

## **“THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER”**

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Considerable interest has been shown in the matter of spiritual security in the last four years. A series of articles have already appeared in STS but this shall be a little different approach. This approach denies all Calvinism but at the same time allows full assurance and confidence for the faithful child of God.

I have appreciated the way in which this paper has handled other controversial subjects and I am grateful to have been allowed space to present my views on this important subject (with the understanding that there may be a review published with it).

This subject is controversial, emotional (with some), and is confusing to many. But we really should have no difficulty in studying together on this matter because we practice the same thing. I might add that no one who knows the truth on this is going to advocate fellowshiping anyone or any group who does not practice the truth. Since our practice is the same there should be no talk of division or disfellowshipping anyone, or firing a preacher for what he believes and teaches on the matter. Regardless of which way a man believes if he presses this issue to the point of causing factions, he is a heretic. When brethren in a local church can't study this issue without ill feelings, it should be dropped like a hot potato. It is an important subject, but we should never force our opinions on such matters to the point of causing division.

When we talk about the security of the believer we have no reference to the denominational doctrine known by that name, also known as "once saved always saved". We believe this doctrine is one extreme on this issue. This denominational doctrine upholds the idea that children of God cannot fall from grace no matter what they do or what their attitude or manner of life is. The other extreme upholds the idea that a child of God falls from grace every time he sins, and it matters not whether the sin was committed inadvertently or in ignorance, nor does it matter what the attitude of the child of God is. The truth has got to be between these two extremes because the first gives one a false hope and the second gives him no hope.

We are taught that we can and should have spiritual security. It is evident that the apostle Paul had this security as he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing" (2 Tim. 3:7-8). He wrote of his confidence and in the same passage teaches that all those "that love his appearing" can also have it.

The writings of the apostle John are just as convincing. He said, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God" (1 Jn. 5:13). From looking at these passages

alone we should have no doubts as to whether or not a Christian can know that he is in fellowship with God.

God has promised us (Christians) a place in heaven. If one does not have confidence that he will receive that promise then he displeases God (sins). You see, if one has no confidence he either doesn't believe God will keep his promise or he doesn't believe that he is a faithful servant. Hope plays an important part in our salvation (Rom. 8:24). The word "hope" means: desire plus expectation. One who has confidence that he will receive the promise of heaven, desiring to do so, has hope. One who has hope has security. If one has not all three (confidence, hope, and security), he displeases God.

### **What Security is Based Upon**

There can be no true security without being a believer in Jesus Christ as the Son of God. A true believer is an obedient believer. To put it in a nut shell, our security is based upon God's grace (unmerited favor, Eph. 2:7-9), and our compliance to His conditions for obtaining it. Those conditions are discussed under the next heading.

### **What is Meant by "Walk in the light"?**

John assures us that "if we walk in the light... the blood of Jesus ... cleanseth us from all sin." The word "walk" has to do with manner of life. One is either walking in the light or walking in darkness. Even though the faithful Christian sins from time to time his manner of life doesn't change—he isn't necessarily, by that sin, made to walk in darkness.

Let's study the context of the phrase, "walk in the light" (1 Jn. 1:6-2:1). The theme is fellowship with God and with one another. The eighth verse teaches us that fellowship is not based upon being "without sin". The ninth verse teaches us that, rather than deny the fact of our sins we must confess our sins. Then the next verse, "... these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...", is given to keep the brethren from misunderstanding and taking what was said in verse seven as an encouragement to sin. That which was being taught in verse seven was just what it says and it is the truth between the extremes. However, some believe that the Christian does not sin while in the light. They believe that when one sins he is at that point, out of the light and thus out of fellowship with God and the brethren. But now there is a big problem with that. If the phrase "walk in the light" means "sinlessness" there wouldn't be any sins to be cleansed by the blood. So if one is walking in the light it would have to be because he is "without sin".

Some make a play on the words, "as He is in the light". Of course when they do, it is tantamount to admitting that perfection is essential to being in a saved condition. The question is not how we walk but where we are walking. Isaiah appealed to the house of Jacob: "Come let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isa. 2:5). Certainly God is light, but we are merely imperfect humans. We must walk in the light of the Lord, which indicated the place. No man can live in the sun but all can walk in the sunlight. While on earth we cannot attain the same degree of purity, perfection, holiness, honesty and knowledge as God possesses, but we can walk in His light. God's condition for grace is not that we be like Him for His word tells us we all sin. One such passage is Ecc. 7:20: "For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not." (Also 1 Ki. 8:46; and Jas. 3:2, 8).


Then someone says, "The blood is not continuously applied but is continuously available". Now is that what the text says? The text teaches that one who walks in the light has the blood continuously applied. If it is just "available" what are the conditions? Repentance and

confession certainly are essential for one to walk in the light. But one says, "Each individual sin must be confessed specifically." Another says, "No, groups or categories of sin will suffice." And another says, "It is when we say the words 'forgive me of all my sins.'" Brethren, what does the text say? It says none of the above. It says, "If we confess our sins God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins . . .". Although we should confess specific sins, as did Simon (Acts 8), the confession of 1 Jn. 1:9 is a general statement. Rather than deny our sins (vs. 8), we must confess them. Rather than "walk in darkness" we must "walk in the light". The two "walks" are opposites and both have to do with attitude and manner of life. Likewise, denial of sin and confession of sin are opposites and have to do with one's manner of life.

### **Conclusion**

The cleansing for those who "walk in the light" is not "unconditional" and it is not "automatic" (without repentance and confession). Rather, it is conditioned upon one's continually repenting of specific sins, confessing specifically those sins of which he is aware and asking forgiveness for his "secret sins" (Psa. 19:12-13).

This view has not one shade of Calvinism and it lends no encouragement to sin. "These things have I written unto you that you sin not". The charge that this teaching leads to sinful teaching and practices is just as false and ridiculous as to charge that having a preacher leads to the "pastor system". With this view our spiritual security is not based upon our having perfect knowledge of law and our being absolutely certain that we have recalled and confessed specifically every sin. With this view even the babe in Christ who is honest and diligent in his effort to learn, grow, and do God's will can have confidence that should he be overtaken by death suddenly, he will forever be with the Lord in heaven.



## **A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER"**

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The editor has asked that I review the article entitled "The Security Of The Believer" by Robert Waters found elsewhere in this issue. I do not know brother Waters personally, but I intend to treat him with all fairness and kindness in this review. I appreciate the policy of this paper in handling such disagreements as this. While the paper is open to discussion, the editor will call an end to an exchange after both sides have been given ample space and then move on to other matters.

**What Is The Real Issue?**

The first thing we need to do is to focus upon what the real issue of difference is. (1) This issue is not a question of security or confidence. Brother Waters and I both agree that the Christian has confidence. (2) The question is not whether or not the Christian can or must live perfectly. Neither of us believe that he can. (3) The issue is not a matter of specific confession of every instance of sin. Neither of us believe that is required. Thus we will waste a lot of time and space to deal at length with these points.

The real issue is: are there some sins that separate us from God and some that don't? Robert Waters tells us that there are some sins that do not separate us from God. I say that all sins separate us from God. That is the real difference.

### **Two Extremes**

Our brother suggests that his position is between two extremes with reference to the security of the believer. The first extreme is Calvinism which teaches "once saved always saved." This provides a false hope. Then the other extreme that he gives is "that a child of God falls from grace every time he sins, and it matters not whether the sin was committed inadvertently or in ignorance, nor does it matter what the attitude of the child of God is." This he says provides no hope. Well, I just wonder what sin brother Waters thinks a child of God can commit and not stand condemned before God. Brother Waters, would you please give us an example of such a sin?

It is interesting to me that this is the same argument that the Baptists have used to try to deny the possibility of apostasy. A. U. Nunnery said in his debate with Guy N. Woods, "According to his proposition (I don't know, whether every Christian that was here yesterday, whether you are a Christian today or not). He might have so lived or so acted last night, that he's a sinner this morning" (Woods-Nunnery Debate, p. 244). Nunnery further said, "They will have their names rubbed out every day and have them rewritten the next day, that will be a mess" (Ibid, p. 302). The charge that brother Waters makes concerning what I and those who agree with me teach is no different than the charge made by the Calvinists through the years.

### **Confidence, Hope and Security**

A lot of space was used by our brother to cite passages that teach we can have confidence. Again I say that is not an issue. I believe that the Christian can and should have confidence, hope and security. We disagree on the basis for the confidence. The basis is not that there are some sins which do not separate us from God. If that were the case, then we would have confidence and security while we continued in sin. I believe that this is what our brother believes. He tells us in this article and in other writings on the subject that the cleansing is "continuously applied." He wrote in *The Expository Review*, "We must not overlook God's dealings with the nation of Israel. They were not rejected until they had demonstrated that they had no intention of repenting and walking again in the old paths (Jeremiah 6)" (August, 1983). I wonder why this works for some sins but not for others. Evidently from what we just saw above, one can have confidence and security even though he continues in that sin and hasn't repented or confessed. If that is not the case, then the blood is not "continuously applied" and God does condemn one before he demonstrates that he is not going to repent. Will that not work on the man who commits adultery? Will that not also work on the man who worships with the instrument ignorantly? If not, I want brother Waters to tell us why not. Why do these people not have the same confidence that he has? It seems to me that they would if the basis for the confidence that he has described be true.

The true basis for confidence is the grace of God (blood of Christ—1 Jno. 1:7) as we repent and confess our sins (1 Jno. 1:9) and serve diligently (2 Pet. 1:5-10).

To be fair to brother Waters, he does believe that a Christian must repent and confess. However he believes that confession is a general acknowledgement that we are not free of sin. If he thinks that any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential then he has no more confidence than the rest of us have, for if one sins, he stands condemned until that general repentance, confession and prayer is made.

I really don't understand how a man can contend that some sins do not separate us from God and the blood is "continuously applied" and at the same time say that repentance and confession is essential. That seems to me to be contradictory. Brother Waters, which way will it be?

### **Walking In The Light**

Our brother tells us, "Even though the faithful Christian sins from time to time his manner of life doesn't change—he isn't necessarily, by that sin, made to walk in darkness." He goes on to say, "However, some believe that when one sins he is, at that point, out of the light and thus out of fellowship with God and the brethren." He has told us before that "some unwillful sins do not cause spiritual death" (Expository Review, August 1983). Brother Waters has written a 36 page booklet also entitled "The Security Of The Believer". In it he says, "some sins result in spiritual death and some do not" (p. 10). "Sins that are committed, 'as we practice the truth', are sins that God does not consider rebellion against him and for which he does not sever fellowship" (p. 11). "Since some sins are an abomination to God, we must deduct that some are not as detestable" (p. 14). In his booklet he takes passages like Ezek. 18:4; Isa. 59:2; Jas. 1:15 and Rom. 6:23 which show that spiritual death is the result of sin and says that these do "not teach that every sin causes spiritual death" (pp. 17-18).

Brother Waters, please tell us WHAT SIN DOES NOT SEPARATE ONE FROM GOD? Name one. If it is a sin of ignorance or weakness, name some sins of ignorance and weakness that do not condemn the soul. Will he do it? We shall see. What about the sin of lying, does it separate from God? In a context of telling us that some sins result in spiritual death and others do not, he tells us that the difference in the mind of the judge is influenced by the attitude of the transgressor. "For example, Ananias and Sapphira lied and died (Acts 5); whereas Abraham lied three times (Gen. 12:13; 20:5; & 25:7) and he lived" (Booklet, p. 10). Well, I wonder if we can lie today and not be separated from God. What about adultery, does it separate from God? He said in **The Expository Review** that the sin of David and Bathsheba was one of those that is "not so severely punished" (August, 1983). Does that mean they were not separated from God? What about the fellow who commits adultery in a moment of weakness? Is he separated from God? And then I wonder about the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument. He never really knew that it was wrong. Why does he not have fellowship with God as the Christian who may commit any other sin of ignorance? And if he is in fellowship with God, why should we not also fellowship him? Are we better than God?

If one sin doesn't separate one from God, then just how many does it take? Will two? That's just one more. Three? That's just one more than two. Four? Five? How many does it take? The New Testament is filled with passages and examples that tell us that one sin

is all that it takes for one to stand condemned. Will our brother tell us that all of these are willful sins? Will he say that none of these are cases of sins out of ignorance or weakness? Did none of these have an humble attitude? Consider the following: (1) Adam and Eve (Gen. 3); (2) Nadab and Abihu (Lev. 10); (3) Achan (Josh 7); (4) Uzzah (2 Sam. 6); (5) David (2 Sam. 11); (6) Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5); (7) Peter (Gal. 2:11—the ASV says that he "stood condemned"); and (8) Simon (Acts 8). Brother Waters tells us that Simon didn't fall when he sinned. "These babes at Corinth, even though said to be carnal, were not fallen, and neither was Simon" (Booklet, p. 19). Nevertheless Peter said, "thy money perish with thee" (Acts 8:20, emphasis mine DVR).

Paul said, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye that are spiritual, restore such an one ..." (Gal. 6:1, emphasis mine DVR). How many sins are involved in "a fault"?

If brother Water's position be true, I just wonder how we are to determine which sins separate and which don't. There is nothing in the context of 1 Jno. 1:7 to limit sins to those of ignorance and weakness. If 1 Jno. 1:7 means that one type of sin doesn't separate from God, it means that no sin separates from God. If it includes sins of ignorance and weakness why will it not also include willful sins?

Whether answering Waters, Ketcherside or a Baptist preacher the point is still the same. Sins of ignorance separate like any other sin. Consider the case of the man of God who believed the lie of the old prophet (1 Kings 13:18-26). Saul persecuted the church ignorantly (1 Tim. 1:13). Jesus will say "depart from me" to many who ignorantly attempted to serve him (Matt. 7:21-ff). Those who crucified the Son of God did so ignorantly (Lk. 23:34).

Brother Waters suggests in his article and in his booklet that to deny his position is to contend for perfection. Such is simply not the case. Imperfection is not necessarily sin. Some areas are relative and thus we will never reach perfection. But, that doesn't mean that we are guilty of sin. A simple misunderstanding is not sin (Rom. 14). However when we do sin, to plead for repentance and confession is not teaching that we must be perfect.

### **Blood Continuously Applied**

Our brother says that 1 Jno. 1:7 says that the blood is continuously applied. The text doesn't say that. That's an assumption of Robert Waters. Look at v. 9. The blood cleanses as we confess.

### **Specific Confession?**

He tells us, "But one says, 'Each individual sin must be confessed specifically.' " Who teaches that? Would you please name a writer or speaker who has taught that. I don't know of anyone. Keep in mind that there is a difference in repentance and confession of what one is guilty and specific confession of every instance of sin.

We are told that the confession of 1 Jno. 1:9 is a general statement of one's manner of life. That's not what the text says. The text says we are to confess our "sins", not the fact that we are sinners.

### **Questions**

1. Why will your position not work on the pious unimmersed?
2. What about the homosexual who doesn't know he is wrong, is he in fellowship with God?
3. What sin (give some examples) can a child of God commit and not be separated?

### **Conclusion**

"Therefore, thou son of man, say unto the children of thy people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turneth from his wickedness; neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sinneth" (Ezek. 33:12).



## **“THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER” (2) RESPONSE TO RADER**

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The Jan. issue contained an article entitled "The Security of the Believer" which was written by me and was reviewed by Donnie Rader. If you have not read them please do so before continuing. Elsewhere in this issue is a response to this article. Please study it along with this one. In dealing with his review I shall use the headings as he used them.

WHAT IS THE ISSUE": I must take exception to the wording of some of what Donnie says the issue is not. He said, "This issue is not a question of security or confidence". The Christian should have confidence but the question is does he when he should? My reason for writing is the fact that the confidence of many Christians has been shaken due to the teachings of certain preachers over the last few years.

Then brother Rader said, "The question is not whether or not the Christian can live perfect. Neither of us believe that he can." Even though he admits that a Christian cannot live perfectly (several prominent men of his persuasion are saying one can), his doctrine necessitates that one do so to have confidence and security. You see, he believes that every sin, without qualification, causes God to sever his grace and fellowship, leaving one to walk in darkness. So according to him, if one is in the light he is perfect, in the sense of sinlessness. Therefore, if one has confidence and security he must believe that he is sinless. Thankfully though, they do not practice this doctrine. For example, when they preach a funeral for a faithful Christian they assure the family and friends that their loved one has gone to a better place, regardless of the real possibility that the deceased may have inadvertently sinned and died before wording any kind of confession. Another example is that they wait until a brother refuses to repent, rather than withdraw fellowship from him as soon as his sin becomes known. I wonder if it is alright to practice something the Bible doesn't teach.

Note that my brother didn't deny holding an extreme position. Brother Rader, isn't truth always between extremes? He concluded this section by saying, "The charge that brother Waters makes . . . is no different than the charge made by Calvinists . . ." Calvinists teach apostasy is impossible; the Bible teaches that it is possible, but Rader teaches that it is inevitable. Incidentally, in the Woods-Nunnery debate that was mentioned, Woods responded by saying that the position that Nunnery was making fun of was "bald legalism". Woods holds the position that I do.



CONFIDENCE, HOPE AND SECURITY: Under this heading brother Rader makes his first of a number of quotes of things I have written elsewhere. I thought he was supposed to review my article, not everything I have ever written on this subject. I would like to reply to everything, especially the quotes he took out of context, but unfortunately space will not allow me to do so at this time.

Donnie implies that I believe a Christian may continue in sin, or practice sin, because I have said that the cleansing of 1 Jn. 1:7 is "continuously applied." But what he apparently failed to notice is that I have consistently taught that the one who has the blood continuously applied is faithful and diligent—a true Christian.

Next he wrote, "However he believes that confession is a general acknowledgement that we are not free of sin." Well that's only partly true. I taught that 1 Jn. 1:9 is a general confession as opposed to a general denial of sin (not necessarily a worded confession), but in the same sentence I made it clear that there is a "specific" confession of known sin (Acts 8). More than that, the Christian should ask forgiveness for sins of which he is unaware (Psa. 19:12). Continual repentance, confession, and prayer on the part of a faithful Christian is essential if he is to "walk in the light". It is something that the Christian does while in the light. My brother's problem is that he thinks repentance and confession of sin is something the Christian does while out of the light. (Really though, and who is not "in the light" is not a Christian, since he would not be Christ-like). Rather, repentance and confession are a practice of the Christian. One brother wrote, " If he is walking in the light, he is not guilty of sin and does not NEED to confess anything" (J.L.Z.). How far from the truth! The Pharisee in the parable in Luke 18 didn't think he needed to confess anything but look what happened to him. This will continue to seem contradictory to men like Rader until they accept that "walk in the light" doesn't mean "sinless living".

My friend next said, "If he thinks that any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential then he has no more confidence than the rest of us have, for if one sins, he stands condemned until that general repentance, confession and prayer is made." No, that's not what I believe. That's what you teach, unless you think all sins have to be specifically confessed. Which is it, brother Rader?

WALKING IN THE LIGHT: Note how our brother dealt with this section. He quoted from my article and booklet in the first paragraph, but that was about it. Then, rather than deal objectively with what was said he built a straw man. He wants to know "what sin does not separate one from God", and, "If *one* sin doesn't separate one from God, then just how many does it take?" I say he built a straw man because I have never said there is a sin, or particular deed, that will not separate one from God, nor have I said that one sin will not do it. His question, "just how many does it take?", is not the issue with Calvinists nor with our discussion. With Calvinists it is not a question of how many, but will any do it. And as far as we are concerned it is not a question of how many, but attitude—what will he do about it when he learns of it.

In using Gal. 6:1 Donnie teaches that "a fault" causes one to fall from grace. He has concluded that the word "restore" has reference to fellowship—that fellowship is lost when one is overtaken in a fault. (We've already seen that he doesn't practice this idea). His exegesis of the passage is that if you have a fault you are lost. But if that is true it is most unfortunate for all of us. What about you brother Rader, do you have a fault? We who are spiritual are to seek to correct the faults of brethren. The fault may be one that has resulted in spiritual death or it might not. The next point I think worthy of reply is his statement, "Brother Waters suggests in his article and in his booklet that to deny his position is to contend for perfection." Is it not 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)? In view of this theory, we deny our sins if we express confidence of salvation.

**BLOOD CONTINUOUSLY APPLIED:** In my first article I said, "The text teaches that one who walks in the light has the blood continuously applied." Brother Rader said, "The text doesn't say that." Well then, if my statement was wrong, then one who walks in the light does not have the blood continuously applied. He said, "That's an assumption of Robert Waters." Well, I'll let the reader decide who is doing the assuming. Here it is: "But if we walk in the light... the blood ...cleanseth..."

Yes, the blood cleanseth as we confess; the confession being a part of the "walk". But the word "cleanseth" of 1 Jn. 1:7 is continuous. Vincent said, "The cleansing is present and continuous." But, of course verse nine gives a condition, which is that we confess our sins. We are forgiven of sins as we confess, or "if we confess", in the same sense that we are forgiven "as we forgive our debtors" (Mt. 6:11-14). The context of verse nine indicates that this confession is in opposition to denying sin in our lives (or thinking that we are "without sin"). Specific confession of known sin is of course taught in Acts 8.

1 Jn. 1:7 does teach that the blood is continuously applied to those who "walk in the light". That is what it says. Of course confession is essential to that walk, but so is repentance, forgiveness, love, etc.

**SPECIFIC CONFESSION:** Now he wants to know who teaches that each individual sin must be confessed specifically. I wish he hadn't asked that because I would rather not call names and give quotes of anyone who can't respond. But since he asked I feel obligated to answer. Of course writers have been careful not to come right out and say "all sins must be specifically confessed", nevertheless, it is apparently believed and taught. You judge from the following quotes (emphasis mine): 1) **Marshall Patton**—"When in public prayer we pray 'Forgive us our sin,' such presupposes repentance on the part of **each individual of what he is guilty**. Public prayer is no place to identify each individual's private sin." (GOT, July 4, 85, p. 401. **John Welch**—"When a man does not confess his sin, the guilt of it is still with him and he is walking in darkness." (F&F's, Jan. 81,;10). **Donnie Rader**—implied it when, in ridiculing a Calvinist who asked, "Can a person be in error on simply one point of Bible doctrine and still go to heaven?", he said, "Doesn't that sound like some of our brethren today?" Rader implied that he believed any "one point" must be specifically confessed. If "one point" of Bible doctrine then every sin (F&F's, Jan. 81, p. 30). **James Zachary**—The consequence of sin is spiritual death...

The only way to avoid such a consequence is to do something about **that particular sin** . . ." (The Epistle, May 85). "When I commit a sin, I have done an unrighteous act. That makes me unrighteous . . . As long as I have the guilt of **that sin**, I am walking in darkness. **The moment I repent, pray and confess** The Lord forgives me and I once again walk in the light. To be in 'darkness' is to have **sinned and not yet confessed.**" (**Know the Truth**, May 5, 85; published by C of C, Winchester Rd., Memphis, TN). **Mike Willis**—"I believe that any time a Christian commits a sin, he stands condemned (Gal. 2:14) or he dies spiritually (Gen. 3). In order to be forgiven of **that sin**, he must **repent of his sin**, confess it, and pray for forgiveness from the Lord." (GOT, June 6, 85, p. 368). (Mike now denies believing what he said).

Brother Rader, if you believe in confessing categories of sin, what if you did not know of or forgot to specifically confess a certain category? Or do you believe a general confession such as, "forgive me of all past sins", will suffice in such cases.

QUESTIONS (asked by Rader): 1. "Why will your position not work on the pious unimmersed?"

Answer: The "Pious unimmersed" have not had the blood of Christ applied and thus are not walking in the light.

2. "What about the homosexual who doesn't know he is wrong, is he in fellowship with God?" Answer: It would be rare indeed that a Christian not know that such was wrong. Our society in general has come to look upon this sin as a great sin. If we were to judge according to human standards and reasoning we would have to say, "that man is definitely in darkness", but we are not the judge. Judgments on hypothetical examples that involve ourselves are necessary (to an extent), to our having confidence. But whether the individual in the "what if" case is in fellowship with God or not in God's business. IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH US. Churches no doubt have fellowshiped sexually immoral persons, but if a church is aware of it, it must withdraw fellowship. So really, the question, and others like it, are irrelevant and prejudicial. 3. "What sin (give some examples) can a child of God commit and not be separated?"

Answer: A child of God is not permitted to commit any sin willingly. But we all sin as my brother has admitted.

RADER'S CONCLUSION: He concludes with a quotation of Ezek. 33:12, but why I do not know. All that I wish to say about it is to ask you to read the whole paragraph and any commentary (if you choose), and you will readily see that it lends no support to that which brother Rader is advocating.

QUESTIONS FOR BROTHER RADER: 1. Is a thing sin if the one guilty is ignorant of it (consider Lev. 5:17)?

2. If a man who had been preaching the gospel and serving God faithfully for 40 years inadvertently or ignorantly sins and dies before he becomes aware of it and before any confession can be worded, would he go to hell in every instance? You can answer this one because it may happen to you.

3. Is it not true that "sins of omission", (failure to do, Jas. 4:17), is sin just as sins of

commission? If yes, then if I must be without sin to walk in the light and in fellowship with God, that means that I must always do everything I know to do that is good. Do you?

### **Conclusion**

If I believed the way brother Rader believes I would be too scared to open my mouth to teach even after diligent study. You see, if he is teaching error on even one Bible subject, regardless of what it is, he is separated from God and would be eternally lost if he died while teaching it. I once showed a preacher an error that he made in a sermon, thinking that it might help him to see that there was no security in his position. But he said, "that was just unfortunate". It was unfortunate alright. But what is more unfortunate is the fact that brethren are denying their sins rather than confessing them.

If the reader has difficulty understanding what this is all about you can go to Luke 18:9-14 where the Lord summed it up in one short parable. There was a Pharisee who was self-righteous and who denied his sins and there was a tax collector who said, "God be merciful to me a sinner!". Clearly we can see that there is a wrong attitude and a right one here. And surely the lesson is that after we have been diligent in our service to him, we are not perfect or sinless (Ecc. 7:20; 1 Ki. 8:46; Prv. 20:9; Psa. 143:2; 2 Chron. 6:36; Rom. 3:9-19; Jas. 3:2,8). But sinners in need of mercy for sins aside from what we are able to recognize and specifically confess.

Brethren, don't lose sight of the fact that we who "do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the spirit", have been made "free from the law of sin and death" by "the law of the spirit of life" (see Scheme of Redemption, by Wharton pp. 17-23, on Rom. 8:1-4).

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## **A REVIEW OF "THE SECURITY OF THE BELIEVER" (2) RESPONSE TO WATERS**

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I appreciate the good attitude with which brother Waters is carrying on this discussion. When such is the case, the discussion can only be profitable.

## **Things He Didn't Answer**

1. 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. I asked him about the man who may be guilty of lying, adultery or worshipping with the instrument. Do these sins separate from God? He didn't tell us. I'm asking again, brother Waters, please tell us **what sin(s) does not separate from God?**
2. Since he believes that (a) some sins do not separate, (b) the blood is continuously applied, and (c) one is not condemned until he demonstrates that he will not repent—then what about the one who commits adultery in weakness or ignorantly worships with the instrument, why do they not have the same confidence that you have? I've asked that before. Why didn't he deal with it?
3. Though he made reference to it, he really didn't address the point that he has no more confidence than he claims we have if he believes any kind of repentance, confession and prayer is essential, for one would be condemned until that repentance, confession and prayer was made.
4. He didn't really answer the question that I asked about how many sins it takes to separate from God. If one sin committed in ignorance or inadvertence doesn't separate then would two, three, four? Just how many? He didn't tell us.
5. He didn't deal with the eight examples of one sin (some of ignorance, weakness and inadvertence) separating from God.
6. 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. He didn't tell us.

I plead with our brother to deal with these points as well as those that I shall make in this article.

## **The Article**

What I teach gives no reason for a lack of confidence as brother Waters tried to indicate. I have already shown that his teaching doesn't provide any more confidence. Even if some sins do not separate, we still would have no more security because we would need a list of all the sins that do and don't separate, a perfect knowledge of that list and a perfect knowledge of self.

Brother Waters, just who are the several prominent men who say one can live perfect? We would like proof of his statement.

Our brother said, "So according to him, if one is in the light he is perfect, in the sense of sinlessness." While one is in the light he is without sin, just as one who rises from baptism is sinless at that point, though he is not and will never be perfect (there are many

virtues in which he can continue to grow, for example love, knowledge, patience and self control). However, he will sin (1 Jno. 1:8) which is a step out of the light (1 Jno. 1:5). The Christian who asks for forgiveness is then in the light and is sinless at that point. If not, the prayer was ineffective.

He said that I would preach the funeral of a man and give assurance to the family not knowing if he died with a sin of inadvertence unconfessed. Thus he says I don't practice what I preach. Brother Waters, do you preach funerals and give assurance to the families? If so, do you know for sure that they didn't commit a willful sin that was unconfessed. Do you know that any sin they did commit and didn't confess was one of inadvertence? Do you know that they didn't sin in attitude and didn't confess it? Then concerning a church withdrawing fellowship, there is a difference in the point at which a church withdraws from one and the point at which he is separated from God. Withdrawal is the last step, not the first.

He says that I teach that apostasy is inevitable. I do teach that all sin separates (Jas. 1:15). That doesn't mean that when we sin (1 Jno. 1:8) we will become wholesale apostates and be the man of Heb. 6. I'm confused on how he uses the term "apostasy". I generally use it to mean a complete abandonment of the faith. However, if he means that I teach that the Christian will sin (1 Jno. 1:8) and that sin will separate him from God and he denies that such is inevitable, then he is the one that affirms the possibility of sinlessness.

He denies that his teaching that the blood was "continuously applied" means that a Christian may continue in sin without separation. If the Christian who sins ignorantly or inadvertently is not cleansed as long as he may ignorantly or inadvertently sin, then the blood is not continuously applied.

He says that I believe that repentance and confession are done outside the light. If the brother who has sinned is still in the light, then why does he need to repent and confess? Is sin equated with darkness or light in the N.T.? What about the faith, repentance and confession on the part of the alien sinner, are those done outside the light, or is he already in the light as he meets the conditions in God's law of pardon?

Our brother denies that he believes that one stands condemned until a general repentance, confession and prayer is made. Then why does he claim to teach that repentance and confession are essential? If one doesn't stand condemned until he repents and confesses, then these are not essential to forgiveness. I wonder if he doesn't believe that one's past life give future forgiveness. Consider his question about the preacher who faithfully served God for 40 years then inadvertently or ignorantly sinned and died before confession. Brother Waters, do you think that his 40 years of righteousness granted him forgiveness of these ignorant and inadvertent sins? Suppose the things were turned around and for 40 years he had been a wicked sinner and then the day before he died he was baptized. Do the 40 years of sin mean his baptism is of no avail? Why not, if 40 years of righteousness means that those sins were of no avail?

He said, "I have never said there is a sin, or particular deed, that will not separate one from God, nor have I said that one sin will not do it." He has told us that some sins do not separate (See Searching The Scriptures, Jan., 86; The Expository Review, Aug. 83; his booklet, The Security of the Believer, pp. 8,10,11,12,13,14,16, 18).

We are told that it isn't a question of how many sins, but attitude. Suppose the man is ignorant of the right attitude and sins, is he separated? According to him, one sin in attitude will separate one from God. Now I wonder even more about that preacher who served God for 40 years and then commits one sin (wrong attitude). Does his 40 years of righteousness take care of that sin?

In his reference to Gal. 6:1 he confuses "faults" as we normally use the term today and "sin" as it is used in the passage. He said that the fault may result in spiritual death or it may not. If it doesn't separate from God, then why does he need to be restored? He says that in 1 Jno. 1:7 that "cleanseth" is continuous. While that is true, it is only as frequent as we confess (1 Jno. 1:9).

I had asked for the names of men who taught that we must specifically confess every instance of sin as brother Waters said some taught. None of the men quoted believe that. He misrepresented every one of them! None of the quotes say what I was asking and he knew it as evidenced in his statement just previous to the quotes.

He asked about confessing categories of sin and what if one forgot to confess a certain category. I pointed out in my first article that 1 Jno. 1:9 says we must confess our sins (of what we are guilty). That doesn't mean every specific instance of sin. If he is guilty of lying, though he may not remember every instance, he must confess that he is guilty of lying.

### **My Questions**

1. He didn't answer the question. If some sins don't separate, then why doesn't that work on the pious unimmersed?
2. It seems that he had trouble answering about the homosexual. He said he would judge from human standards that the homosexual is in darkness. Why? If some sins of ignorance do not separate from God, why will it not work here? He said it would be a rare situation for a Christian not to know it was wrong. Well, tell us about that rare case.
3. He didn't answer this question either. I know you believe that a child of God cannot willfully sin, but I was asking for some examples of those sins that do not separate. Surely, surely you can just name a few.

### **More Questions**

1. If a Christian sins, are there any conditions for forgiveness?
2. Should we fellowship all the saved?

3. Is it possible for a Christian to lie (as Abraham did) and not be separated from God?
4. Is the man who ignorantly worships with the instrument guilty of a sin that separates him from God or is that a sin that doesn't separate?

### **Questions For Me**

1. Yes (1 Tim. 1:12-16).
2. Yes, so far as the word of God teaches (the old prophet—1 Kings 13; Ezek. 33:12). What is the likelihood of a faithful servant of 40 years not knowing that he had sinned?
3. Yes. (Matt. 25:31-46).

### **Absolute And Relative Matters**

It will help in this issue if we better understand that not all of God's requirements are of the same nature. There are some areas that are absolute. In these we must be perfect. There is no room for growth. One is either guilty of adultery or lying or he is not. In this area we can attain unto God's perfect law. There are other areas that are relative. Our obedience to these commands is determined upon our time, opportunity and abilities. There are varying degrees of patience and knowledge. These commands we never keep perfectly. We always fall short of perfection. But, that lack of perfection is not necessarily sin. The key is a "diligent" effort (2 Pet. 1:5). (For more study on this see Marshall E. Patton's excellent articles in Searching The Scriptures, Sept., 74 and Jan., 79).

### **Constantly Sinning?**

Underlying this idea that some sins do not separate is the concept that the Christian constantly sins. That's why some have to believe some sins don't separate, for if all sin did separate we would be hopeless because we sin all the time. Where is the passage that shows that the Christian is in and out of sin regularly? Oh, I know he will and does sin (1 Jno. 1:8), but that doesn't say that he can't help but sin every hour of the day. I just don't believe we are all that sinful; do you? If we are, we are a sorry and hopeless bunch! I realize that we all will and do sin, but lack of perfection is not sin. Neither is every misunderstanding a sin (Rom. 14).



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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. I 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 specifically 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."

**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?

<b>EXTREME</b>	<b>IS THIS TRUTH?</b>	<b>EXTREME</b>
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 weakness) 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