It tells us that “whosoever abideth in Christ sinneth not”, and that “whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.” This is an awful fact when we remember that it is written that Christ will come in flaming fire, taking vengeance on all that know Him not. That surely includes all who practice sin. And in this very thing, we are told, “the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil”—that is, in the fact that the first class do not sin and the latter do. And the apostle is very sure he is not mistaken in this matter, for in chapter 5, verse 18, he emphatically reaffirms it. “We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not.” Also, in 4:17 he says, “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.” So unless we are like Christ in love, purity, and sinlessness, we shall not have boldness to stand in the day of judgment.

Bro. F: I do say it seems awful. I never saw it in that light before. But while I was hunting the Bible through, I found some other

texts that seem to teach that no one can live without sin in this world.

Bro. L: Well, let us consider them.

Bro. F: This is one: “Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?” (Prov. 20:9).

Bro. L: Certainly no person can say he has made his own heart clean, for it takes the blood of Christ to cleanse our hearts. Only Christ can save from sin.

Bro. F: Another is I Kings 8:46, which reads, “For there is no man that sinneth not.” And here is one more, one that is very strong: “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not” (Ecc. 7:20). What can you say to these, I should like to know?

Bro. L: These certainly make a sweeping assertion, but they must be understood as simply teaching the universal fall and depravity of the human family, and the fact that all men have committed more or less sin in their lifetime. They only show us where the fall has left the whole race of mankind, but make no allusion to the grace of God that lifts and preserves the humble, trusting soul above this low plane. Any other interpretation would ignore and conflict with the rest of the Bible. But, to give you all the advantages these texts can afford, let us suppose that in Solomon’s time there was no man but that sinned, “not a just person on earth that did good and sinned not.” We could allow all that and still sustain our position of freedom from all sin very easily.

Bro. F: How could you do that?

Bro. L: Why, brother, we have but to open the Bible and read what God has done for the human family since Solomon’s day. We live in a far more favored dispensation and age of the world than he did. Since his time the angels came down from heaven and proclaimed “on earth peace, good will toward men,” and announced “good tidings of great joy” “to all people,” because a Saviour, Christ the Lord, was born into the world. Christ says, “I

am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness” (John 12:46). “I am the light of the world; he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). He “is the true light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Can we not avoid running into sloughs and pits of sin now since light has come, far better than when “darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the people”?

Bro. F: It would seem so.

Bro. L: We certainly can. All through the Old Testament times the present dispensation was looked forward to as a period of grace, mercy, and freedom, of holiness, and victory over sin. And surely we should not now fall short of holy men who walked with God in the dim ages of the past. The Jewish types but faintly pointed forward to the great sacrifice for sin on the cross. But now “Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,” and “how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Heb. 9:14). “The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did” (Heb. 7:19). Let us read a few verses on this point from Hebrews. “By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament” (7:22). “But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises” (8:6). “Now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself (9:26). “And these all [ancient holy men], having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect” (11:39, 40). All these Scriptures show that God has provided infinitely better things for us than Solomon or any one else in his day ever knew; hence we can live holier lives than they. The great kindness and love of God toward man hath appeared in these last days, yea, the “grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men” (Titus 2:11). The great salvation we now enjoy, the prophets never received, could not comprehend, and

even the “angels desire to look into” (I Pet. 1:8-12). Jesus declares that John the Baptist was greater than the prophets, that is, in point of privilege, or advancement in light. And yet “he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he”, that is, he has a more perfect experience of salvation (Luke 7:28). All these and many other Scriptures teach us that we are living in the great day of heaven’s highest blessings, the glorious time of redemption from all sin and the revelation of God’s love and power to constantly keep us pure and holy and triumphant over all sin and the power of Satan. Hence we have no excuse for sin at all. Thus saith the Lord: “If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin” (John 15:22). The margin reads, “no excuse.” A salvation that is perfect in all respects is offered us now. Therefore, we cannot weave a cloak of the dark sayings of the Old Testament and cover ourselves with it. Jesus is “able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him,” and we are “kept by the power of God through faith” free from all sin. So there is no cloak for sin now, no excuse for any man to commit the least sin. Even “where sin abounded, grace did much more abound” (Rom. 5:20). Jesus said to the man that was healed at the pool, “Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (John 5:14). To the woman He forgave He said, “Go, and sin no more” (John 8:11). Hear this call from heaven: “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame” (I Cor. 15:34). Jesus says that just persons need no repentance (Luke 15:7). If you ask why, the Psalmist will tell you. He says, “They also do no iniquity: they walk in his ways” (Ps.119:3). So you see, Bro. Foggy, Jesus did not come into the world to gather a church of sinners, but to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, without spot and blameless, and He is able thus to save and keep us holy in His sight, right in this sinful world.

Bro. F: Yes, Bro. Light, I confess I see it as I never have seen it before. I must confess that my poor weary soul is hungering after righteousness. But it seems impossible to me that man can be perfectly holy in this wicked world. Do you really think we can live

perfectly free from sin and enjoy constant peace in spite of all our surroundings?

Bro. L: If we were to take our eyes off Christ and look at the works of the devil, we should certainly stumble. But, thank God, full salvation enables us to “look unto Jesus, who is the author and finisher of our faith.” Being “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time,” as the apostle says in I Pet. 1:5, we do not need to commit sin. Surely, the power of the almighty God is sufficient to keep us free from sin, “and that wicked one toucheth us not.” Backed up by this fact: “The foundation of God standeth sure” (II Tim. 2:19), and with this assurance: “Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24), we can stand firm in spite of all devils, even stand perfect and complete in all the will of God, as the Word commands us. As the prophets foretold, God now dwells in us and walks in us, and He enables us to keep His temple undefiled. Read II Cor. 6:16 and look up the references. Certainly, we can be kept in perfect peace at all times and under all circumstances, because God says, “I will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me, because he trusteth in me.” And it is just natural with a sanctified heart to have our mind stayed on God. “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:7). You see, we have the very peace of God ruling and keeping our hearts.

Bro. F: Does nothing stir up anger in your heart?

Bro. L: God bless you, dear brother! After the heart is perfectly cleansed in the blood of Christ, there is no sinful element left there to stir up. Love and praise to God, and love to friend and foe, naturally flow from a pure heart and no elements contrary to these have any existence there.

Bro. F: Well! Well! That must be a very happy state. But, after all, do you not have evil thoughts?

Bro. L: We think of evil things, for wickedness presents itself to our mind wherever we look, or in whatever paper or book we may read. But there is a great difference between thinking of that which is evil and indulging in evil thoughts. A pure heart abhors all evil that is forced upon the attention. But evil thoughts proceed from evil that is in the heart, and they follow the leadings of some unholy desire or lust. No, thank God! We have no evil thoughts, but we have “the mind of Christ” (I Cor. 2:16), which is a “pure mind,” “casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Cor. 10:5). You see, the Lord captures all our will, all our heart; and even every thought is brought into obedience to His own sweet will. Oh, praise His name!

Bro. F: Well, that is wonderful indeed. I never noticed that text before in my life. But does not the Bible say that the devil is mighty? I cannot see how we poor weak creatures can always withstand his great power.

Bro. L: Why, it is not we that do it but Christ in us. “He that is in us is greater than he that is in the world.” He bruises Satan under our feet and always causes us to triumph. We are even “more than conquerors through him that loved us.” Four great facts are an all-sufficient guarantee against all sin and the power of the devil. First, the holiness of God, which sets Him against all sin. Second, the omnipotence of God, which reigns supreme over all the power of sin and Satan. Third, the actual indwelling of Christ, which gives the enemy of our soul no chance to attack us when unprepared. Fourth, the perfect sacrifice of Christ, and the power of His blood to cleanse and keep us constantly free from all sin.

Bro. F: Well, Bro. Light, since my mind is carried up to the omnipotence of God our Savior, I must confess that I am convinced not only that the Bible teaches perfect holiness, but also that through God it must be practicable. Thank God! I have received much light, and by the grace of God I will seek this perfect salvation from all sin and all unrighteousness.

Bro. L: Amen! God help you, brother. It is the only perfectly satisfactory life, and it is for you. Goodbye, brother.

Bro. F: Goodbye, Bro. Light. Call again.