

light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Verses 8, 9 and 10 throw more light on the two pictures, and show what is necessary to have darkness dispelled and sin put away, and live in fellowship with God and fellow-Christians. Verse 8, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." Verse 9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Verse 10, "If we say we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and the truth is not in us."

Verse 1 of chapter 2 makes it abundantly plain that if fellowship and fullness of joy were to be enjoyed, that sin could not and must not be indulged in. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not." Unless John was a most illogical writer, verse 8 of the first chapter must mean something more in harmony with stray statements of an apparently opposite character, than is commonly understood by those who say that it is an impossibility for a man (even though he be born of the Spirit of God, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost) to live without sinning in thought, word and deed daily, and that there are no seasons in which a Christian is so free from sinning that he can dispense with confession and asking pardon.

We do not touch sin as an entity, or what is called the inevitable sin of our nature, which is covered by the atonement and pardoned when we accept Christ as our atoning Saviour and Redeemer, and need never again disturb fellowship with the God of all grace. We refer only to sin or sinning of a positive character, which comes within the range of our consciousness, which alone calls for confession, as it only keeps us out of harmony with God and one another. We believe also that it is sin in this form that those who oppose "this way" claim that it is impossible to successfully resist, and try to read into John's letter a license to continue in actual sin that grace may abound, making John an apologist for their wickedness of heart and life.

In the light of the context, we notice

that John was writing an exhortation to those who did enjoy true fellowship and fullness of joy, and that, therefore, the others were not without sin, as where no sin is there is no lack of oneness with God and enjoyment in the soul of man. Unbelief is sin, and if you don't believe you can by the indwelling Holy Ghost abide in Christ and sin not, you dishonor the God of all grace, and sin lies at your door—true fellowship is still unknown to you. John, probably by an intuition born of the Spirit, or by communication, knew the lack of the brethren; he knew that amongst them there were gnostics, i.e., those who claimed that they had no sin, yet whose lack was evident to a spirit-taught man like John.

In our own hearts we know if there is conscious lack, or if in others there is a visible lack, that sin is the cause.

It was sin in Adam's case, and it is always an evidence of sin in us when out of true fellowship; and there is no room for doubting that true fellowship with God and one another was wanting in the case of those here written to, if the letter is read carefully.

By the eighth verse, John shows that any (lacking in brotherly love, fullness of joy, and fellowship with God,) who "say that they have no sin, deceive themselves, and the truth is not in them." They are deceiving themselves, for were it true that they were without sin, or that they had not sinned, they would be enjoying the fellowship which is with the Father and with the Son, and have fellowship one with the other. They would walk even as Christ walked, always doing the will of the Father, enjoying His smile and approval.

Verse 9 gives advice to all out of true fellowship with God and one another, to have the remedy applied for sin and uncleanness. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Make a clean breast of it, confess your sins, be forgiven and cleansed. Don't stop short with pardon only; the latter part of the promise is as obtainable as the first. The blood of Jesus Christ washes whiter than snow. No sin can be left in what is thus