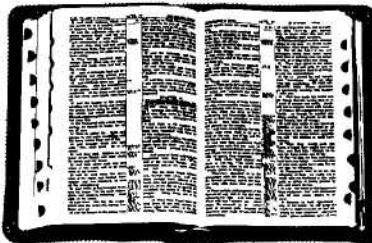


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

"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

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VOLUME XXVIII

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WAKE THE WORLD AND TELL THE PEOPLE

Wilson Adams

891 Autumn Valley Lane
Gambrills, MD 21054



KITCHEN TABLE CONVERSATIONS

No, I'm not promoting the denominational propaganda of "salvation by faith only." We all understand that such is false doctrine and opposed by Scripture. Neither am I suggesting that we mimic the Mormons and other cultic groups and launch out on the evangelistic trail of knocking on every door in the city (personally I've never observed much success coming from random door knocking with attempts made to convert person X whom we have never seen before and who has never seen us. isn't it a little strange that we are eager to talk to people we don't know and hesitant to reach out to those we do know? Maybe I'm wrong and I'm sure there are exceptions but that's been my experience.) There must be another way. I believe there is.

I hate to say this but many churches of Jesus Christ are dying. I said "many," not all. Some are thriving and growing and making an impact in their communities with the Gospel. These brethren are on the west coast, the east coast, in the south as well as the mid-west. Geographic locations don't seem to be a help or a hindrance to brethren who have captured the zeal of New Testament Christianity. Don't tell me that people today aren't interested in what the Gospel offers. I know better. Could it be that we have said—"Times have changed. . ." "Things are different. . ." "It's not that way anymore..." so long that we have actually believed it, and thus excused our inactivity and spiritual stagnation?

Here's what I think. I think people are tired of denominational pabulum that makes a mockery of God's simple arrangement. People are tired of ecclesiastical hierarchies and church synods and councils which insult human intelligence by claiming that man can't really comprehend Scripture. And people are tired of churches that offer nothing but a social atmosphere and exist solely for the benefit of those seeking entertainment and recreation, food and frolic. People are looking for a religion based on Bible, rooted in an appreciation for divine authority and filled with people who are enthused about living life (in the real world) on the mountain peak of human potential. Who else can offer them that? Pentecostalism can't, for it's pure emotionalism. Denominationalism can't, for it preaches moral ethics while ignoring basic Bible doctrines. Catholicism can't. Crossroadsism can't. Cultic groups can't. BUT MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST CAN! I really believe that. Do you?

We have got to find a way to get the Lord's message out of the four walls of the church building and into the hearts and homes of people who are hurting. For too long we have sat in our buildings and waited for the community to flock on in and they haven't "flocked." ("Woe are we. . . people aren't interested in the Gospel anymore. . .") And do you know what we preachers do about it? We lambaste the brethren for their failure to do more "personal work." We criticize and complain and condemn other Christians because they aren't bringing people to services, they aren't teaching home studies and they aren't. . . (I think you get the point.) I'll lay it on the line—we preachers are part of the problem. Too many of us like to lay everything off onto the brethren but (and correct me if I'm wrong) aren't we the brethren, too? Take a good look at Matthew 23:1-4. Let's not be guilty of doing that.

On the other hand, preachers can't do it all nor should they be expected to. In fact, churches that depend only on the preacher to save the unsaved will be in for a disappointment. I've actually heard people say—"You preachers have more opportunities than anyone else. . ." I DENY THAT! Do you know how many non-Christians I deal with on a daily basis? Few! Outside of a few business contacts and neighbors the majority of

folks I deal with consistently are Christians (and believe me, I count that as a privilege and a great fringe benefit to my work). But that limits me. And that limits every preacher and that's why congregations that depend on the preacher to do all the reaching out will experience minimal growth. (I really didn't mean to get into all of that but one thought led to another and...) Back to the point Even though we preachers can't do it all, the real question is: ARE WE DOING ALL WE CAN? I'll confess that I don't measure up and I can do better. How do you see it?

Have we gotten to the place where we have forgotten how to take our Bible and sit down in a humble home and talk to folks about the Lord? I don't necessarily mean going door to door to strangers we have never seen or heard about before, I mean people we know, people who have visited our services, people who know somebody who know somebody who contacted us. ARE WE DOING ALL WE CAN IN THE ONE ON ONE SITUATION OR ARE WE ONLY ENAMORED WITH THE CROWDS OF SAMARIA? (Next time you have a moment why not go back and ponder Acts 8.)

I guess the biggest discouragement in all of this is that there is so much to do and so little time. Balancing a busy schedule, preparing lessons, writing articles, taking time off for the family-all have to be considered and all deserve quality and quantity time. We must study to meet God's approval (2 Tim. 2:15) and that takes time (it does no good to invite people to a feast when we haven't taken the time to prepare the meal!), but we must also guard against the condition of self-inflation to the point where we feel that we are too important to walk with Phillip down the Gaza road.

I'm thankful to God for men like Dick Blackford, Rodney Miller, Wayne Chappell and a host of others who have influenced my life and shown me that people can be taught and led to the Lord, that congregations can grow and that the preacher's greatest thrill is not preaching to a packed house on Lord's Day morning but, rather, experiencing the joy of a late night kitchen table, an open Bible and a favorable response to the age-old question: "What doth hinder you from being baptized?"

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Editorial

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EVENTS AT THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

The promise of the second coming of our Lord has produced many beneficial results. It offers hope to the faithful and instills fear in the ungodly. While the righteous can confidently say "Even so, Come Lord Jesus", for the wicked such a prospect is fraught with terror, for "our God is a consuming fire." It is the expectation of His coming that stimulates evangelism. We do not know when He shall come and therefore it is urgent that we be ready at all times. We must reach all we can with the gospel message "while it is day." This hope challenges us to devotion. "Every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself" (1 John 3:3). In light of His coming Peter said "What manner of persons ought ye to be..." (2 Pet. 3:11).

While the doctrine of the second coming of Christ is such a vital part of scripture, it is a shame that false teachers have so confused the minds of people as to exactly what is to take place at His coming. Let's see if we can set the record straight.

The second coming of Christ will be the end of the world. "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10). In the context of that passage we learn that this deals with the "promise of his coming" (verse 4). Right now, the world is "reserved unto fire against the day of judgment" (verse 7). The "day of the Lord of verse 10 is the day that fulfills the "promise of his coming." It is the day when all that pertains to this earth will be destroyed. That plays havoc with the schedule arranged by dispensationalists who have an elaborate menu arranged for what will happen on earth after the second coming of Christ. They speak of his coming in different stages, of rapture, tribulation and a literal reign upon a literal throne in literal Jerusalem for a literal one thousand years. But the Bible teaches that at the second coming this earth and the works therein shall be "burned up." Jesus left in clouds, and according to angelic promise, will return in clouds (Acts 1:9-11). Paul said we will meet him "in the air" (1 Thes. 4:17).

Well, what about the "new heavens and new earth"? Whatever that will be, this present earth will not be associated with it, for this present heaven and earth

"shall be burned up." The expression "new heaven and a new earth" is used to describe a new dwelling place which God is preparing for his own. The coming of the Lord is the end (1 Cor. 1:7-8).

All the dead shall be raised at his coming. Speculators tell us there will be a thousand years between the raising of the righteous and the wicked. But Jesus said "The hour is coming in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jno. 5:28-29). The same "hour" the righteous come forth is the same "hour" the wicked come forth. There is no thousand year period here between the raising of the righteous and the wicked. 1 Thes. 4:13-18 does not teach it, either, for that passage only deals with the issue of the righteous dead as opposed to the living in Christ at the time of his coming. The subject of the wicked dead was not even mentioned in 1 Thes. 4.

At his coming the kingdom will be delivered up to God. "But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power" (1 Cor. 15:23-24). Instead of taking up rule and authority at his second coming, Paul said he will "deliver it up to the Father." Something is dreadfully wrong with the time-table of the speculators.

His second coming will be the end of preparation to meet God. The parable of the wise and foolish virgins of Mt. 25:1-13 teaches that when the master returned, "the door was shut." Then the time of preparation will be ended. False teachers hold out false hope to unconverted Jews by teaching that the door will left cracked open enough for them to have another chance to get in. But the time to prepare for his return is while the master is in "the far country", not after he returns from it. That is when the door will be shut. There is no room left for a thousand years between the return and the accounting of the servants. Such teaching as we hear so frequently these days runs counter to what the Bible teaches about God's impartiality. He treats Jew and Gentile alike and offers the same gospel to both. It is wrong to teach Jewish people to glory "in the flesh."

His coming will institute the judgment of all men. Mt. 25:31-46 shows that when he comes he will sit on the throne of his glory and will separate the wicked from the righteous. Notice the order in the passage: he comes in glory, then he shall sit upon his throne, before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them. This passage leaves no room for a thousand years between his coming and the judgment of all men.

The first coming of Christ accomplished all God meant for it to do. His mission of salvation is complete (Eph. 1:7-10). His revelation is complete (Jude 3). His authority is now complete, he has it "all" (Mt. 28:18). His kingdom is complete. The Colossians were in it (Col. 1:13). John was in it (Rev. 1:9) It cannot be moved (Heb. 12:28). His throne is complete (Rev. 3:21). Not long

before his arrest, trials and crucifixion, Jesus prayed to his father and said "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do" (John. 17:4). Then in verse 11, he said "I am no more in the world!" Every millennialist would have to argue with the Lord on that, for they are just certain that he was mistaken about it and that he will be yet in the world for a literal 1,000 years. Their problem is that they do not understand the book of Revelation, much less the 20th chapter of that great book. They do not know the difference between literal and figurative language in the Bible. They have a false concept of the prophetic books of the Old Testament which provide the backdrop for the symbolism of the book of Revelation. Not understanding that, they seize upon the thousand years out of a passage which assures victory for the cause of Christ in the interest of martyred saints, and then based upon a view of that passage, weave an elaborate web of speculation which bends and twists the whole Bible out of shape to make it fit this notion.

The Lord is coming for the purposes stated in this article, plus a few other things the Bible teaches which space forbids our treating here. It will be to our eternal advantage to watch and pray and maintain constant readiness for the trumpet to sound and for all things temporal to end.

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Donnie V. Rader

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THE EFFICACY OF PRAYER (Part 1)

Part of the process of learning how to pray is to understand the efficacy of prayer. Knowing that power and effectiveness teaches us to pray.

As a whole God's people today are not a praying people as they ought to be. It seems that we are not as prayerful as the saints of old. C. R. Nichol once said, "Prayer is less engaged in today, so far as we can Team, than in former ages." One reason for that may be that we have failed to realize the efficacy of prayer. Forbes Robinson observed, "a man's power in the spiritual world is measured by his prayer."

We shall consider in this article that God answers prayer and some of man's erroneous views of that. In the one to follow we shall study the providence of God.

God Answers Prayer

The Bible plainly states that fact. If we believe the Bible, we believe God answers prayer. Look carefully at a few passages. James said, "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). In the next two verses he illustrates the effectiveness in relating the case of Elijah praying for it not to rain and it didn't. Then, he prayed for rain and it did (vs. 17-18). Jesus said, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you... If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him" (Matt. 7:7-11). Peter said, "the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers" (1 Pet. 3:12).

Prayer will do good. James said that prayer "availeth much" (Jas. 5:16). He didn't say that it avails to the full extent of our wishes. Nor does he say that it avails to grant the things for which we ask. Yet, the text does promise that it does much. To illustrate, when one fires a rifle it accomplishes something. He may miss the target, but the bullet still has force. It may do nothing but split open the air or dig up the ground. But, it does something. So, every prayer has power. It does something. It may miss the mark for which we aimed, but it does good.

Every prayer receives an answer. This does not mean that our prayers are answered immediately or in the way that we desire. It will be answered according to God's desire and will. The answer will either be yes, no

or wait awhile. We can be assured though that God in someway responds to the prayers of the righteous (1 Pet. 3:12).

Sometimes the answer is "no". Paul prayed three times that God would remove the "thorn in the flesh", but God's answer was "no" (2 Cor. 12:7-9). David prayed that his child wouldn't die, but he did (2 Sam. 12:15-23). We must reconcile ourselves to the fact that God does not always grant the request we make. When such is the response, that doesn't mean God didn't answer. He answered, we can be sure, but just not the way we wanted him to.

Erroneous Views That Deny

That God Answers Prayer

"Prayer is merely a glorified pep-talk." Some think that the only good accomplished in prayer is that it spurs us on to greater zeal. Such a concept comes from a heart that has little or no faith in its creator. The passages noticed earlier in the article affirm that prayer does more. However, if this concept were correct, then the heathen would benefit just as much from prayer as the Christian. Likewise, prayer offered to an idol or a fence post would be just as effective.

"God can't answer without working miracles." It is possible that this concept comes as an over-reaction to Pentecostalism, thinking that since God doesn't work miracles today, he just does not work today. We put limitations on God to the point that he is to us no more than what the heathen's god is to him. How do you know God can't answer prayer without working a miracle? Could not God who was able to create the world from nothing work in his universe within the realm of natural laws?

Naturalism says that everything is predetermined and fixed. Thus, God will not change a thing. The concept says that God has now removed himself far from the world; having wound us up like clocks, he just sets back and watches us tick. This theory says that all that happens is a part of the natural course of events and that God's hand has not and will not change a thing.

Again, If we believe in God and the Bible at all we can see that this concept is erroneous.

Prayer used as an emergency device. Some only pray when they are deathly sick or some family member is ill or in some major crisis. When that prayer isn't answered as they thought it should be, they have doubts about the power of prayer. Obviously, these do not "pray without ceasing" (I Thess. 5:17).

These are a few of the modern day views that say in essence that God does not answer prayer. We, the people of God, believe otherwise.

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PATTON—PHILLIPS DEBATE

Marshall E. Patton

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THIRD AFFIRMATIVE By Marshall E. Patton

PROPOSITION: The Scriptures teach that the innocent person (free of fornication) who has been put away without God's or his/her approval and against whom adultery has been committed may remarry.

According to the arrangements of this debate, this article brings my part of this discussion to a close, except for a very brief rebuttal. According to the rules of honorable debate, Brother Phillips will not introduce any new material in his third negative.

In closing his last article (second negative) Brother Phillips levels some charges against me which I feel obligated to answer, not just in self defense, but also in the interest of truth and the exposition of error. I had rather he had left such judgment to the readers of this exchange. Furthermore, I had rather he had identified in particular that which would sustain his charges instead of making assertions. However, the fallacy of such charges are exposed in the brief review that follows.

Brief Review

In my first affirmative, I made an argument and gave proof that Matt. 5:32b cannot apply to ANY divorced person, but only to a particular "her." My argument involved the innocence of the husband in this verse and the innocence of the put away wife in 32a which innocence **proves** that the put away "her" of 32b was one against whom no fornication had been committed. Therefore, to apply this part of the verse to anyone else is to misapply the word of God. I even illustrated this argument with a chart, the point of which Brother Phillips completely missed and misrepresented my intended use of it, as I pointed out in my last article.

Brother Phillips, in your reply to this verse, you never touched this argument. You exposed no error. You did not even deny the innocence affirmed. Yet in spite of this proof to the contrary, you continue to apply it to "anyone—everyone" and that without making any argument to prove it. I will let our readers answer the question, Who is really guilty of "assertions"?

In my second affirmative I made an argument and gave proof that Matt. 19:9b, like Matt. 5:32b, cannot apply to ANY put away person, but only to a particular

"her." My argument involved the meaning of the Greek "kai" translated "and" which is a copulative conjunction connecting the a and b part of this verse. I gave Thayer's two possible meanings only one of which is possible in harmony with the context and all else revealed. The two possible meanings are: 1) Sequential, i.e., the b part follows in sequence—"in addition" or "after" the events of part a, and 2) Adverbial, i.e., "likewise," which means the situations of a and b part are alike. In this instance both the husband and the put away wife marry when no fornication is involved before their remarriage. My argument proved that only meaning No. 2 is possible, and, therefore, cannot be applied to the person of my proposition. I also used charts to illustrate this.

Brother Phillips, How did you answer this? You said after checking 35 translations you found not one that translated "and" so that "also" or "likewise" appear either in the text or footnotes. Of course, not! Neither do they translate it "in addition" or "afterwards" which meaning is necessary to the position you hold. The issue is not how is "kai" translated, but what is it meaning? You replied, but did not answer the argument. You exposed no wrong in the argument. Yet, in spite of proof to the contrary, you continue to assert without proof that the b part of this verse applies to "anyone—everyone." Again, I will let our readers answer the question, Who is really guilty of "assertions."?

Since you question Thayer's definition of "kai," let me give a Bible example of its adverbial use meaning "likewise." In Mark 10:11, 12 we read, "And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another, committeth adultery against her. AND (Emp.—MEP) if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery." The word "And" which joins verses 11 and 12 is from the same Greek "kai" which joins a and b parts of Matt. 19:9. In this passage from Mark the obvious meaning is "likewise." What is true of the husband is also true of the woman and we do not need a lexicon or any other authority to see it.

In my first affirmative I made an argument and gave proof that the "Whosoever" of the exception clause of Matt. 19:9 INCLUDES the person of my proposition. If there is any word that means "anyone—everyone," here it is! The only persons EXCLUDED are those excepted by revealed truth. I pointed out three exceptions and pressed you to find one more—one that would EXCLUDE the person of my proposition. I pointed out that unless you could do this, my proposition stands! How did you reply? You said, "Until brother Patton finds a "Whosoever" who can marry again (except the "Whosoever" who puts away his spouse for the CAUSE of fornication), he has not proved his proposition." Brother Phillips, I do not need to find another "Whosoever." The one in the exception clause INCLUDES the person of my proposition. The innocent person of my proposition puts away his/her guilty spouse for the CAUSE of fornication. You fail to recognize the all-inclusive meaning of "Whosoever." Until you show another exception—in addition to those I named—the per-

son of my proposition in INCLUDED.

True, the "Whosoever" does not specify in particular one who was already put away by human authority and without God's approval—so What? Neither does it specify in particular all the others which it includes and the situations peculiar to each. Think what a list such would make. The word "Whosoever" covers them all. Remember, it just does not meet the issue to say that such a person has already been put away. If so, then human action contrary to God's will can take away a divine prerogative! This human authority supersedes the divine. Brother Phillips, you have not shown any escape from this consequence.

These arguments and proof given on my part are not "assertions, claims, unnecessary inferences." They are not "misapplied scripture." They are not an "imagined situation." I believe our readers can see that I have made arguments and offered proof that continues to stand.

Positions Clarified

Brother Phillips begins his second negative trying to set before our readers my position. In so doing he fails to do so fully and accurately. He attributes to me the affirmation that "At a later time (the length of time would have no bearing on the situation) the husband remarries, thereby committing adultery." He knows that I refused to sign a proposition which he submitted before the debate which affirmed that the adultery against the innocent person was committed "subsequent" to the putting away. The Lord did not specify any time frame in which this adultery must be committed against the innocent in order to remarriage. By what authority do we specify a time element? The innocent person might have had fornication committed against him/her before the guilty spouse put him/her away—WHILE he/she was praying, hoping, and trying for reconciliation. The fact that the guilty spouse beat the innocent person to the putting away does not take away the divine prerogative that previously prevailed. After all, the putting away by the guilty spouse was by human authority and without God's approval. It was FUTILE so far as breaking the marriage bond in heaven is concerned. Even Brother Phillips has admitted this. Whether the fornication is committed before or after the putting away by human authority is immaterial—the divine prerogative remains for the person of my proposition.

Now, I have corrected him, let us see if I can clarify his position. If I fail, he will correct me.

A husband who has been scripturally married to his wife comes home one day with his secretary by his side and with whom he has committed fornication and announces to his wife that he is through with her; that he thereby puts her away, and that he is going to marry his secretary. Because he was the first to say, "I put you away," his innocent wife is doomed thereafter to celibacy. Even if she, because of his fornication, rushes to the court and filed for divorce, it would be to no avail so far as her having a right to remarry is concerned. I understand that Brother Phillips believes that civil au-

thority is beside the point so far as "putting away" is concerned. Furthermore, it would make no difference if fornication were committed after he SAID, "I put you away." She became a put away person who can never remarry when he SAID, "I put you away."

Our readers know that I take sharp issue with this position. On the matter of "putting away" my position is made clear in my definition of terms given at the beginning of the debate. Further, I believe that civil authority is ordained of God for the protection of the innocent (Rom. 13:1-4) and not to victimize the innocent as per Phillips position, if his putting away were followed by civil action. I know that the innocent must sometimes suffer because of the sins of the wicked, but there is enough of this at best. My point is, Why make the innocent suffer unnecessarily? I see this as a consequence of the position of Brother Phillips.

Misrepresentations

Brother Phillips misrepresents me when he says concerning Matt. 19:9b, "By implication brother Patton has placed an exception clause in the passage that is not actually in it. The "her" in brother Patton's proposition is not in this verse (I say, amen!—MEP). Yet he makes this '**her' who is put away against her will and whose husband has committed adultery or remarried**' an element that is necessary to prove his point." Brother Phillips, I have insisted throughout this debate that the person of my proposition is not in Matt. 19:9b. I have used argument after argument—even charts to this effect. I do not need an exception clause added to this part of the verse to sustain my proposition. We both should leave it AS IT IS! The "her" of 9b is one against whom no adultery has been committed. That is why I have opposed your applying this part of the verse to "anyone—everyone"—even to the person of my proposition. It is rather strange that you now admit that "The 'her' in brother Patton's proposition is not in this verse." What is even more strange is that before you complete your article, you turn right around and apply it and Matt. 5:32b, which says the same thing, to "anyone—everyone, including the person of my proposition. Now, just which time did you mean what you said?

Again, when Brother Phillips says concerning Matt. 5:32b that "No persons other than the "whosoever" and "her" that is divorced is in this passage, I agree with him. I wonder why he keeps applying it to ANOTHER person—even the one of my proposition, who, according to his own admission, is not in it!

Again, he misrepresents me when he says, "Brother Patton equates the putting away with God releasing the yoke." My point from the beginning has been that when the person of my proposition was put away that such did not effect the yoke or marriage bond in heaven.

Release Clause

Brother Phillips wants to know Where is the exception clause that releases a put away woman from the adultery of Matt. 5:32b; 19:9b; Lk. 16:18b who was put away when no fornication was involved, with or without her will? I answer, There is none. However, if this

woman was put away against her will and thereafter was praying, hoping, and trying for reconciliation until adultery was committed against her, she may then exercise the divine prerogative of Matt. 5:32a and 19:9a. These exception clauses release such a person from the adultery of the b part of these verses.

Marriage-Bond-Yoke

Brother Phillips' arbitrary use of these terms confuses the issue and involves him in contradictions and inconsistencies. Let me show how this is so.

He acknowledges that marriage approved of God involves a personal commitment, "a covenant between a man and woman," and also "a divine element"—a joining "with a yoke that can be broken only by God. . ." ; that "at death God releases that bond of marriage (Romans 7:2, 3; 1 Corinthians 7:39)." Yet, he ignores and excludes this divine element in the matter of terminating the marriage. He teaches that the breaking of the personal commitment on the part of either the husband or wife totally dissolves the marriage. He says, "Where this happens the marriage is broken. . . Whether approved by God or by the one put away makes no differences, the marriage is terminated; it no longer exists!" While he recognizes the "yoke" and "bond" in heaven as continuing, it is no longer called by him a "marriage bond" which is exactly what he called it before the breaking of the personal commitment. Question, Brother Phillips: What kind of "bond" is it (the one in heaven) after the breaking of the personal commitment? If it is still a "marriage bond," then the MARRIAGE remains intact, untouched, and unaffected in heaven. If it is no longer a "marriage bond," then it has been broken by someone other than God, which contradicts your former statement. It has been touched, effected, broken, and changed into some other kind of bond—as yet we know not what kind to call it—and all of this because of human action by human authority on earth.

While this point in our discussion has come up too late for full discussion, especially in view of our limited space, I believe that much confusion can be cleared if we remember that the Bible speaks of marriage from different view-points—that of the world and that of heaven. While the Bible recognizes both and speaks accordingly, we must determine which by the context. The verses cited by Brother Phillips can be easily understood this way. For example, the "unmarried" woman who needs to be reconciled to her "husband" in 1 Cor. 7:11 is "unmarried" from the viewpoint of the world, but still married from the viewpoint of heaven—otherwise, we have an unmarried husband, which involves a contradiction of terms. Again, in Matt. 14:3,4 Herodias was married to Herod from the viewpoint of the world, but was still the "wife" of Herod's brother, Philip—hence, still married to Philip from the viewpoint of heaven, otherwise we have an unmarried wife, which involves another contradiction of terms.

I insist that human action by human authority can have no effect upon a marriage formed in heaven from God's viewpoint! Therefore, the divine prerogative

which God gives to the innocent person of my proposition stands—regardless of what is done on earth.

The Waiting Game

I answered Brother Phillips on the "waiting game" in my last article. One thing he has not done—One thing he cannot do—and that is pin on me the "waiting game" AS DEFINED in my definition of terms. This is the one he is obligated to deal with, and so far he has left it untouched. Read my former reply.

Mark 10:11

My answer to Brother Phillips' question as to whether I deny the argument attributed to me is, No. My point was that he ignored the argument I did make and tried to answer one I did not make.

Furthermore, he has missed my argument on this verse, and he has missed the point of the authorities as well—even the ones he quoted. I have known all along that the Greek "epi" can be and sometimes is translated "with." If so, the reference is always to the second wife. If it be translated "against," it of necessity refers to the first wife. The meaning of "adultery" demands this. Note the following: "The (Greek letters—MEP) at the end of ver. 11 may mean either against, to the prejudice of her (the first wife), or with her (the second). The former view is taken by leading modern exegetes, the latter by Victor Ant., Euthy., Theophy., and, among moderns, Ewals and Bleek" (THE EXPOSITOR'S GREEK TESTAMENT, Vol. 1, p. 409).

Brother Phillips made his first argument using "against" and I replied accordingly. If he wants to use the word "with," that is all right with me. The adultery would then be with the second wife, but by necessary implication it would be against the first.

May the Lord bless this debate to the establishment of truth, the exposition of error, the edification of souls, and above all to the glory of God.

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PATTON—PHILLIPS DEBATE

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THIRD NEGATIVE By H. E. Phillips

This is the closing article in this discussion, except for a brief rebuttal by each of us. I shall introduce no new material, but I will respond to the material already in evidence, including his third affirmative. It is not necessary that I take each statement or argument he made and examine it. Obviously, there are some things upon which we agree, some things that are repetitious, and to the rest I have already replied.

Brother Patton has formulated a doctrine which he has been trying to prove by the Scriptures, but he has failed through three efforts. He stated the issue between us in his first affirmative. He said: "I affirm that there is a certain put away person who may remarry and the proposition is worded so as to help identify this certain person. Brother Phillips believes that no put away person may remarry, hence, the issue between us." The reader needs to keep in mind that this is the issue in this debate. He holds a position destined to be popular with the public because most divorced people are seeking a way to remarry with approval. They welcome any creed that will appear to give divine sanction to divorce and remarriage. I want no part in giving false hope for remarriage to those who have been divorced for any cause.

Brief Review Reviewed

Brother Patton reaffirms that Matthew 5:32b "cannot apply to ANY divorced person, but only to a particular 'her.'" He said in his first affirmative that there are TWO putting aways in this verse: one for fornication (authorized in the exception clause), and one for some cause other than fornication. But brother Patton eliminates the putting away for other than fornication by his process of argumentation, leaving only the putting away FOR FORNICATION. That is the only one he has left in Matthew 5:32. He says: "This putting away is done by human authority and, hence, without God's approval." "Furthermore, this latter putting away is futile so far as breaking the bond formed by God when He joined them in marriage." (First Affirmative). That leaves in brother Patton's position only ONE putting away in Matthew 5:32, the one for fornication. No other is really a putting away. Please read again what I said in my second negative on this point.

Matthew 5:32 says the "whosoever" husband puts

away his wife, "saving for the cause of fornication. . ." Brother Patton argues that this "put away" wife is not guilty of fornication, neither the husband. He says this innocent put away wife must wait until the husband commits adultery or remarries, THEN she may "put away" the husband and be free to remarry. Question: What more does the innocent wife DO in "putting away" the husband than what the husband DID when he "put away" the wife? That question is not answered by telling us what God DID. The Scriptures do not teach that God "puts away" anyone in marriage; the husband OR wife does that. God may or may not release one of them from that which He has "joined together." If this innocent husband terminated the covenant and relationship of marriage, and that is all he can do, what MORE can the innocent wife do, "who has adultery committed against her," subsequent to his putting away of the wife? There is nothing for her to put away. SHE can put away NOTHING because no marriage remains to terminate.

The issue is not resolved by saying that the first putting away was not really a "putting away." Jesus said in every case that the husband "PUT AWAY his wife," and the wife "PUT AWAY her husband" (Mark 10:11, 12). This putting away is for every cause, including fornication. The putting away of a put away person is impossible in view of the language of Jesus.

"Kai"

In this discussion, brother Patton has argued that the word "kai" in Matthew 19:9 has two meanings. He says Mr. Thayer says the first meaning is, "... It marks something added to what has already been said, OR (Emp.—MEP) that of which something already said holds good; accordingly it takes on the nature of an adverb. . . likewise" (Second Affirmative). This second definition is the way brother Patton wants to define "kai" in Matthew 19:9. But what is the difference between the construction of the sentences in Matthew 5:32 and in Matthew 19:9? The reason I ask is because he has argued in his affirmatives that the woman of Matthew 5:32b is the "wife" of Matthew 5:32 a. If he is correct, then Thayer's first definition would have to be given to "kai." Since the sentence construction is exactly the same in Matthew 19:9, what is there in the text or context of the sentences that would make Matthew 19:9 different from 5:32 except that it is necessary to brother Patton's position?

Brother Patton accuses me of questioning Thayer's definition of "kai." No, I did not question his definition. I questioned brother Patton's application of it. In his third affirmative brother Patton uses Mark 10:11-12 when the word "kai" is used according to the second definition that is given by Thayer. Why would this be true? It is because the context shows that Christ is discussing **two different parties who are doing the same thing.**

Brother Patton wants me to find one who is EXCLUDED from the "whosoever" of Matthew 5:32a and 19:9a besides the three he gave in his first affirmative. The fact of the matter is, his three "exclusions" boil

down to only two: 1. The put away fornicator. 2. The person put away for every cause. I do not have to find one who is EXCLUDED from the "whosoever" in these passages; he has to prove that his person is INCLUDED. It is brother Patton's position that is being examined. Let me identify the "whosoever" of these verses. The "whosoever" in part "a" of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 DID the putting away. This does not fit brother Patton's proposition because he was not a put away person. The "whosoever" of the "b" part is the one who marries the put away person, and in every case, without exception, he commits adultery; that makes the put away woman commit adultery.

Brother Patton says if the "put away person" of his proposition can not "put away" the spouse who put him/her away after fornication is committed, "... then human action contrary to God's will can take away a divine prerogative!" That is not so! I dealt with that in my second negative when discussing the meaning of putting away. The "divine prerogative" belongs ONLY to that person who puts away his/her spouse FOR THE CAUSE OF FORNICATION. To apply this to a person already expelled from the marriage covenant and relationship for a cause other than fornication, when the marriage has been terminated, certainly rests on human authority. Brother Patton is doing just that!:! It is totally false to talk about terminating a covenant-contract and relationship that has already been terminated. There is nothing to "put away" by the person who has been "put away."

Brother Patton's Emotional Appeal

I am amazed at brother Patton's appeal to sympathy and emotion by an example which represents neither his nor my views on this subject. He presents a man who comes home with his secretary with whom he had committed fornication and tells his wife he is through with her and he thereby puts her away, and that he is going to marry his secretary. Because he was the first to say, "I put you away," his innocent wife is doomed thereafter to celibacy. Brother Patton, you know full well that does not represent anything I believe and teach, and it certainly does not represent your position. The readers can read my negatives and I know I have never said or implied that "putting away" consisted only of SAYING: "I put you away." Please do not misrepresent me in that regard anymore. Why use such a prejudiced illustration if not to misrepresent me?

But using brother Patton's illustration with a slight change let us see what happens to the "innocent wife" who is "doomed thereafter to celibacy." The husband comes home without his secretary and SAYS, "I put you away." He never remarries or commits adultery. Can this poor innocent wife have any recourse? Can she ever remarry without sin? Now brother Patton, one proves as much as the other. The truth of the matter is, human situations never prove anything to be scriptural or unscriptural.

Misrepresentations

Brother Patton is mixed up about my statement on

Matthew 5:32b. I said that "No persons other than the 'whosoever' and 'her' that is divorced is in this passage." I did not apply it to ANOTHER person, the one in his proposition. I said his particular "her" is not in either Matthew 19:9 or 5:32, I did not misrepresent him.

I did not misrepresent him on his equating putting away with God releasing the yoke. This is a fact, and that is his problem in this discussion. God does not "put away" anyone in marriage, man does that.

I asked brother Patton for an exception clause in Matthew 5:32b and 19:9b and he said, "There is none." Then quit trying to find one. Where does the Bible teach that the put away woman without fornication must oppose the divorce? He affirms for her to be eligible to remarry, she must be praying, hoping, and trying for reconciliation until adultery was committed "against" her. Where does the New Testament teach this condition? Where is the passage? Is this not human authority? Of the "unmarried" woman in I Corinthians 7:11 he says she is such from the viewpoint "of the world, but still married from the viewpoint of heaven—otherwise, we have an unmarried husband, which involves a contradiction of terms." But we have an "unmarried wife" in verses 10,11. Is that a contradiction of terms? The fact of the matter is the marriage is broken if she leaves her husband. God's yoke is still there, and that is the reason she has but one course if she does not remain "unmarried," be reconciled to her husband, the man with whom she once had a marriage commitment and relationship.

The Waiting Game

Brother Patton's definition of the "waiting game" is more accommodative to his position than it is to the meaning of the words as they relate to this subject. Read his definition in his first affirmative. One must accept the consequences of his position. However he defines "the waiting game," his position demands that the put away person of his proposition must wait until the he/she who did the putting away remarries or commits adultery. That is a key element in his/her being qualified for remarriage, according to brother Patton's proposition. He can deny it all he wishes, but the fact remains his particular "her" MUST play "the waiting game" before she can remarry, and he admitted that in his second affirmative.

Mark 10:11

Brother Patton claims I ignored his argument and answered one he did not make. I will leave the reader to make that judgment. Read again my first and second negatives, he is making an arbitrary application of "against" the first wife and "with" the second wife.

But if it be conceded that the correct use of Mark 10:11 be "against" the first wife, what does it prove with regard to his woman of Matthew 5:32 b? Remember, he said that no fornication is involved in this verse. She has been put away, the marriage is dissolved and the relationship terminated. What is SHE going to "put away" even if he committed adultery?

There are only two persons in this "b" part of Matthew 5:32 and 19:9: the "whosoever" (any and every

man) and "her that is divorced." Every passage used in this debate that has the "b" part teaches the same thing, and **there are NO exception clauses**. The "whosoever" who marries the put away person **commits adultery**. That is it! The "whosoever" in these verses is any man. Without exception he/she commits adultery when **marrying** a divorced person. It is absolutely impossible for the one marrying the put away person to commit adultery without the put away person also committing adultery. That means the put away person who marries "whosoever" commits adultery with him/her without exception. Any view you take of the "b" part of Matthew 5:32; 19:9 and Luke 16:18 leaves no area for the "whosoever" who marries the put away person, and the "her" who is put away, to be free from adultery. That means neither of them is free to remarry anyone.

This closes my third negative. I have tried to be honest with brother Patton and myself. I am grateful to brother Connie Adams for the opportunity to engage in this discussion in the pages of Searching The Scriptures. I am grateful to brother Patton for his efforts and willingness to engage in this discussion. We are dealing with serious matters which have to do with the human race, with the purity and success of the church and with our eternal destiny. I am indebted to some men whose valuable material I freely used in preparing for this discussion. Among these were J. T. Smith, Maurice Barnett, Gene Frost, Donnie Rader, Jay Bowman and several others.

I pray that this discussion will help many know and obey the truth of God's word in the marriage relationship. I pray that God and his word will be glorified.

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**PATTON—PHILLIPS DEBATE
REBUTTAL
By Marshal E. Patton**

While Brother Phillips made reply to my first two affirmatives, in my judgment, he did not meet the arguments I made. I commend him for finally meeting some of my former arguments in his third negative, though such effort fails of its objective. I regret that he waited to do this until I have no opportunity to make fair and full reply—Impossible in this limited rebuttal.

I deny having formulated a doctrine, new or otherwise. I verily believe (except for cause of death) that only the innocent person who "puts away" his/her spouse for fornication may remarry! I oppose the efforts of some who would take away this DIVINE PREROGATIVE from such a one as is identified in my proposition.

If Brother Phillips will show wherein I misrepresented him in my illustration of his position, I will apologize. I am sorry he has impugned my motive. My illustration was based upon his own statements in his second negative on what terminates a marriage, e.g., "When the commitment is broken, the marriage is dissolved. .. Whoever initiates the termination of the marriage 'puts away' the other. He/she dismisses the spouse from the relationship"—Also, upon his opposition to the expression "put away by civil authority" in the proposition for debate (according to correspondence from Brother Adams prior to the debate saying that Phillips thought "civil authority" was "beside the point" in a putting away). Based upon the above, I still see no inaccuracy in my illustration. Brother Phillips, I was VERY CAREFUL to show your error in your illustration. Please do as much for me. What MORE must be done besides giving the verbal dismissal? I accept the consequences of your second illustration. I acknowledged that the innocent often suffer at the hands of the guilty, but my point was, Why cause suffering unnecessarily, as per your position?

Your NEW ARGUMENT on "kai" and the "sentence construction" of Matt. 5:32 and 19:9 is in error. In the former there are no "likewise" situations—no remarriage in the a part, only in b, and that "after" the action in a. Matt. 19:9 is DIFFERENT. As you said about Mk. 10:11,12, you have "**two different parties who are doing the same thing**"—Both remarry when no fornication is involved, hence, "likewise" situations. For reasons already given "kai" must take the meaning of "likewise" in this instance.

O yes, there is something the innocent put away wife (person) of my proposition CAN put away! She can put away the one who yet remains her husband from God's viewpoint. She CAN DO this by breaking HER personal commitment which heretofore has remained unbroken. When she DOES THIS, God breaks (releases)

the marriage bond in heaven which heretofore remained intact. This is MORE than he, by human authority and in violation of God's will, has done or can do.

It is my honest conviction that the position held by Brother Phillips and a few others has grown out of an effort to refute arguments in behalf of the put away fornicator remarrying. Until this issue became prominent, brethren in general held (most still do) the position I have affirmed. Brethren, in our efforts to oppose error let us not run past Jerusalem and knock ourselves out against the walls of Jericho. May God bless this study to His glory.

**PATTON—PHILLIPS DEBATE
REBUTTAL
By H. E. Phillips**

Our agreement called for a one page rebuttal for each of us after the third negative. It is impossible to reply to an argument in that short space. Brother Patton's rebuttal was a brief restatement of his arguments and my reply to them. I shall, therefore, make some brief observations in closing.

Brother Patton has not shown any scriptural evidence that a **put away person** may remarry under any circumstances. He has inferred it from his process of arguments and human situations, but that is not Bible proof.

He has not been able to escape "the waiting game" in order to get the person of his proposition remarried. He has vehemently denied it throughout the discussion, but he must accept that consequence or renounce his position.

He has not been able to prove that the "whosoever" of Matthew 5:32b, 19:9b and Luke 16:18b can marry the put away woman without committing adultery. That means the **put away** woman commits adultery when the "whosoever" marries her.

Brother Patton cannot find Bible proof for the conditions he claims for the innocent put away person who must be opposing the divorce, and **must** be praying, hoping, and trying for reconciliation until adultery is committed against her before she is eligible to remarry. This condition is of human authority and not divine.

In his rebuttal he appeals to the majority position as proof of right. He says my position is held by "a few others" but the majority of brethren hold the position which he affirms. What does that prove? I am not impressed by the number who hold a position. I am concerned with what the Bible teaches.

The total effort of brother Patton in his three affirmatives has been to strain out of the exception clause in Matthew 5:32a and 19:9a a person who **HAS BEEN PUT AWAY** for any cause other than fornication, and thrust him/her into the role of the one **DOING THE PUTTING AWAY** for the cause of fornication and be

free to remarry without sin. He has misused these verses in his efforts. He has made two grievous errors in his affirmatives: First, to disregard the context of the verses he used and develop a position that supports an already growing problem of adulterous marriages in the church. Second, he is opening the gates to "acceptable" divorce for literally thousands who will carry his position a little further by his own reasoning, and the congregations of God's people will be filled with second, third and even fourth marriages based upon his arguments. I must raise my voice against such a position. May God bless our efforts to a better understanding of His word.

would triumph. I shall hold dear those few hours and remember that advice for a lifetime. I deeply treasure the confident hope of continuing that conversation in a beautiful home where we will never again part.

His family, Mrs. H. F. (Pearl) Sharp, Mr. and Mrs. H. F. "Sonny" Sharp, Jr., Mr. and Mrs. Keith Sharp, eight grandchildren, two brothers and a surviving sister, thank the many hundreds of friends and brothers and sisters in Christ who have expressed their love and concern.

(I have asked Brother James W. Adams to write an obituary of Dad, and he has consented. This will follow in a few weeks.

HAROLD F. SHARP, SR. PASSES

Keith Sharp
Rt. 1, Box 8034
Mena, AR 71953

H. F. Sharp, a preacher of the gospel for approximately fifty years, passed away Sunday, February 1, 1987, after an extended illness. He departed this life while a patient in the Arkansas Baptist Medical Center in Little Rock, where he had been a patient for about three months, suffering from pneumonia and congestive heart failure. He was seventy-one years old.

He had often prayed for a peaceful hour in which to die. He passed away without struggle in his sleep while his elder son, H. F. Sharp, Jr., was at his side.

I oft heard him pray he would not live so long that he would renounce the great truths for which he had sacrificed and fought. This prayer, also, was answered affirmatively. To the very end he employed all his strength to uphold truth and fight error. His beloved wife and faithful help meet, Pearl, had to type his article for the May, 1986 special issue of The PRECEPTOR on "The Christian and Sin" because a stroke had caused his left hand to be numb. Thus, though an aged and weary warrior at the time the struggle over "neo-Calvinism" beset the Lord's church, he fought to the end.

His desire was to preach as long as he was able. The last time I was privileged to see him alive, nine days before his death, his mind was lucid, his memory clear and his knowledge of the Scriptures profound. He spent some time telling me about the sermon he planned to preach at Cedar Hill, the little, country congregation where he labored the last six years of his life, when he got out of the hospital.

That day, as he sat in his wheelchair, he spoke to me of standing for the truth and the sacrifices and heartaches that would result. But he firmly maintained truth

SINCERE WORDS

The preacher sought to find out acceptable words: and that which was written was upright, even words of truth (Ecc. 12:10)."

Dick Blackford
P.O. Box 225
Owensboro, KY 42302



SHOULD SCIENTIFIC CREATION BE TAUGHT IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS?

(This article first appeared in the "In My View" column of the MESSENGER INQUIRER, daily newspaper of Owensboro, Kentucky, on September 7, 1986.)

The Messenger-Inquirer reported that some Nobel Prize winners had urged the Supreme Court to strike down the Louisiana law requiring schools to give balanced treatment of creation and evolution. Where are the wise men among us? Our time is characterized as one with an abundance of knowledge but little wisdom. Are these men aware that the father of modern evolutionary theory believed in balance? "For I am well aware that scarcely a single point is discussed in this volume on which facts cannot be adduced, often apparently leading to conclusions directly opposite to those at which I have arrived. A fair result can be obtained only by fully stating and balancing the facts and arguments on both sides of each question; . . ." (Charles Darwin, THE ORIGIN OF THE SPECIES, p. 6). It is not a matter of evolutionists having access to information not available to creationists. The same evidence from nature is available to both. The question is, which interpretation best fits the evidence.

Contrary to public misinformation, it is not against the law to teach creation science nor to criticize evolution in the classroom. It can be done without quoting the Bible, if this is such a problem. Creation scientists are asking that balance be given these two views on origins rather than championing one and censoring the other. It is true that any position on origins isulti-

mately beyond the realm of science. We can produce neither the Big Bang nor the Act of Creation, since both would be past events that had no observers. However, everything since that origin is open to inquiry. It is therefore reasonable to use the methods of science to investigate whether it is reasonable to postulate a Creator.

Some object that creationism is fundamental to conservative religious views. Evolution is also a basic premise of many religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, liberal protestantism, modernist Catholicism, Reformed Judaism, Humanism, Communism, and Atheism). A 1961 Supreme Court decision (*Torcaso v. Watkins*) declared that a system of thought need not profess faith in a Creator to be considered a religion. The Humanist Manifesto plainly says that Humanism is a religion (p. 3) and that evolution is a cardinal tenet of Humanism (p. 8). Thus, it is absurd to claim that evolution is a non-religious subject. The renowned British physicist, Dr. H. S. Lipson, echoed exactly the same sentiment. He said: **"In fact, evolution became in a sense a scientific religion; almost all scientists have accepted it and many are prepared to 'bend' their observations to fit in with it,"** ("A Physicist Looks At Evolution," In: **Physics Bulletin, Vol. 31, May, 1980**).

At the time of the Scopes Trial (1925) evolutionists thought it was unfair that evolution could not be taught in the classroom. Clarence Darrow argued that it was "bigotry" to teach only one theory of origins. They liked Darrow's logic then. It is a poor rule that won't work both ways. Creationists are asking for fair treatment, not favored treatment (as evolution presently enjoys).

The Constitution does not require hostility toward belief in a Creator, as the American Civil Liberties Union seems to think. The poor logic of ACLU lawyers is astonishing! It appears they have a philosophy to spread. They have become notorious for opposing distribution of Bibles, prayer, posting of the 10 Commandments in schools while defending pornographers, the Nazi Party, homosexuals, abortionists, evolutionists, etc. They have become watchdogs for the nation's schools to make sure they don't teach anything that harmonizes with conservative religion. They say nothing when various forms of religious humanism are taught. This seems hypocritical.

Eight judges of the fifth circuit court disagree with creationism being taught. They said, **"Irrespective of whether it is fully supported by scientific evidence, the theory is a religious belief,"** (*Messenger-Inquirer*, 5/17/86). Imagine it—even if fully supported by science! For centuries the Bible has taught the necessity of blood for life (Lev. 17:14). Less than two hundred years ago men thought blood should be drained from a person when he was sick (re. George Washington, World Book Encyclopaedia, Vol. 21). Leeches were also used to extract "bad blood." The necessity of blood for life is now fully supported by science. Must we now take that information out of science books since the Bible (a religious document) was the first and only source that taught it for centuries? What about the fact that the earth is round and it hangs on nothing? (Isa. 40:22; Job 26:7). These

and many other pre-scientific truths will need to be removed from textbooks if we follow the judges' logic. Wisdom has departed from the wise (Rom. 1:21-23).

Neither creation nor evolution are repeatable or testable, experimentally. Both can be discussed as scientific models. Students deserve to be informed of ALL the scientific data instead of being fed only what evolutionists want them to hear. Then the students can make a fair decision. To exclude information because it corresponds with the Bible is censorship of the worst kind. It is also poor science and poor education and unfortunately, our children are the losers. To exclude such information is neither American, civil, nor liberty. On the basis of such logic our children should not be exposed to the Mayflower Compact, Patrick Henry's famous speech, the Declaration of Independence, Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, the Pledge of Allegiance, etc. All of these make reference to a Creator. Tragically, subversive forces are at work to undermine these too, removing the concept of a Creator completely from the minds and literature of children.

If there is even a possibility that creation could be true (and there is!), aren't scientists supposed to be interested in truth? Have they proved there is no Creator? That is the presumption of organic evolution.

How many local teachers have had the opportunity to examine creation science textbooks? Not many, judging from the scarcity of materials in local libraries. (The public library and some Owensboro schools have allowed me to place such materials in their libraries). Many teachers, textbook writers, and librarians are simply not aware of the extensive scientific evidence that supports creation or exposes evolution.

According to a 1981 poll conducted by the Associated Press and NBC, 86 percent of the population want scientific creation taught. Only eight percent want to continue censoring scientific evidence that supports creation. Several thousand scientists now believe creation is a more accurate interpretation of the evidence. These scientists get very little press coverage. Is this censorship? There is also a growing number of evolutionists who are admitting the flaws in their theory. One can only wonder at the reluctance of evolutionists to allow the scientific evidence to speak for itself. If arguments for evolution are valid, there is no reason to fear the data presented by creation scientists.

I am not advocating Bible reading or prayer in schools, but I am saying that creation and evolution should stand or fall together. It should be to the greater benefit of everyone to be able to study and evaluate objectively all the scientific evidence and arguments for both. It is time for parents and school boards to quit being intimidated and pushed around by the ACLU and other humanists.

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WIDOWERS

QUESTION: You stated in a previous article on the church helping widows that the principle would also apply to widowers. 1 Tim. 5:16, as well as James 1:27 specifically states, "widows," and not "widowers." As Christians we are to help the widowers but I had never thought the church was given the command to help widowers. What about this?

ANSWER: I cannot think of a Scripture that specifically states that the church or an individual is to help a widower. But there are several passages, in principle, which so teach.

James 1:27 says nothing about "widowers," particularly, and since it is individual in scope, then by the querist's manner of reasoning, we may not help a widower on an individual basis. Actually, James 1:27 is a synecdoche, a figure of speech where the part is put for the whole. James is speaking of ALL in distress or trouble of any kind. He simply uses the visitation of the fatherless and widows in their affliction as an example of pure religion.

E. W. Bullinger states that "widows and fatherless are put for all kinds of afflicted" (*Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, p. 629). He quotes Exodus 22:21 (in addition to Jas. 1:27), "Ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child," and comments, "Surely it does not follow that they might afflict all others. No! one kind of class is put for all similar kinds of helpless people."

1 Tim. 5:16 states, "If any man or woman that believeth have widows, let them relieve them, and let not the church be charged, that it may relieve them that are widows indeed." What are the children to do with their daddy since this verse obligates them to their mothers, specifically? Let him go without the necessities of life? No, no! This verse in principle also shows a responsibility we have toward our fathers and it shows the duty the church has toward widowers, as well as widows, when there are no children to help, or won't help.

In fact, the church has an obligation toward all needy saints as long as the need is there, whether young, old, single, married, widows or widowers. Cf. Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 6:1-4; 11:27-30; Rom. 15:26, etc.

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SPECIAL PEOPLE

There is a stir of excitement within, accentuated by a quickening of the pulse and a warm inner glow that overwhelms one with the realization of being special to someone. Often it is the need to be reminded that we are special that produces the very qualities that make us so. There is a thrill attendant in being a Christian explained and realized only as we recognize that such an one is special.

Let me focus on First Peter with a brief introduction. The design of this epistle is expressed in "I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand" (1 Pet. 5:12). Peter intended to accomplish three things: exhortation, testify of the true grace of God and encourage in that grace. In light of the major theme of suffering and bearing triumphantly while engulfed in trial and persecution these things are especially meaningful. Faith needed confirmation and only by patience in trial and through hope anchored in the "true grace" would that faith crystallize into the realization of how special they really were. As they are reminded of what makes them special, so are we.

In developing the theme of this article let me pose an overriding question. What makes the Christian a special person? For answer we direct our attention to some things Peter has to offer in this first chapter. Of first consideration is the fact of being "elect." The Greek "EKLEGO" meaning "choose or select" as per verse 2. The child of God is elect according to the "foreknowledge" (PROGNOSIS Gr.), the previous determination and purpose of God. It is the idea of chosen people, selected by divine will, in keeping with a purpose of God earlier formed. Paul joins with Peter to complement this picture in his statements "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of his will" (Eph. 1:3-5).

The word "PROGNOSIS" translated "foreknowledge" bears kinship to our prognosis which is usually in a medical connotation. Medically, our case is diagnosed, tests are run, evaluations made and we are anxious for the doctor's prognosis, his projection of what lies ahead.

The Christian is special because, among other things, God selected him as his very own on the basis of conditions which He willed and projected well in advance of the fact. In the Ephesian quote it is said to be "according to the good pleasure of his will." The argument over whether man is the elect of God, conditionally or unconditionally, is here laid to rest. Unconditional election is false! It is according to the good pleasure of God's will. Only as man properly relates to that will is he the elect of God.

Not only is the Christian special because of being "elect" of God but even more so because of being "begotten." As a closer look is given to verse 3, focus upon the word "again." The faltering, failing faith of the disciples of our Lord in the tragic hours of his condemnation and death was revived in the full impact of his resurrection. The perceived redemption of Israel was foiled in the Messiah's death. Hope, dead, surges to new life in the resurrection of Jesus to become a living hope, hope not bound by perishable expectations or failing earthly dreams but quickened to new force and life, to "an inheritance incorruptible."

Thirdly, the Christian is special because he is "redeemed" (v. 18). Having been set free from the bondage of sin by virtue of the payment of ransom. For a parallel thought we go to the noun form of the word "ransom" found in "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:28). As the idea of ransom echoes throughout the gospel it becomes the revealing of the chief purpose of God, deliverance of us all from sin. The life of another, Jesus, God's own Son, instead of our own. He became satisfaction, "propitiation," for our sins. Not only from the guilt of sin but from the sinful life itself as we perceive ourselves in this special relationship, being no longer given to "vain conversation." The significance of that relationship is enhanced only as we see it bought by the most precious of all gifts, the "precious blood of Christ" (1:19). How special we are!

Verse 22 adds to the picture by identifying the Christian as one purified. Analytically, this is past action with existing results, obtained in obeying the truth. Obedience is here projected as the ground of godliness with the love of brethren the effect of it. Human agency in purification is to be noted from this verse reminiscent of "save yourselves" in Acts 2:40. The soul is purified. How? By hearing and obeying the truth out of a pure heart. How simple the process and how beautiful the results as the will of God works within us.

Then verse 23 presents the Christian within the intriguing figure of birth, "born again." This statement calls attention to common parenthood. It is the same verb as in verse 3, "begotten," and offers the highest motive for wholesome relationship circumscribed in "loving as brethren" (1 Pet. 3:8). We are children of the same father, born of the same seed. The seed by which one is born into the world is different from the seed by which we are born into the family of God. One seed is "corruptible," subject to death and decay. The other is "in corruptible," and not subject to death and decay. The term "in corruptible" describes the seed itself which "liveth," possesses life (ZONTOS). In Jesus' parable of the sower, "the seed is the word of God" (Lk. 8:11), life is resident within that seed. Verse 24 is offered as proof in the quote of Isaiah 40:6-8 that the physical passes but the word abideth forever. The physical is fragile, like grass and flowers it withers and dies. But, the life produced by the word of the Lord is eternal. How significantly this adds to the picture of the Christian as someone special.

"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" (1 Pet. 2:9). You can't get any more special than that.

READ YOUR BIBLE TODAY

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 6.9, Brooks, KY 10109

CECIL WILLIS, Box 15, Woodlake, TX 75865—It was my pleasure to preach in a gospel meeting January 11-16, 1987 at the Holbrook, Arizona church. It was my first gospel meeting in six years, and was immensely pleasant to me.

The Holbrook congregation may not be familiar to many brethren. Hence, I would like to introduce these brethren to you. Holbrook is located in northeast Arizona on I-40, a highway traveled by thousands of brethren annually. Let me suggest that you plan to worship with these brethren the next time you use I-40.

Holbrook is a very interesting city of 5,000 inhabitants. It is located near the large Navajo and Apache reservations. Indians tribally own nearly 20 million acres in Arizona. About 220,000 Navajos live on the reservation which stretches into two or three adjacent states. There are 166,000 Indians living in Arizona. The smaller Apache reservation

is located just south of Holbrook. The beautiful Painted Desert and Petrified Forest National Park is just east of Holbrook. It is certain that thousands of brethren each year visit these scenic locations.

The Holbrook church only has an attendance of about 30 on the Lord's Day, but they are quite active in doing the Lord's work. Brian Faulkner and his wife, Natalie, work with the Holbrook congregation. They are in the process of adopting a Navajo infant boy. About half the students in the Holbrook school are Indians. Like nearly all congregations, the Holbrook church has a few problems that they need to work through, but they are contending for the Old Paths, and are deserving of your interest and prayers.

The meeting house is located at 4th and Erie Streets. You may reach brother Faulkner at 706 N. Ave., Holbrook, AZ 86025. His phone number is (602) 524-3625. Brian is a faithful young man in his late 20's,

and is from Columbus, Ohio. I first met Natalie's parents while in Alaska for a gospel meeting in 1966 when Natalie was just four years old.

As readers of this journal know, July 23, 1986 I made a public confession of sin in my life before the church at Groveton, Texas. The editor of this journal then asked my permission to publish the statement in this paper, along with some editorial comments about me. Included in those comments was the suggestion that brethren who had known me write me a few words of encouragement.

About three hundred brethren (mostly preachers) wrote me nice letters affirming their brotherly love. Since then I have written about 300 letters in reply, but have not yet answered all of those who wrote me. Literally hundreds of other brethren have spoken similar words of encouragement to me face to face. I want all brethren to know how much their support and forgiveness meant to me.

Thanks again, brethren, for your kind, generous, magnanimous and loving remarks which you conveyed to me both orally and through letters, and in the two articles that appeared regarding my restoration to the Lord.

BILLY ASHWORTH, Route 3, Box 215, Columbia, TN 38401—On January 2, 1987, my wife Lois and I moved to our newly-purchased home in Maury County, six miles north of Columbia on U.S. Highway 31. At the same time, I began preaching for the Hillview church of Christ at Nashville, a church with which we spent five and a half years from January 1, 1968 through July 23, 1973. We are enjoying our present arrangements and being together with the saints at Hillview. We invite all who may visit in that area to attend services at Hillview. The building is located at 7471 Charlotte Pike (U.S. 70 N). It is easy to find by leaving I-40 West at Old Hickory Blvd, going about 1/4 mile to Charlotte Pike, turning left to find the building about 1/2 mile on the left side of the road. Sunday services are at 9 & 10 A.M. and 6 P.M. with Wednesday Bible study at 7:30 P.M. My phone number is (615) 388-3855.

WARD HOGLAND, 1800 Hairston Ave., Conway, AR 72032—1986 was a good year here at Northside. The Lord willing, in 1987 I will assist in meetings at Monticello, FL Jan. 20-23; Biscoe, AR Mar. 2-6; Columbia, TN (Jackson Hts.) Mar. 15-20; Eldorado, AR April 6-10; Clarksville, IN April 26-May 1; Batesville, AR May 10-15; Paragould, AR May 24-27; Houston, MS June 7-12; Lanton, TN June; Joaquin, TX July 6-10; Mountain Home, AR July 20-24; Lafayette, IN Sept. 13-17; Texarkana, AR Oct. 11-16 and Alamogordo, NM in the fall. Our meetings at Northside will be conducted April 19-24 and Oct. 25-30 with Oliver Murray and Robert Turner. Visit with us when in central Arkansas.

DEBATE IN OWENSBORO, KY

DICK BLACKFORD of Owensesboro, KY (one of our column writers) met STEVE EPLEY of Owensesboro in a debate March, 9, 10 and 12, 13. The subjects were the Godhead and Baptismal Formula and the debate was conducted in the building of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, 5691 W. 5th St. Rd. in Owensesboro, KY. We are sorry we did not have this item in time to print before the debate took place.

NEW CONGREGATION IN WHITE OAK, TEXAS

DENNIS C. ABERNATHY, 205 Pinewood, Gladewater, TX 75647—This is to inform readers of this paper that a new congregation is now meeting in White Oak, Texas. We presently have 25 in attendance, with a contribution of about \$300 a week. If any readers should visit the area, we invite you to stop and visit us and worship with the church. We meet at 407 1/2 White Oak Road (just past the Post Office). Our mailing address is P.O. Box 454, White Oak, TX 75693. On Sundays we meet at 9:45 and 10:45 A.M. and 6 P.M. and at 7 P.M. on Wednesdays. We anticipate good growth here. My family and I will continue to live in Gladewater. I would like to receive your bulletin at my address given above. I am still \$800 per month short of needed wages of \$2800 per month. If any congregation or individual could help, I would appreciate hearing from you.

FROM FOREIGN FIELDS

WILFREDO B. SAMODAL, P.O. Box 5680, Iligan City 8801, Republic of the Philippines—I am glad to tell you that on January 4, 1987 3 souls obeyed the gospel and then January 11 another 2 were baptized

into Christ here in Iligan City.

I am sad to tell you that we do not have normal peace and order here. On October 17, 1986 my brother in the flesh, Rufo Samodal, was killed by rebels. Rufo was a very successful preacher for many years before he fell away in sin. I am glad to say he repented about a year before his death and served the best he could from then until he was killed. His son, my nephew, was also shot by rebels and was seriously injured in the head. His wife has a newborn infant to care for. I am left with the responsibility of meeting the hospital bills for his care and also for seeing after his family. The church here has already helped all it can.

PAUL K. WILLIAMS, P.O. Box 324, Eshowe, 3815 South Africa—One of the young people we teach each week baptized 9 at his home two weeks ago. We have 20-30 young people to teach each week. They are enthusiastic and earnest and are teaching others. Two were baptized in Eshowe, one now attending teacher's college away from here. DAVID HURST was not able to raise support to come to Johannesburg to preach. We are disappointed but not discouraged. (Editor's note: It is a crying shame that a brother who was willing to go to a place where the gospel is so badly needed and where the brethren already at work there successfully wanted him to come and where a local church was ready to provide partial support, could not find the necessary help from brethren in this blessed land of ours. This makes twice in recent years that the South African field has been deprived of needed workers who were ready and willing to go, but who could not for want of financial support. This is sad. Worse than that, it is shameful. The American news media fills our eyes and ears with much bad news from South Africa. But there is much good news in terms of gospel work going on there. The gospel is the cure for the ills of the world as it changes hearts and lives and fashions them into the image of Christ. Something is badly wrong here, my brethren. All too few men and their families are willing to go to such fields to labor. Why should they have such difficulty finding the help they need? CWA)

NOLI H. VILLAMOR, 315-C Loreto St., Sampaloc, Manila 2806, Rep. of the Philippines—On February 4 at 5:45 A.M. a fire broke out in Tondo, Manila where several houses were burned. Among those gutted by fire was the home of Reynaldo Cruz, one of the deacons of the Tondo church. His house was also the meeting place for the church. They offered their home free of charge. Not only did the Cruz family lose their house and all their belongings and money, but the Tondo church lost its place to meet, along with 30 folding chairs, 4 long benches, wooden pulpit, blackboard, all its Tagalong songbooks, 3 electric fans and 12 Tagalong Bibles. The total loss would be not less than 95,000 pesos for brother Cruz and for the church. The immediate need would be enough to purchase materials for posts and roofings so the brethren would not be exposed to the elements in conducting services. Those who might want to help could contact: Reynaldo Cruz, 1610 F. Varona St., Tondo, Manila, Philippines. (Editor's note: I have known Noli Villamor for 17 years. He is a faithful and able brother. For several years he published a good paper which did much good in the Philippines. Tondo is a very poor suburb of Manila and life is difficult at best for people there. I have on hand pictures of the charred remains of the home of brother Cruz and also pictures of the small congregation assembled there prior to the fire.

RANDY S. REESE, SR., P.O. Box 14, Ashiya Shi, Japan 659—The Crossroads Movement has come to Japan. In June, 1986, George Gurganus, who preached in Tokyo 35 years ago, returned as one of the deacons of the Boston Crossroads church. Along with him he brought a small group of American and Japanese workers. They have already taken control of the Yoyogihachiman church in Tokyo. In June, 1987 the Boston church plans to send a 20 person team of Japanese speaking workers to spread their false teaching among the churches here. This team will be headed by Randy McKean, brother of Kip McKean, the preacher at the Boston church. At this writing Crossroads members are already active in the streets and stores in Tokyo. They plan to plant someone in every congregation in Japan as soon as possible. Currently I am teaching two classes a week dealing with this movement. I am also writing a tract on this heresy which will be printed in Japanese in April.

I have a number of other classes in progress which are productive of good. Our financial situation has been strained because of the devaluation of the American dollar. In addition to that problem, I am losing

support in April from one congregation and in June from another in the amount of \$400. The work is making progress and we need to be able to stay with it. But we will need help to recover our financial losses. Thank you for all your prayers and help in the work here in Japan.

PREACHERS NEEDED

ANTIGO, WISCONSIN—A working congregation with 31 members needs a preacher with at least five years experience. Please send resume with references to: Church of Christ, 1427 5th Ave., Antigo, WI 54409. Additional support will be needed.

RUSTON, LOUISIANA—An experienced preacher is needed to work full time with the Hwy. 80 church in Ruston. Attendance is usually 10-15 but work is challenging. Most financial support must be raised elsewhere. Those interested may call Phillip Frizzell (318) 259-8922 or Toby Crump (318) 255-2957, or write: Church of Christ, 2902 W. California Ave., Ruston, LA 71270.

PREACHER AVAILABLE

C. DAVID ROBBINS, P.O. Box 122, Scipio, INDIANA—I am available for fill-in or regular preaching in central and southern Indiana or northern regions of Kentucky, from my home in S.E. Indiana. Over 25 years experience. Reference: Elders, 10th St. church, Columbus, IN. Call (812) 392-2833 or write me at the above address.

RECENT DEATHS

EDGAR C. WALKER passed from this life in December, 1986. He preached for many years in Kentucky, Michigan, Florida and was preaching in Tennessee at the time of his death. Much of his preaching was done in hard places with congregations which needed his strong

help. It was my privilege to know him and his wife, Ovana, for many years and to work with them in meetings at Flint, Michigan and Jamestown, Kentucky. We express our sympathy to Ovana. He will be greatly missed.

HAROLD F. SHARP passed away in February in Arkansas. Funeral services were conducted in Conway before a large audience. He was a powerful preacher of the gospel whose labors spanned many years and took him to many places. Most of his local work was done in Arkansas with a few years in central Georgia. In the critical struggle over institutionalism in the 1950's and 60's, he stood firm and helped many brethren to stand. He was an exceptional power in the pulpit. His two sons, Sonny and Keith are faithful gospel preachers. Our kindest sentiments go to his wife, Pearl, their two sons and their families. His death leaves a void that will be hard to fill.

SYLVIA WHEELER, wife of gospel preacher Tom Wheeler of Harrodsburg, Kentucky, passed away on February 16 after a short and bizarre illness. The Wheelers have done good work in many places over the years, much of it in Kentucky where he has worked with churches in Beaver Dam, Hodgenville and Harrodsburg. Sylvia was a dignified, quiet but strong support for Tom in his work. Our heartfelt sympathy is expressed to Tom and the two daughters. A new grandchild was born the day before her death.

IN THE NEWS THIS MONTH

BAPTISMS	148
RESTORATIONS	60

(Taken from bulletins and papers received by the editor)
