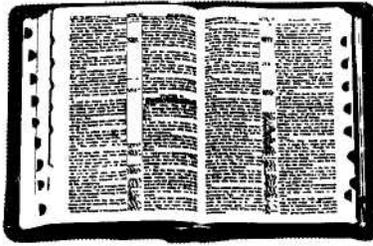


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" — John 5:39.



"These were more noble than those in Thessalonica in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" — Acts 17:11

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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THINK ON THESE THINGS

H. E. Phillips

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HOW DOES THE GRACE OF GOD SAVE?

"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12).

God's grace has been one of the most misunderstood and misapplied words in the Bible. If one did not have a doctrine to protect and support, the popular conclusions that are drawn from this world would never appear. Neither the definition of the word "grace" nor the context where it appears suggests that God saves without any effort on man's part. But if one condition is admitted as essential to salvation, by all logic and scripture, all conditions of salvation that are taught in the word of God are essential to be saved by grace.

Grace means unearned favor, unmerited kindness, unearned blessings. God gives grace, but man must receive it. Grace is not an irresistible force that man cannot reject or receive at his own will. Otherwise, man could not be responsible for not receiving the grace of God, and if all men did not receive God's grace, He would certainly be a respecter of persons. But the Bible says He is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 2:17). If man is accountable to God for receiving or rejecting His grace, man must do something to receive it.

Many of the most prominent denominations of our day teach that the grace of God is a gift that comes to man without his consent and without any effort on his part. Conversely, any sort of works by man would be a

rejection of God's grace. The very idea that **works** and grace can be in the same system of salvation is obnoxious to many theologians. It is totally incompatible with their concept of God's scheme of redemption. However, the word of God clearly teaches that the very **nature** of sin, grace, the authority of Christ, repentance and remission of sins makes it impossible for **grace** to exist apart from law and **obedience**. He who denies the necessity of obedience to divine law to receive the grace of God is ignorant of both law and grace.

It is said that works nullify the grace of God. The idea comes in part from Romans 4:4: "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt." The context of Romans 4 shows that the "works" are works of merit by which one earns salvation, and whereby he might boast. Merit works are not possible where grace reigns, but works in "receiving the grace of God" are absolutely essential for grace to work in the heart and life of anyone.

God's grace provides that which man cannot supply for himself in view of his salvation from sin. Let the mind of this scribe be understood on this point. Man is lost because he has sinned. Sin carries the penalty of death (James 1:14, 15), and that sentence of God has passed upon all men because all have sinned (Romans 5:12). How can one extricate himself from this sentence of death? Only pardon from God will make him free from sin and release him from death and separation from God.

If man, who is guilty of sin, must die as the penalty for his sins, he would die away from God and be lost for all of eternity. He can do no works that will earn him the forgiveness of one single sin. That is the reason salvation is "not of works, lest any man should boast." **Forgiveness is an act of mercy**, which results from God's great love. But He is **just** as well as merciful. His word must be kept. When He pronounced death as the penalty for sin, it must stand because God does not lie and His word is always sure. Since man is to die because of his sin, and he cannot develop a system by which he can work his way out of sin; and if God's justice must be kept, how will man be saved from his sins? Justice demands that he die for any sin he has committed. Only mercy and grace can provide a way for man to change

and be forgiven of his sins, and thereby be justified before God.

God's grace must provide the way to be saved from sins. It will cost a life, because the penalty for sin is death. Only one who has lived a perfect life without sin could be such a sacrifice, who would die and not be apart from God in his death. Isaiah 53 tells of the death of Christ and its purpose. God provided what man could not provide to make possible his forgiveness of sins: a **perfect sacrifice**. This would satisfy His justice and also his mercy toward sinful man.

This grace is explained in these words of the Holy Spirit: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the **grace of God** should taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9). The blood shed by Christ is called the **grace of God** for every man. The blood of Christ is the only sacrifice that could take away sins, and man himself could not provide it (Heb. 9:22; 10:4). For as much as the grace of God provided the death of Christ for every man, why is it that every man is not saved? There would be no sensible answer if there were no conditions to receiving the grace of God.

The grace of God also provides the **revelation** of His sacrifice for *sins*, and the conditions upon which it may be appropriated to man. This grace of God provides His will which man alone could not obtain. "And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 20:32). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12). The grace of God teaches!

God's grace provides what man could not provide: a perfect sacrifice and the revelation of His will by which this sacrifice may be applied to man in order to receive remission of sins. It does not mean that grace is without any kind of effort on man's part. Man must **receive** God's grace, whatever that implies. Man is not to receive the grace of God in vain (2 Cor. 6:1). This indicates some effort on man's part to "receive" the grace of God. There are at least three things implied in receiving the grace of God:

1. Man is called by God's grace. The apostle Paul said: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel" (Gal. 1:6). Verse 15: "But it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace." What is the calling? Whatever it is, it is called the "grace of God."

We are called by the gospel of Christ, and it is the gospel that revealed God's grace. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (I Pet. 2:9).

(Continued on page 4)

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

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THE WARNOCK-DEASON EXCHANGE

In this issue you will find an article by Jim Deason of Columbia, Tennessee in which he takes exception to the position taken by Weldon E. Warnock in his question column of November, 1985. We ask the readers to weigh carefully what each had to say on the always explosive issue of divorce and remarriage. The spirit in which each wrote is commendable and illustrative of the attitude which should be maintained when differences must be expressed.

A number have asked me if I agree with the position taken by brother Warnock in his November column. With his answer on the question of whether or not the guilty party in a divorce (guilty by reason of fornication) can scripturally remarry, I am in complete agreement. He said "no" and I would have to say the same thing. However, with the latter part of his response I do have some difference. He brought up a case in which divorce occurred which was not for fornication, then stated that should the one putting the other away remarry, the other party could then put the husband away "in purpose of heart" and be free to remarry. This involves the notion of mental putting away after the fact of actual divorce and termination of anything that might even resemble a marriage.

It is my conviction that there are only three classes of people who have a right to marry: (1) those who have never been married; (2) those whose companions are dead; and (3) those who have put away a companion for the cause of fornication. It appears to me that any attempt to find authority for anyone else to marry, must trade on the silence of the scriptures. I realize that brother Warnock's illustration involves fornication but it is after the fact of divorce and not before. It is very difficult for me to see how this is not in reality the "waiting game" for one waits until the other sins and then claims scriptural cause. I am also made to wonder if we may have the "mental divorce" then why not at the other end of the marriage have a "mental marriage" before the fact of social and legal requirements being met. Indeed, is this not the very thing claimed by those who insist that two people may cohabit as long as they have a "meaningful relationship" and plan to get married anyhow?

Marriage is so lightly treated in our society. We must make room for all that God allows on the subject and then stop right there. We must recognize the one excep-

tion the Lord made and we must not leave the door open for any more. With this sentiment, I am sure Brother Warnock, agrees. I am fully aware that many good and able brethren do not share the view I have expressed here. That is between them and the Lord. I certainly do not feel obligated to count heads on any issue before having my say. I have no better friend on earth than Weldon Warnock. We are as close as brothers could be, not to be family related. We have played together, laughed together, wept together, traveled together and anticipate many more such experiences in life. But I feel strongly on this subject and don't want one single reader to have the impression that the editor of this paper accepts the position mentioned above.

Brother Warnock is at perfect liberty to write his column as he sees fit. He has done an outstanding work with it, in my judgment. It is not an easy assignment, requires much time and careful work. For all of that I am most grateful and am sure that every thoughtful reader shares that sentiment. None of those who write for this paper have to agree with this editor on every point to have his material published. But I have always reserved the right to express my own convictions whenever I thought the question of sufficient importance to do so, and I believe this is one of those times. We ask readers to consider carefully what is said by both brethren Warnock and Deason. Meanwhile, we absolutely **MUST** teach our children that marriage is for life and that it is imperative that they make prudent choices of companions who will help them to go to heaven. This is far better than trying to unravel all the tangles into which people get their lives and over which brethren are apt to differ in trying to resolve them.

THANKS TO BRETHERN WATERS AND RADER

With this issue we conclude a three-part exchange between Robert Waters and Donnie Rader on the question of continuous cleansing. This is another "sticky" subject and one hotly contested in some areas. Both have written with restraint and respect for each other and for the word of God. We believe such a study in profitable. We also believe enough has been said about it for awhile. I have an article by Ken Green in which he summarizes the various positions taken on this question. At the time he sent it, he did not know this exchange was in the works. I told him about it and we decided to wait until the exchange was over and then his article will be published more or less as a summary of views. We have tried to give pertinent issues a hearing without becoming a one-issue paper. And we have tried to do it in a fair and responsible manner. We refuse to give space to character assaults and the venting of personal bitterness. We make no apology for necessary militancy and for dealing with controversial topics as the need arises.

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

(From page 2)

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling..." (Eph. 4:4). There is just one calling. That is the gospel call of grace that will deliver men from sin when they answer that calling. It means that one must hear the gospel of Christ and obey it. Remember, the word of God is His grace which brings salvation. The grace of God also is the sacrifice of Christ by which man is forgiven of his sins, and the gospel is the power of God to save (Rom. 1:16) in that it calls into this grace "to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Thess. 2:14). II Timothy 1:9 shows that this is a holy calling by which we are saved. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation (Rom. 1:16), but it must be heard and obeyed before it will save from sin.

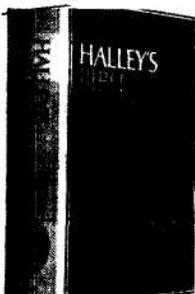
2. Man must believe the gospel to be saved by grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). "There-fore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Rom. 5:1,2). "There-fore it is of faith, that it might be by grace. . ." (Rom. 4:16).

Faith depends upon hearing the gospel of Christ (Rom. 10:17). But hearing only will not avail anything. One must do the will of God to receive the blessing promised. "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). Faith is an action on the part of man that comes as the result of hearing the gospel of Christ. In this way the grace of God that teaches and calls may have its effect.

3. Man must work righteousness to receive the grace of God. At this point most denominations reject what the word of God says. The works of Romans 4 and Titus 3:5 are works of merit whereby man might boast, but there are works of faith that are conditions upon which *the* grace of God is received. "That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through right-eousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. 5:21). "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: but in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with him" (Acts 10:34, 35).

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During the days of the prophet Elisha, Ben-hadad king of Syria besieged Samaria. The vivid narrative of I Kings 6 tells of the gross horror of the ensuing famine in which mothers boiled their own offspring (verse 28-29) and bird droppings were worth more than their weight in silver (verse 25). People were dying. It was a day of terror; a day of nauseating repugnance; a day in which everything that was grim and ghastly and grisly could be seen by those still alive to see it; a day in which the smell of death permeated the nostrils of those still alive to smell it.

In chapter 7:3 we are introduced to four lepers who raised the question: "Why do we sit her (at the city gate until we die? Three choices faced them in verse 4—"We will enter the city, then the famine is in the city and we shall die there; and if we sit here, we die also. Now therefore come, and let us go over to the camp of the Syrians. If they spare us we shall live; and if they kill us, we shall but die." They had no choice. They would plead for mercy at the hands of the enemy.

The succeeding verses inform us of their starting discovery upon entrance to the Syrian camp. The Lord had given the pagans a brief exhibition of divine power causing such wide spread panic that the Syrians "*fled for their life*" (verse 7). The lepers, fully convinced that they were dead men walking into the hands of the feared and dreaded enemy, stood in amazement. The camp was deserted—"for behold no one was there" (verse 5). Quickly they gorged themselves on the remaining food while plundering the Syrian tents. And then it hit them—

"We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent; if we wait until morning light, punishment will overtake us. Now therefore come, let us go and tell the king's household" (verse 9).

Awakened by a guilty conscience which saw them feasting while their brethren famined, they proclaimed: "*This is not right!*" "*This is not patriotic!*" "*What we are doing is not even humane!*" "*We're eating and they are starving!*" "**THIS IS A DAY OF GOOD NEWS BUT WE ARE KEEPING SILENT!**" Thus, fearing the consequences of silence, they made a resolute determination to "go" and "tell" the good news at once.

Brethren, think of the implications of the afore mentioned account in relation to the Gospel. And just what is the Gospel? It is "the" GOOD NEWS. The good news

that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son..." The good news that saw Jesus live, die and arise triumphant over the grave. The good news that heard the angelic announcement— "He is not here, He has risen." It's the good news that answers the questions: "O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting"? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law, but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. 15:55-57). It's the good news that heard the Master say: "In the world you have tribulation, but take courage; I have overcome the world." It's the good news that heard John the Baptizer proclaim: "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" It's the good news announced by Peter on Pentecost and later by such preachers as Paul and Phillip as they travel abroad telling the old, old story. And it's the good news of Luke 2:10—"I bring you good news of great joy which shall be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

Has there ever been any better "news" Has there ever been a more meaningful message to "tell" Indeed the four lepers had good news to announce, but our news is far more valuable, more precious and the implication of our information is far greater than just the relief of physical hurt and hunger. We announce to the world Him who is the "Bread of Life," the "Great Physician," and the Savior of all mankind.

Hence it becomes our supreme duty, our ultimate obligation and responsibility to WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE. We can ill afford to hold our peace any longer.

"This is a day of good news, but we are keeping silent."
.. The question is—Why?

(Note: The title and major points of this material come from the files of my good friend, Bill Fairchild, of Crane, Texas. Together we share the grave concern that our greatest failure in the church today is a failure to do the one thing we must do—teach and tell the good news of Jesus. Next month: Our Challenge.)

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"THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER" (3) RESPONSE TO RADER

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This is the third and final part of this discussion on the matter of forgiveness of sin as it pertains to the faithful child of God. It will be of much help if you will have the previous articles before you for reference as you study.

As Christians and preachers of the gospel we are met almost daily with denominational error. It grieves us to see our good friends take extreme positions on Bible matters. We take a stand against these false doctrines, but sometimes our stand is too far in the opposite direction. That is exactly why some of my previous articles charged Donnie with holding an extreme position (that every sin results in death). He has not responded to the charge. The truth is in the middle and that is where we should meet and stand united.

In dealing with his article we shall use his headings which will be in parentheses. "**Things He Didn't Answer**" (See Exchange #2 for his questions)

1. Donnie said, "Our brother didn't tell us which sins separate from God and which do not. I think brother Waters will agree that this is the issue." No, I do not agree that this is the issue. I stated the issue in my first article in discussing the extreme positions. The issue is: DOES THE CHILD OF GOD FALL FROM GRACE EVERY TIME HE SINS REGARDLESS OF WHETHER THE SIN WAS COMMITTED INADVERTENTLY OR IN IGNORANCE, AND REGARDLESS OF THE ATTITUDE. He says yes, I say no. In my second article I said it is a question of "... attitude—what will he do about it when he learns of it." Brother Rader seems to take some comfort in the fact that I haven't answered his question the way he expects me to (and I will not). If I had been told that he had been beating his wife and I asked him, "Have you quit beating you wife?", I'd expect him to say "yes", if he had. But if he was innocent of the charge he would not answer as I expected, If he said, "I have never beat my wife", that would answer my question and I would not ask it again. The point is that all questions can't be answered with a "yes" or "no". Furthermore, I'm innocent of the charge, and I have answered the question. Now it's time for him to quit asking this foolish and irrelevant question. It only clouds the issue.

2. I do not totally agree with what he said I believe. Nevertheless, he wants to know why one who commits certain sins in ignorance (instrument, etc.) does not have as much confidence as I do. They may have as much confidence as I do but I fail to see that, that has anything to do with the issue. A lot of people have

confidence who have not obeyed the gospel, but it is to no avail.

3. Again, how much confidence one may have is beside the point. My brother's problem is that all he can see is SPECIFIC repentance and SPECIFIC confession of KNOWN sin, and a "worded" confession. He therefore, believes that, as he said, "one would be condemned until that repentance, confession and prayer was made", under all circumstances. Apparently he does not believe in a general confession of all sin.

4. My answer was in the first paragraph under "walking in the light". He completely ignored it. My answer to no. two applies here.

5. I'm not going to say none of those he mentioned were separated from God because it is probable that some were. But the fact that God made an example out of someone by causing physical death doesn't necessarily mean they will be eternally lost, does it? Aaron was killed because of sin, and Moses didn't get to enter Canaan because of the same sin. Are they eternally lost (Mk. 9:4)? His question regarding his examples was, "Did none of these have an humble attitude?". Perhaps some did, but I know of no one who says that humility is all that is essential in every case.

6. 1 Jn. 1:7 tells us that those who "walk in the light" are cleansed of "all sin".

"THE ARTICLE"

Can One Live Perfectly?

Donnie wants proof that some are saying that one can live perfectly. Well I have it: Keith Sharp of Mena, Ark. Sharp very definitely took the position that man can live without sinning. (And there is no misrepresentation because that is what perfection is. If living without sin isn't the same as perfection then the Lord wasn't perfect).

I have in my possession a recording of a sermon preached by Keith in Tucson, Arizona. The gist of the sermon was the same as the discussion we had in the meeting. The following are quotes from that sermon: "I can know what sin is and I can avoid it! IT IS POSSIBLE!" "How can I live without sin? Luke 6:40... I just have to do what Jesus did. Brother and sister, if I'll hide the word of God in my heart and always appeal to it in temptation, and if I will always go to my father in prayer for the strength that I need, I'LL OVERCOME SIN. Yes, I CAN DO IT. It is within man."

Specific Confession

In the previous discussion, Donnie asked me to name some who have taught that each individual sin must be specifically confessed. I did that, but now he says none of them believe that. Well maybe they don't now, but surely they believed what they said when they said it. Then he said I misrepresented them all. Perhaps they think so, if so, such was unintentional.

I understand what Donnie's position is. He believes that if a Christian has been telling lies he doesn't have to confess that he had lied to Joe, and Tom, about this and that—just that he had told lies. Thus, such things as lying, cheating, stealing, breaking man's laws, worry, and all sins (and there are many), must be specifi-

cally confessed. He doesn't believe in asking forgiveness for categories of sin such as sins of omission, "secret faults", etc. He tells us there is to be, on the part of the Christian, "repentance and confession of what one is guilty". I think one of our problems is simply a matter of semantics. Writers on both sides of this issue have been guilty of not making themselves clear.

We both believe that specific instances of sin we commit must be specifically repented of and confessed when we become aware of them (Acts 8:22). But Donnie doesn't believe in a general confession which is both worded (Mt. 6:11-14), and is a manner of life (1 Jn. 1:9). He thinks each one of the sins, such as mentioned in the above paragraph, must always be specifically named. But that is nothing but Donnie's opinion. He hasn't proved it.

This doctrine of his, that every sin automatically brings death, leaves faithful Christians with doubts, and the "babe" hopeless. It gets worse when he teaches that you have got to know about a sin and confess it. His doctrine does not take care of hypothetical examples, such as the example of the preacher we gave in exchange #2. Remember, he said if this happened to such a man he would go to hell! Look again at the question and his answer to it. How can any of us have any security if we believe that? Few have been as bold as Donnie in answering such a question. They usually say, "I'll leave that in the hands of God", which is a cop-out. But Donnie and several others who do not understand nor believe in continual cleansing, have decided that all sin just automatically results in death. (Every passage they use is taken out of context and misapplied). They do not allow God to judge. I believe the man would be saved because he did not turn his back on God and he was not walking in darkness. Such belief is necessary to our confidence because of the real possibility of dying under such circumstances.

Some Things to which Rader was Supposed to Respond

1. I said, "1 Jn. 1:9 is a general confession as opposed to a general denial of sin (not necessarily a worded confession)...". Take it in context.

2. I made the statement that, ". . . repentance and confession are a practice of the Christian." He did not reply.

3. I made the statement that Calvinists teach that it is impossible for a child of God to fall but that he teaches it is inevitable. In his answer to this he merely accused me of teaching "the possibility of sinlessness". However, I do not accept the things he takes for granted which necessitate his conclusion. He assumes that every time a Christian sins he falls. I believe that a person can become a Christian and live a long useful life in God's service without ever falling from grace. He will sin and does sin, but his "walk" or manner of life doesn't change.

4. I asked, does one who is walking in the light not need to confess anything, (as the brother I quoted said). Wasn't that the problem the Pharisee had (Lk. 18)?

5. I accused him of building a straw man regarding "one sin" and "how many sins". He responded, but

misrepresented what I actually said.

6. On Gal. 6:1 I said, "Donnie teaches that a fault causes one to fall from grace", and that his conclusion was that "the word 'restore' has reference to fellowship—that fellowship is lost when one is overtaken in a fault". Note his contradictory response and how he changed horses in the middle of the stream. He accused me of confusing "faults" with "sin". I'll let the reader decide who is confused.

7. I asked, "Is it true that if we always fall from grace when we sin then sinlessness is essential to security (or at least thinking that we are sinless)?"

8. I made the statement, "We are forgiven of sins as we confess, or 'if we confess' in the sense that we are forgiven 'as we forgive our debtors' (Mt. 6:11-14). He made no response.

9. I said, "1 Jn. 1:7 does teach that the blood is continuously applied to those who 'walk in the light'. He previously denied it but made no reply this time.

10. In my conclusion I showed that the gospel preacher would be too scared to open his mouth to teach if he really believed what Donnie claims he believes. He made no response.

11. Donnie also did not respond to my use of Rom. 8:1-4.

"My Questions"

Donnie says I didn't answer his questions. I'll let the reader decide if I did or didn't. Certainly I responded to each of them.

"More Questions"

1. There is no "if" about it; he sins and if he is walking in the light he repents and confesses specific instances of sin as he becomes aware of them, makes general confessions, and asks forgiveness of "secret faults". Thus he is cleansed (continuously) of "all sin".

2. We don't know who "all the saved" are, but we know who we can fellowship. When a brother sins we tell him about it. If he is impenitent we cannot fellowship him.

3. It may be possible, but I wouldn't dare try it because a Christian (one who walks in the light), is to "avoid every appearance of evil".

4. Whatever God decides in each particular case, As I have said before, such questions are irrelevant and prejudicial.

"ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE MATTERS"

Are sins of omission relative or absolute? Can we obtain perfection in the things we are to do, or be? Some say no, but then they say such isn't sin. In G.O.T. Mag., 3-7-85. Herschel Patton said, "Some of us have used the word 'sin' in referring to weakness and failures, involving abilities, opportunities, situations, etc., ..." . The idea he was teaching is a doctrine of men. No scripture! Concerning the "one talent man" (abilities), the Bible says, "Cast the unprofitable servant into outer darkness". You can call it absolute or relative or whatever you want to, but our failures or our missing of the mark on anything that we are commanded to do, not do, or be, is sin! Why, failure to use one's abilities is apparently a

sin a Christian "can't commit". But some seem to think that one can get by committing this kind of sin. They deny that some transgressions are sin, but it is simply an effort to get some semblance of security out of a hopeless doctrine.

Regarding "absolute" matters Donnie said, "in these we must be perfect." (I wonder, is teaching the Bible absolute? Must we be right on everything we teach?). But regarding "relative" matters he said, we never keep them perfectly, we always fall short. But the truth of the matter is that SIN IS SIN whether absolute or relative and we fall short in both areas. Therefore Donnie's position is wrong, and continual cleansing is without a satisfactory alternative.

Conclusion

As I expressed in my first article I believe this issue to be important to the confidence and security of individual Christians. Nevertheless, I plead that brethren treat it as a matter of opinion. As long as our beliefs on vital matters are the same, and our practices remain the same, let us work and worship together in peace and harmony and treat one another fairly.

Although faithful Christians do not sin "all the time", as some brethren have wrongly affirmed, we do sin. Such sins, of the one who walks in the light, are not acts of faithfulness (sin being associated with darkness), but his life is a life of faithfulness and God approves of his life. We should and can avoid any sin that we are "tempted" to commit, (1 Cor. 10:13), but brethren, we commit sins without there being a temptation at all. That is, we commit sin ignorantly and especially inadvertently. Thus, for even the faithful Christian to have confidence and security there is ever present the need to be continuously cleansed by the blood of Christ. Thank God (for His mercy and grace), that "if we walk in the light" . . . "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us of all sin."

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**A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY
OF THE BELIEVER" (3)
RESPONSE TO WATERS**

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As brother Waters has pointed out, this is the final installment in this exchange. I urge the readers to read and reread all three installments. While the very mention of this subject is an immediate "turn off" to some, I believe that it is time for brethren to carefully study the issue with an open mind. I appreciate the kindness that brother Waters has shown in this discussion. Though I disagree with him, I have no ill feelings toward him or any that may agree with him.

Still Wondering

Our brother has been given ample opportunity to deal forthrightly with the issue at hand. However, we are still wondering about a few matters.

1. We are still wondering **WHAT SIN(S) DOES NOT SEPARATE FROM GOD?** He had refused to directly answer that question. 2. Since he says (a) that some sins separate and some do not, (b) the blood is continuously applied and (c) one is not condemned until he demonstrates that he is not going to repent, I'm still wondering about the one who commits adultery in weakness or ignorantly worships with the instrument; why does he not have the same true assurance that he claims to have? 3. I'm still wondering how he can ridicule my teaching saying that it is "hopeless" since he claims to believe that there is some kind of repentance and confession that is essential. If that be true, he has no more confidence than he believes the rest of us have, for if one sins he would stand condemned until that repentance and confession is made. 4. I'm still wondering if he doesn't believe that a past life of righteousness gives future forgiveness. He told us that the preacher who had been righteous for 40 years would be forgiven of that sin he committed (and didn't repent or confess) just before he died. 5. He told us that the thing that really mattered is the attitude of the one who sinned. Well, I'm still wondering about the Christian who may be ignorant of the right attitude as well as the preacher (40 years righteous) who commits a sin (in attitude) and then dies before repentance and confession? His doctrine concerning the attitude is simply the old denominational doctrine (that sincerity is all that matters) that is applied only to Christians. 6. We are still wondering about the homosexual who doesn't know that his practice is wrong. If some sins of ignorance do not separate, why will it not work for him?

Extremes

Brother Waters says it is an extreme to believe that

every sin separates from God. Well, I believe Rom. 6:23 and Jas. 1:15 which teach that the result of sin is death. If that is extreme, then so be it! I still would like to know which sins do not separate.

It seems from the three articles and his booklet (also entitled **The Security of The Believer**) that our brother arrives at what he believes to be the truth by posing what he believes to be two extremes and then assumes that the truth is between them. Brother Waters, I find the truth by first going to the N.T. and then anything to the right or left of that I label as being extreme. I do not know what is extreme until I first know the truth. He has had a lot to say about truth always being between extremes. He then poses his extremes and concludes that the middle is the truth. I have presented the following chart to show that his method of arriving at "truth" would have us accepting all that is in the middle column. Why not? Are not those things in the right and left columns extreme? Is not "truth" between extremes?

EXTREME	IS THIS TRUTH?	EXTREME
No sin separates (Calvinism)	Some sins separate and some do not (Waters)	Every sin separates (Rader)
Cannot worship with the instrument	Instrument not commanded, but can be used as an aid	Use of the instrument commanded (psallo)
Cannot commit adultery	Adultery is not a duty — but neither is it wrong	Adultery is one's civil duty (i.e. temple service in Corinth)
Cannot tell any lie	Can tell some lies	Can tell any lie

Eight Examples

In my first article (Jan., p. 9) I cited eight examples showing that one sin is all that it takes to separate one from God. Those included sins of weakness, ignorance and inadvertence. Brother Waters' response concerning whether they were separated from God was that 'it is probable that some were.' He doesn't know. Yet, Peter "stood condemned" (Gal. 2:11, ASV) and Simon was "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" and would perish if he didn't repent (Acts 8:20-23). He said that physical death wasn't proof that they were lost. That, however, contradicts his argument about Abraham lying and living (as proof that he wasn't separated) whereas Ananias and Sapphira lied and died (as proof that they were separated) (Booklet, p. 10).

What Sins Are Covered in 1 Jno. 1:7?

I asked him why 1 Jno. 1:7 included sins of ignorance, weakness and inadvertence (as far as sins that do not put us out of the light), but doesn't include all sins. His response was, "1 Jn. 1:7 tells us that those who 'walk in the light' are cleansed of 'all sin.'" That would mean then that presumptuous and willful sins do not put us out of the light. Is that what you believe brother

Waters?

Who Is Teaching Perfection?

I had asked him who are the several prominent men who say that one can live perfect. He replied by accusing Keith Sharp of teaching "that a man can live without sinning." I have talked to Keith and he denies that he took such a position.

Concerning brother Sharp's sermon in Tucson, brother Waters has again misrepresented what was said. The title of the sermon was "Yes We DO, But Do We Have To?" Again the point was that though we do sin, the Christian does not have to sin. I have a copy of the sermon and have listened to it several times. If brother Sharp made anything clear in that sermon it was the fact that he does not believe nor teach that the Christian lives a perfect (flawless) life. If any reader would like to hear the sermon, just send me a blank cassette tape (60 min.) and postage and I will send you a copy. It will speak for itself.

Interesting

I found it interesting that brother Waters said, "We both believe that specific instances of sin we commit must be specifically repented of and confessed when we become aware of them (Acts 8:22)." I do not believe that. While I believe that one must confess his "sins" (1 Jno. 1:9), I do not believe one has to specifically confess every instance of sin. I find that interesting because he is the one who chides me about specific confession and then says he believes one must confess "specific instances" of known sin. If a man is guilty of lying, must he specifically confess every instance of lying? Look out brother Waters, you're going to meet yourself coming back!

Another interesting matter was that he stated that the preacher who was faithful for 40 years and then sinned inadvertently or ignorantly and then died before he was aware of it and could repent and confess "would be saved because he did not turn his back on God..." I say that's interesting because I wonder then about the man who commits adultery in ignorance (not knowing the Bible teaching on divorce and remarriage) or maybe in weakness—has he turned his back on God? Otherwise, he is trying to do right. Would he be saved if he died without becoming aware of his sin and repenting and confessing? What about the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument—has he completely turned his back on God? Would he be saved?

My Four Questions to Waters

1. I asked him if there are any conditions for forgiveness if a Christian sins. His answer indicates that he believes that there are. If so, then when one sins he stands condemned until those conditions are met. That, friend, is the very thing that he ridicules me for believing and calls it a "hopeless doctrine". If one does not stand condemned until those conditions are met, then they are not conditions for forgiveness.

2. I asked him if we should fellowship all the saved. He said, "We don't know who 'all the saved' are, but we know who we can fellowship." That would mean that

there are some who are saved that he excludes from fellowship. God fellowships them, but Waters doesn't. Can we fellowship all whom we know to be saved? Does he fellowship those who according to him are without hope and hold to a "hopeless doctrine"? His answer to my fourth question indicates that there are some who use the instrument that are saved. Can we fellowship them?

3. I asked if a Christian can lie as Abraham did and not be separated. He said, "It may be possible..." Keep in mind that Abraham deliberately told a lie (Gen. 12:3; 20:5; 26:7). Also remember that Rev. 21:8 says "all liars" will have their part in the lake of fire.

4. I asked him if a man who ignorantly worships with the instrument is guilty of a sin that separates or is that a sin that doesn't separate. His answer: "Whatever God decides in each particular case." He doesn't know! Apparently some who ignorantly use the instrument are saved and some are lost. If some are saved, why not all? What makes the difference?

Absolute and Relative

Brother Waters responded to my explanation of absolute and relative matters by asking, "Are sins of omission relative or absolute?" One can sin by violating either absolute or relative commands. However, the point I was making was that a lack of perfection (lack of flawlessness) is not necessarily sin. That was also the very point that Herschel Patton was making in the quotation that brother Waters gave. Sin is a transgression of the law (1 Jno. 3:4), but the law is not transgressed necessarily just because there is still room for growth (in patience, knowledge, temperance, etc.). If that is not true, then we all just live in constant sin; there would never be a moment we are not sinning. Yet, brother Waters stated in his last paragraph that Christians do not sin "all the time".

I believe that all transgression is sin. The point is that a lack of flawlessness is not necessarily a transgression. Apparently brother Waters doesn't see a difference in things absolute and relative. He asked if teaching was absolute. Our knowledge of the word, ability to teach it and our use of our opportunities fall into the relative realm.

Brother Waters said that since we fall short in both areas, this idea of continual cleansing is the only satisfactory alternative. Suppose one falls short in the matter of worship (either uses the instrument or takes the Lord's supper on Saturday); will "continual cleansing" give him confidence? I still wonder about the homosexual who falls short in his knowledge of what is sin.

Opinion

Our brother pleaded in his conclusion for brethren to treat this as a "matter of opinion". He contrasted it to "vital matters". Brother Waters, why have you said and written so much about a subject that to you is not a matter of faith and isn't vital? However, he believes that we must accept his position, which has "no satisfactory alternative," or we will be holding a "doctrine of men" that is a "hopeless doctrine." Friends, that's confusing!

Summary

1. **What Robert Waters has said:** (a) He has told us that some sins (of ignorance, inadvertence and weak-ness) do not separate from God. (b) He believes that the blood is continuously applied, (c) He said that it was not a question of how many sins one committed, but the attitude of the transgressor, (d) He thinks the confession of 1 Jno. 1:9 is simply an acknowledgement that we do sin. (e) He has stated that one isn't condemned until he demonstrates that he is not going to repent, (f) He has charged that to believe as I do would mean one would have to live perfect in order to be saved and thus he has no confidence.

2. **What Donnie Rader has said:** (a) I have pointed out that the issue is not a matter of confidence, hope and security, or specific confession of every instance of sin or whether a Christian can or must live perfect. The issue is whether or not there are some sins that do not separate, (b) I have repeatedly asked what sin(s) does not separate, (c) I have shown that 1 Jno. 1:9 says we must confess our "sins" (that of which we are guilty) and not merely the fact that we do sin. (d) I have asked about the one who commits adultery in weakness, or lies, or ignorantly worships with the instrument—if these are sins that do not separate, (e) I've noted that if he believes any conditions must be met, then he has no more confidence than he attributes to me. (f) I have demonstrated that what I teach does not require "per-fection".

Using the

SWORD OF THE SPIRIT

Ken Green

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WHAT WE NEED

"And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants that with all boldness they may speak they word" (Acts 4:29).

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; and for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel, For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Eph. 6:18-20).

The disciples in Jerusalem did not pray that persecution might cease, but that they might preach the word with boldness. Paul did not ask the saints in Ephesus to pray for his release from imprisonment or for the preservation of his life. He requested that they pray that he

might teach boldly the gospel of Christ.

Have you ever heard of anyone praying for persecution? The following article from the "Baptist Bulletin" may interest you:

"Ethiopian Christians are praying that the persecution by the present Marxist government will continue. According to Open Doors News Service, the persecution of Lt. Colonel Mengistu Hile Mariam's government has brought about unparalleled growth in the Ethiopian church.

"The government is closing many of the evangelical churches, so we are being forced to meet in secret,' an Ethiopian Christian told Dan Wooding of Open Doors News Service. 'We already have a thriving underground church and it is growing at an incredible rate. We are praying that the government here continues with its persecution and closures because it is resulting in a much stronger church and much more dedicated christians.'

"Wooding reported that hundreds of Ethiopian Christians have been imprisoned by the government, even while overseas Christians pour famine aid into the country."

I've heard some suggest that while we pray for religious tolerance and freedom, what we really need may well be something quite to the contrary.

Alarms have been sounded concerning the possibility that churches which refuse to ordain women as elders or preachers, and which refuse to accept into their fellowship practicing adulterers and homosexuals may one day be subject to such great financial liability that ownership of church property will become a thing of the past. It may even develop that such "bigoted" and "discriminatory" policies will become unlawful, in which case, our public meetings and use of the media will be eliminated.

While none of us, I suppose, would pray for such situations, it might be just what we need! Like the religious groups in Ethiopia which have found it necessary to go underground and are "growing at an incredible rate," the Lord's church in this land would undoubtedly fare better in an environment in which we had no doubt that we are strangers and pilgrims.

Problems and divisions over what can be done in the church building would no longer occupy our attention. There would be no church buildings. Church support of "our institutions" would not need to be debated, for there would be no institutions. I seriously doubt that supporting fun and games from the church treasury would divide us. Folks are not likely to risk their necks, meeting secretly, for a game of basketball.

All we would have left would be the church, the faithful, who would stand in the face of all opposition and persecution. I submit that that remnant would be a mighty force in this land.

Might it be that we would also pray, "Lord, keep the persecution coming. Just give thy servants boldness to speak as we ought to speak."?

**Restoration
Footnotes**

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NO CRAVING FOR WORSHIP

Fifty years ago Batsell Baxter told the story of an elder many years before who lived several miles from the town where the church met. He missed worship one December Sunday when it was cold and misty and the unpaved roads muddy. But on Monday the preacher met the man in town. "The mist was still falling, the weather was colder, and the roads mudder. He explained to the preacher that he could not come to church Sunday because the weather and roads were too bad. But he could come to town on Monday because he was out of tobacco and had to have it."

Like the elder, some other members of the church can do without communion with the Lord when circumstances make it inconvenient and feel no pang of conscience. But let something turn up that they really crave and the mud could hardly get too deep to keep them away. Appetites are cultivated and the reason most churches have an attendance problem is that many members have not cultivated a taste for spiritual things. They want their religion in small doses and they had as soon skip the worship altogether if the "mist and mud" are a little too heavy.

"STAY OUT OF THE KITCHEN"

One of the prerogatives of older preachers is to give advice to younger preachers. I appreciate this and have always tried to profit by it, even when I was young. The counsel of those who have already trod the road I walk can bolster my spirits, strengthen my resolve, and improve my service to God and man. Of course, some bits of advice are more helpful than others and one has to be selective. The following item is from an old article "To Young Preachers" by Fred Dennis.

"Stay out of the kitchen! The sisters will appreciate that. They will get the meals and wash the dishes. It is not meant for you to leave the word of God to serve tables. Give yourself continually to the ministry of the word and prayer. You can help your own wife in your own kitchen. But do not be too friendly with the women. Be discreet. Give the enemy no room to talk about you."

This may be more curious than helpful, but then it may be right on course for all I know. Besides being in a sister's way in the kitchen, a visiting preacher might be prone to be meddlesome there. Then, too, brother

Dennis may have known some unlicensed romances that bloomed while a preacher cumbered himself about much serving in another man's kitchen. Anyway, a preacher would do well to avoid being "too friendly" with the women in or out of the kitchen and to confine his zeal for housework to his own wife in his own kitchen.

THE INFLUENCE OF A BAD EXAMPLE

Illustrating the power of a preacher's influence, Earl West recalled an event in the life of Robert and James Alexander Haldane, Scottish ministers who Robert Richardson says gave Alexander Campbell his first impulse as a reformer. The Haldane brothers made a journey in their youth with Dr. James Macknight, author of the celebrated commentary on the Apostolic Epistles, and another learned cleric in the Church of Scotland.

"Crossing over from the border of Scotland, Macknight insisted that they continue their journey, even though it was the Lord's day... The Haldane boys had been reared to go to church; and as they traveled along through the country, listening to the church bells call them to worship, they felt ashamed not to go. But Macknight warned them against such 'frigid' teachings and beliefs. This incident weighed heavily on their minds, and after they grew up there was no writer that they regarded as a more dangerous corrupter of the truths of the gospel than Dr. Macknight. . . Robert Haldane... often said that Macknight neither 'intellectually knew, nor experimentally felt,' the things he wrote... Macknight's failure to measure up to a standard of religion which was generally very rigidly followed in that day led him to lose all influence over those young men."

His impious attitude caused the Haldanes in maturity to shun Macknight's scholarly writings, which they might have found profitable. But they saw him as the irreligious churchman they remembered rather than the erudite expositor he was generally presumed to be. Whether they were wise in this is for another to judge, but it is a fact nonetheless that by one ill-conceived act, the eminent scholar closed the minds of two young men to any good he otherwise might have done them. No preacher can expect his words to be respected, no matter how wise they are, when people have doubts about his life. A good example rests in both words and ways (1 Tim. 4:12).

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MENTAL DIVORCE? A REPLY

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In the November issue of STS brother Weldon Warnock wrote an article entitled, "MAY THE GUILTY PARTY REMARRY?" In most of the article brother Warnock did his usual excellent job. However, with part of what he said I want to take exception. Let it be said that I have no personal vendetta nor ax to grind with brother Warnock. He has been a friend of my family for many years and I count him as such. He can fiddle at my fireside anytime he chooses. I do not consider him a false teacher, but I do believe he is wrong on this point.

That with which I take exception is found in the fourth paragraph of his article (I encourage the reader to go back and read his entire article), a part of which I quote here: "But someone asks: 'What about a woman who is PUT AWAY (DIVORCED) by a man simply because the man no longer wanted to be married? Fornication is not involved and the woman repeatedly tried to prevent the divorce to no avail. After a couple years the man marries another woman. Is the 'put away' woman then free to marry?' SHE CERTAINLY IS, if she PUTS AWAY her husband for fornication. She would have to do this before God IN PURPOSE OF HEART since the divorce has already taken place, legally speaking" (emphasis mine—jhd).

I realize that brother Warnock is dealing with a hard question, emotionally speaking. But you will notice that he has given no scriptural reasoning for saying that the woman in his example could remarry? As a matter of fact, while dealing with scripture, brother Warnock had already answered the question in his example in the previous paragraph. He said, "Hence, in Matt. 19:9 Jesus is saying that ALL (emphasis his—jhd) put away persons who remarry are committing adultery. If a person IS PUT AWAY (this emphasis mine—jhd. Notice the similarity between this and brother Warnock's example.) for incompatibility and he/she remarries, that person is committing adultery." It seems to me that brother Warnock has really answered his own question in two different ways and I like his answer from scripture better.

I think the real nuts-and-bolts issue of this disagreement is the definition of "divorce." Brother Warnock uses the term with two different meanings in his illustration: 1) The first time, when the man is divorcing the woman, he is talking of a legal (civil) divorce; 2) The second time, when the woman is divorcing the man, he uses the term in the sense of a mental act. The scriptures do not so equivocate, wherever the terms "di-

vorce" or "put away" are used in reference to a marriage they have a singular meaning. A divorce is a divorce in whatever society one may be. When one has been divorced they can't turn around and divorce the person that has already divorced them as brother Warnock indicates. A person is either the one being divorced or the one doing the divorcing, he/she can't be both at the same time. I would like brother Warnock to give a single definition of the word "divorce" and apply it to both persons in his example. It would be interesting.

Brother Warnock's position with regard to his example implies at least two things: 1) There can be no real divorce unless scriptural grounds are present; 2) One cannot be divorced (put away) unless they mentally agree to it.

First of all, if there can be no real divorce unless scriptural grounds are present, why did Jesus say, "Whoever divorces his wife, EXCEPT for immorality.. ." (Matt. 19:9)? The very fact that the exceptive clause is found in Matt. 19:9 is proof that two people can actually be divorced for unscriptural reasons but, nevertheless, they are divorced.

In the second place, what passage teaches that in order for one to actually be divorced they must agree to it? What passage allows them to reserve themselves mentally from a divorce, claim to still be married, and not be "really" divorced? One may indeed sin against his wife by divorcing her with unscriptural cause against her will but, nevertheless, is it not still a divorce? I know this has hard and unpleasant consequences. It is similar to being shoved off a cliff, there may be no justifiable reason and you may not have agreed to it but the consequences are still the same. Such are merely the facts. Perhaps most of our troubles in the divorce realm are but penalties for failing to recognize the seriousness of the marriage institution and making the proper preparation for it.

In closing let me say that, although brother Warnock surely doesn't uphold what has come to be called the "waiting game," that is exactly what his position allows. It is exactly what the woman in his example did, motive notwithstanding. I agree with brother Warnock's own words found elsewhere in his article, I believe they are in harmony with what the scripture teaches and I am content to leave the matter with that. He said, "Hence, in Matt. 19:9 Jesus is saying that ALL put away persons who remarry are committing adultery," and again, "But whatever procedure, only the party who has put his/her mate away for fornication may scripturally remarry."



WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Rom. 4:3)

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"DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE" RESPONSE

Before I get into my answer to brother Jim Deason's article, I want to say that his kind remarks about me are, indeed, mutual. I appreciate his work of faith and labor of love through the years.

Brother Deason said I had given no scriptural reasoning for saying that the woman who had been divorced, although she did not want a divorce, had a right to remarry when her husband remarried. Well, read the article again and decide for yourself. Jesus said that a person may remarry if his/her mate is guilty of fornication (Mt. 19:9). That sounds like Scripture to me.

We are too restrictive on this issue when we do not allow what Jesus made so definite, viz., that fornication (sexual immorality) gives the innocent party the right to remarry. Notice Mt. 10:11 in this connection. "Who-soever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her." Let us observe: First, the man puts away his wife. Second, he marries another. Third, he commits adultery AGAINST HER. There may be days, weeks, months or years between the putting away and the marrying another, but when the marriage takes place, the man commits adultery against his put away companion. Jesus says she may remarry because of this sin. I believe that settles the matter!

There was nothing stated, nor implied, in my November article about a "waiting game." Certainly, if both parties wanted the divorce, and later one of them commits adultery, the other person could not use fornication as a reason for remarriage. But the woman in my illustration is not playing the "waiting game." She is pleading, hoping, praying and patiently trying to win her husband back. They are still bound in God's sight, although divorced. But her wishes are not realized as her husband marries another woman. She is then free from the bond to marry again.

Brother Deason says she may not, scripturally, remarry because her husband put her away. But in my article I specifically stated that the innocent woman puts her husband away, before God, for adultery. She cannot do it, legally, in the civil court, because her husband had already exhausted that route by a loose divorce law. She has no legal adjudication, but she does have a moral, scriptural choice.

I cannot accept the position that the law of God in

this matter is regulated by and contingent upon the civil laws of fallible man. The woman I used for illustration (typical of many situations today) is trapped, according to brother Deason's position, by human precepts and judgments. What if the husband simply abandoned his wife, no divorce, and two years later he committed adultery? Could she divorce him for fornication and remarry? I do not see a dime's worth of difference in this and what I wrote in the November issue of STS.

Some societies through the years have had no legal ratification of marriage and no recognition of divorce. McClintock and Strong state: "In Congo and Angola... ' they use no peculiar ceremonies in marriage, nor scarce trouble themselves for consent of friends'" (Vol. 5, p. 805). Many other examples are given of various peoples. Also, compare pp. 799-800 in regard to marriage and divorce among the Romans. Marriage was made wholly by consent and commitment among many of the ancient peoples and divorce occurred by cancelling the agreement and commitment. Reckon if an innocent mate was told by his/her marriage partner, "I disown you, I divorce you," that the innocent person would have had no recourse, ever, because he/she was beaten to the phrase? Brother Deason said, "I think the real nuts-and-bolts issue of this disagreement is the definition of 'divorce.'" Let us notice in the Bible that under the term "divorce" there are included separations of married persons which are unlike one another. First, there are separations of persons (divorces) who remain bound together in the sight of God, although not bound in the sight of men. Secondly, there are separations of persons (divorces) who become loosed before God as well as before men. Both of these are plainly taught in Mt. 5:32; 19:9; Mk. 10:10-12; Lk. 16:18; Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:10-17, 39). Obviously, the Bible teaches that God recognizes all divorces, but He does not sanction all divorces, just like He recognizes all marriages, but He does not sanction all marriages.

The Scriptures teach a husband and wife are bound to each other until death do they part (Rom. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:39). The word "bound" (*deo*) means "put under obligation, sc. of law, duty, etc." (Thayer, p. 131). However, to this law is an exception that Jesus made in Mt. 5:32, 19:9. The exception is "fornication." Hence, if a marriage partner is guilty of sexual immorality, the innocent party may put away the guilty one and remarry. Fornication does not automatically dissolve the marriage bond, but it is a lawful reason for divorce and remarriage when reconciliation is impossible or unfeasible.

If the position that no put away person can remarry, regardless of the circumstances, then it follows: (1) If John divorces Jane and John dies one day later, Jane can never marry again. (2) If Bill secretly flies to Las Vegas with his secretary, gets a "quickie" divorce and marriage, his wife, Sue, has to remain single because she has been put away. The consequences of such a position show its fallacy and untenableness.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that the innocent party in a divorce is not determined by who gets it, or when it

is gotten, but rather on WHAT GROUNDS—whether sexual immorality has been committed by one or the other. Only fornication frees the innocent party to marry again.

PRECEPTS AND PERCEPTIONS

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MAY CHURCHES OF CHRIST SUPPORT HUMAN INSTITUTIONS? — II

WHAT IS THE FUSS ABOUT?

Since so much strife, division and heartache have come among God's people over the relationship of churches of Christ to human institutions of various kinds we give attention to some of these matters. It is ridiculous to charge any Christian with being opposed to caring for widows and orphans or preaching the gospel. I have been preaching for over fifty years and have never met the person who opposed caring for the fatherless and widows in their affliction as well as all other poor and sick of earth who are worthy of charity. Some, I understand, have said I was "anti" helping widows, orphans, but those who know me best know this is a false report. I have never made a big display of what charity I have done. God knows about it and the afflicted widows and perhaps a few orphans know: I have never known a person who was the responsibility of the congregation which I served to go without the necessities of life.

What I personally practice and the amount of money or goods that I may give to the poor has nothing whatever to do with what God has taught each local congregation to do and has forbidden it to do. I have never known a Christian who opposed gospel preaching but I know thousands who oppose church subsidized preaching societies. I have never known many persons who opposed schools operated by Christians and in which the Bible is taught daily. I have known thousands, however, who oppose church donations to such schools. It is sometimes difficult for people to distinguish between what the Bible teaches and what some people practice because they do not study the Bible. Certainly all should strive diligently to do everything God says and only that. The fact remains, however, that if a person does nothing God says that disobedience does not change the fact that God has said do it.

For years we have been hearing that all the fuss among brethren is over how the work God has commanded is to be done. **This is simply not true!** The whole

issue turns on the matter of **who** is to do **what God commanded!** This necessarily involves the question of whether or not merely making a donation to a human institution is the action God commanded a local church to perform. The question to be settled is whether a local church shall do the work God commands it to do or surrender its God-appointed obligation to somebody else. And then, while professing to obey God, may that church donate from its treasury to a service institution which was self-created and is self-controlled? May it support an institution completely independent of every local church on earth as regards its managements but which depends upon subsidies from local churches to stay in business? **This is the issue.**

It should be further observed that we are not opposing the moral right of any group of men, saints and/or sinners, to operate any legitimate business. Whether the institution dispenses food, clothing, shelter, nursing service, books, or courses of study in Bible alone with reading, writing and arithmetic, has nothing whatever to do with the scriptural right of local churches to underwrite the financial involvements to these independent, strictly human, institutions. Since no congregation bought or built them, since no local church owns or controls them, what right do these man-made operations have to call upon churches of the Lord Jesus Christ to pay their bills for them? This is the issue. We are interested in discussing no other in this connection.

What is Scriptural and Right?

When each local congregation relieves the needy for whom God has made that congregation responsible it is doing God's will. This is no more or no less than God's will. This is obedience to God. Scriptures teaching this show that when it was able to do so each local church relieved its own needy members; and when a sister congregation had members which it could not relieve, then churches with the ability made contribution to it. Scriptures teaching that each local congregation relieved its own needy members when it had the financial resources to do so follow:

Acts 2:45—

"and they sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all, according as any man had need."

Acts 4:34-35— "For neither was there among them any that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need."

Acts 6:1—6

"Now in these days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a murmuring of the Grecian Jews against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. And the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, it is not fit that we should forsake the

word of God, and serve tables. Look ye out therefore, brethren, from among you seven men of good report, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will continue steadfastly in prayer, and in the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the multitude: and they chose Stephen, . . . and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas . . . whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands upon them."

1 Tim. 5:16— "If any man or woman that believeth hath widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be burdened; that it may relieve them that are widows indeed."

Scriptures teaching that one congregation contributed to the needy members of a sister congregation:

Rom. 15:25,26— "... but now, I say, I go unto Jerusalem, ministering unto the saints. For it hath been the good pleasure of Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints that are at Jerusalem."

1 Cor. 16:1-4— "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve, them will I send with letters to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me."

When each congregation pays wages to a teacher of the word of God it is doing God's will. This is obedience to God. Scriptures teaching this follow:

2 Cor. 11:8,9— "I robbed other churches, taking wages of them that I might minister unto you; and when I was present with you and was in want, I was not a burden on any man; for the brethren, when they came from Macedonia, supplied the measure of my want."

1 Cor. 9:11-14— "If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your carnal things? . . . even so did the Lord ordain that they proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel."

(To be continued)

A CRISIS OF FAITH WITHOUT CONFUSION

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I was pleasantly surprised to read on the front page of *the Firm Foundation* (Sept. 25, 1984) an article entitled, "Confusion and a Crisis of Faith." The author, Richard Guill, writes his concern for some of the things he is seeing some of his brethren practice. To say that such is a crisis of faith is probably an understatement. Everyone in every place should be alarmed at some of the things the brethren are practicing. They are doing many things without divine authority. They have forsaken the old paths, the good way to walk. They no longer "... endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Tim. 3:3-4).

And so, I agree that we are (and have been) experiencing a crisis of faith. However, it should be noted that the author of the above article also wrote about *confusion*. He begins by writing, "Many of the Lord's people are in a state of confusion..." and later, he calls this "brotherhood confusion." But no one should be confused over the present state of many congregations. These problems did not just happen overnight. This is only the result of what began thirty years ago over the "institutional question." It is the result of what happened over the "instrumental music question" as well as the "missionary society question" many years ago. There was a crisis of faith, but no confusion. It simply came down to the matter of respecting, or not respecting, scriptural authority. Some were trying to stretch the scriptures in order to justify their practice. One should keep in mind that such an attitude did not lead them along "the old paths", but into a full-fledged denomination.

He also writes, "It is time for us to educate them as to the work of the church, scriptural worship, respect for and how to establish scriptural authority, and a host of other fundamental subjects." Such writing is very commendable, but again, one should not be confused on these matters. I know of hundreds of brethren who were preaching, teaching, and writing on these very subjects thirty years ago, but were ignored and "quarantined." They were interested in scriptural authority and concerned about the work and worship of the church. They were trying to educate the brethren on these matters, but no one would listen. Many of them are still preaching what they did back then.

One should not be confused to see some of the brethren who want to associate with, and look like, denominational preachers and churches. It is no great wonder

that some are telling us that there are "Christians" in various denominational churches. It is what some of the brethren want to preach and what some of the brethren want to hear. Scriptural authority and a divine pattern no longer matter to them. Therefore, we can eliminate any confusion on these matters during this crisis of faith.

I would close, however, with a little confusion of my own. If we continue to see such "conservative-thinking" articles printed, I am confused as to which direction the writers of the *Firm Foundation* are headed. Back to the Bible, I trust, on such matters as "the work of the church, scriptural worship, respect for and how to establish scriptural authority, and a host of other fundamental subjects."

YOU COULD HELP US

With very little effort, our readers could help us greatly to increase our circulation. All it would take would be for you to show your copy of STS to a friend (perhaps a member of the congregation you attend), or relative and ask that person if he (or she) could afford \$9 a year in order to receive this paper each month. That is not really hard, is it? We have a club rate of \$7.50 a year for new subscriptions sent in clubs of four or more at one time. Why not send a gift subscription to a young married couple (perhaps one of your children) and get them started receiving good reading material in their home?

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THE NEWS LETTER REPORTS

"... They rehearsed all that God had done with them ..."—Acts 14:27

Send all News Items to: Connie W. Adams, P.O. Box 69, Brooks, KY 40109

DENVER NIEMEIER, 8220 West 82nd St., Indianapolis, IN 46278—Arrangements have been made for Traders Point to underwrite any expenses for four meetings a year to be held for churches that are unable to support such an effort. I would like to limit travel distance to two days driving one way. If the brethren could provide lodging that would be fine, but if not, arrangements can still be made. Contact the elders at the address above.

VIVION ROAD LECTURES

BILL JOHN, N.E. Vivion Road, Kansas City, MO 64118—Paul Earnhart, Ken Green and Jim Poppell will be the speakers June 23-26 in a lecturership at Vivion Road. The theme will be: "Applicable Messages For Today's Committed Christian."

9:30 A.M.—Philippians—The Joy of the Committed Life—Paul Earnhart.

10:15 A.M.—The More Excellent Way—Lessons on Love—Ken Green
11:00 A.M.—The Majesty, Power and Providence of God—Jim Poppell

7:00 P.M.—Congregational Singing 7:30 P.M.—Lessons From the Life of Christ—Paul Earnhart

8:15 P.M.—Winning the Victory—A study of Temptation—Ken Green

9:00 P.M.—Praying in Faith—Jim Poppell

For those wishing information regarding video tapes, audio tapes and housing, please write to: Church of Christ, P.O. Box 28478, Kansas City, MO 64118 or call (816) 452-3684.

DON GIVENS, 411 Hebron Lane No. 3511, Honolulu, Hawaii 96815—If you, or some one you know is planning a trip to Hawaii, we would love to have you worship with us at Waipahu on the island of Oahu. We average over a dozen visitors every Sunday from the mainland. Most tourists stay in hotels in Waikiki. The church building is 16 miles from there. We are the only sound congregation here. The city bus to Waipahu will take one hour and 45 minutes each way. If you rent a car, allow yourself 45 minutes each way. Honolulu is a large city of 800,000. From your hotel, take Freeway H-1 west to exit 8 B (Waipahu exit). Take "Kam Hay" to first stoplight, then left on Waipahu Street. The building will be one mile on your left at 94-1233 Waipahu St. We meet on Sundays at 9 and 10 A.M. and 6 P.M. and on Wednesdays at 7 P.M. Come see us in Hawaii.

VERNON LOVE, P.O. Box 472, New Port Richey, FL 34291-0472—A new congregation has been recently founded in New Port Richey, Florida. This is one of the fastest growing areas in the state and needs a sound church. If you are retiring to Florida or planning to vacation, come and look this area over and worship with us. We will advertise the Bible correspondence course and contact all who are interested in the truth. If you know of members in this area, let us know and we will contact them. We are meeting in the Civic Club in Sims Park in downtown New Port Richey. I am having to "make tents" for a living, but will be able to conduct home studies. My home address is 993 E. Lake Road, Tarpon Springs, FL 33489. Phone (813) 937-6867.

FRANK INGRAM, 1210 3rd St. SW, Cullman, AL 35055—I am interested in relocating sometime in 1986 in Florida. References will be gladly supplied. I am 60, married and have been preaching 38 years. I am presently preaching on the radio six days a week. You may call me at (205) 734-4708 (home) or 734-6380 (office).

SANTOS BASILIO, Fugu Sur, Tumanini, Isabelo, Philippines 1312—We began the work here with one soul. In 1985, 34 were baptized into Christ for the remission of their sins. I have been working without financial support from the USA. The brethren here supply me only 150 pesos a month. I work as a tricycle driver (motorcycle with side-car—CWA) but I prefer to preach the gospel of Christ. We must work while it is day (Jno. 9:4).

J. B. GRINSTEAD

It is with sadness that we take note of the death of J. B. Grinstead, a faithful preacher of the gospel of Christ. He passed away while visiting in Virginia Beach, Virginia and was taken to eastern North Carolina for burial. His work of preaching took him to many places though his most recent work was in the Birmingham, Alabama area. The editor first became acquainted with him through his work in eastern North Carolina and Virginia. For several years he preached in the Dayton, Ohio area. Much of his work was with struggling churches in hard places. Our deepest sympathy is extended to the family.

PREACHER NEEDED

TRENTON, MISSOURI—The church in Trenton needs a full-time preacher of the gospel. Anyone interested please write us at Box 164, Trenton, MO or call Melvin Loveall at (816) 359-2882.

EDITORIAL LEFT-OVERS AS OTHERS SEE US

It might be helpful (though painful at times) to see ourselves as others see us. A few years ago a preacher's wife viewed the rather loud get-ups some of the preachers wore during the Florida College lectures and said they should change the name of that week to "The Parade of the Peacocks." Ouch!

TIES THAT BIND

Speaking of the Florida College lectures, we have missed very few years and always find it delightful to see so many old friends in one place. I seldom ever finish a conversation during that whole week. It is refreshing to hear about the work in other places, exchange pleasantries about families, sing together, and hear able men discuss timely topics. It is also a source of great joy to see decent looking and respectful acting students. They are learning much to equip them for life and they are doing it in a wholesome setting where every teacher is a Christian and where 90% of their fellow students are also Christians. While no human enterprise is without flaw, we believe Florida College has something worthwhile to offer to young people and urge parents with high school students to give serious thought to sending their young people there. I watched with interest as my younger son, Martin, and his wife, Joanie, greeted their own former school mates with exuberance during their first return for lectures. Good friends are needed and there are blessed ties that bind. No place makes that more evident than lecture week at Florida College.

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IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	102
RESTORATIONS	47

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)