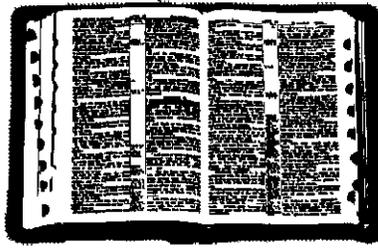


SEARCHING *the* SCRIPTURES

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



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

"DEVOTED TO THE SEARCH FOR DIVINE TRUTH"

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Insight

Dee Bowman

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OVERCOMING DISCOURAGEMENT

Zeal is such a vital part of any project that its importance can hardly be over-estimated. It provides the impetus for activity, the fuel for completion. Its absence will almost certainly insure the failure of the project, its presence will cause respect even if the project it energizes is a faulty one (Cf. Rom. 10:1-2).

The most effective deterrent to this wonderful stimulus is discouragement. Discouragement saps zeal, promotes dissociation from the project and is often the primary cause of failure. Even the concept of the word illustrates the point. "Dis," an English prefix carrying the force of "away"; "courage," the confidence or moral energy needed to accomplish a thing; thus, to do away with the zeal or energy to accomplish a thing. A person discouraged is an empty shell, a wretched soul completely discomfited by his own sense of failure. A person devoid of his courage constantly diminishes his own self-image, becomes a burden to society and is a prime candidate for a number of emotional disorders.

The devil makes good use of discouragement. He very often makes little effort to cause overt sin, he merely causes discouragement instead. In doing so he alters plans, thwarts purposes, impedes progress by robbing people of the zeal which enables these goals and purposes to become realities. Discouragement is a most effective tool. It comes about with little effort on the devil's part and will stay long past the time it ought even when we have fought it off as best as we

can. A person cannot entertain enthusiasm and discouragement at the same time; they mitigate against one another. To hold to one is to diminish the other; they have effects which are opposed to one another.

The effects of discouragement are many, but to my mind one of the most damaging is its weakening of our sense of aim. A person's aim is absolutely vital to his well-being and particularly to his sense of spiritual well-being. Without aim there is no special place to go. Without aim there is no need for the concentration of energies. Without aim there is no cause for unity, no call for togetherness. Our hope is connected to aim. Our achievements are connected to aim. Our sense of self-esteem is connected to aim. Discouragement dulls our enthusiasm for accomplishment, retards our desire to fulfill. It dispirits our aim.

Discouragement is involved in many of the sins of lethargy. It is the cause of some, the effect of others. Indifference, for instance, may be either the cause of discouragement or the effect of it. First, discouragement promotes dullness and inactivity thereby causing indifference. But indifference is very often the result or effect of discouragement because of its ability to dull our sense of dedication. Other problems in this special category of sins which are caused by or result from discouragement include disinterest, lack of attendance, sporadic involvement, and a host of others. It is easy to see why the devil makes such wide use of discouragement, seeing that it accomplishes so much with so little effort on his part.

The decision to do a thing is always antecedent to the realization of that thing. Discouragement inhibits the decision-making mechanism. Because a person is disheartened, he is doubtful. He begins to question even his own abilities to function, he has mental reservations about his aim, and he is likely more mentally occupied with the possibility of failure than success. He is tentative in his approach to the entire affair. The obstacles which line the way of any worth while project become insuperable and very often are magnified completely out of proportion. The self-confidence needed to accomplish the goal now takes a back seat to the discomfiting feelings of doubt and the

disheartening visions of failure. The result is "don't try!" It's the easy way out.

There is no easy solution for discouragement because even the residue left after its expulsion is sufficient to cause continued problems. But I suggest several things which will help us to overcome this most subtle deterrent to our faithfulness:

1. Faith—There is nothing which will counteract discouragement like trusting in God and remembering his immutability. Faith emboldens us. It causes us to be strong. It removes distrust, doubt, removes despair and depression. We have faith from a constant contact with God's word (Rom. 10:17) and we derive strength to overcome thereby (Cf. Phil. 4:13).
2. Self—control—Discouragement seeks control over us. We must not submit to it (Rom. 6:17). We must not allow it free course in our minds. Every person becomes discouraged at times, even the most successful. But we must limit those times to a minimum by remaining in complete control of ourselves.
3. Spiritual thinking—Discouragement is a mental process, not a physical malady. If we are to overcome it, we must occupy our minds with things that enable and edify and not allow doubt and distrust to discolor and distort our thinking. There is sufficient material in God's Word which is intended to edify, encourage, embolden (Cf. Col. 3:1-3; Phil. 4:8).
4. Intense activity—The quickest way to win over discouragement is to get out of yourself and go do something for somebody. Discouragement is very often brought on by feeling sorry for yourself. Quit thinking "poor me" and see what you can do to make someone happy! When you do you will quit feeling sorry for yourself and when you quit feeling sorry for yourself, chances are the discouragement will disappear. It is very difficult to feel sorry for yourself when your mind is occupied with helping others.

All of us have times of discouragement, times when we doubt, times when negativism rules in our minds. We all have times when we distrust our own abilities and lose confidence in our wisdom to handle the affairs of life. But with proper thinking and involvement in good things we can keep these times out of our lives most of the time. And when they do come we will recognize them for what they are and know full well that we can handle them. A Christian is a sojourner, a pilgrim. This world is not his home. And the land to which we journey is so great and its inhabitants so noble as to render almost insignificant any trouble or difficulty we might encounter as we press toward it. "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far greater and eternal weight of glory," said Paul (II Cor. 4:17-18). So, "let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. 6:9). Let us press on!

Searching The Scriptures

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Editorial

Connie W. Adams

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EDITORIAL STEW

Winter is upon us and it is time once again for that mixture of items which we think need saying but which require short space. Some of our readers have commented that they wish we would present a column along these lines more often. We remind them that "stew" is good at certain times of the year but when served too often develops a sameness which loses appeal.

IN JOURNEYINGS OFTEN

The year 1981 found us, as usual, in frequent travels to preach the gospel in 18 meetings in various parts of the nation and in Ontario, Canada besides. In these meetings a number responded to the gospel call. With few exceptions the meetings were characterized by good attendance and interest and with a good number present who were not Christians. From various sources we continue to read that the day of the gospel meeting is over, and that attending such meetings is but an exercise in boredom. I guess we are just not going to the same places some of these folks are talking about. There are a few places we know of where the brethren might do well to consider reducing the number of meetings so that the folks will be hungry for one when it comes. No congregation should have a meeting just as a matter of routine.

We have worked with many fine gospel preachers, young, middle-aged and older, who are devoted to the Lord and who are going competently about their work. At a number of places we have been impressed with some young families and, in some cases, college aged youth who are really serious about serving the Lord.

PURELY PERSONAL

We encountered a temporary set-back in our work plans in October after suffering a detached retina in the left eye which required surgery, the cancellation of one meeting and being forbidden to drive a car or wear a contact lens on the troubled eye for several weeks. I was permitted to hold two meetings in November but had to have my wife drive me everywhere and also had to work with half vision. I am thankful that all has gone well thus far, that I still have sight and that things should hopefully be back to normal by the time you receive this paper. I have now had a detached retina in both eyes, cataract removed from one, have all sorts of lens and glasses, but with the help of the

Lord am still able to see and attend to most of my work. My wife says she is thankful that I don't have three eyes. You have heard of the fellow with one eye and half sense? Well, let other editors have whatever fun they can get out of that!

OUT OF THE MOUTH OF BABES

During one meeting last summer a little girl got pretty restless and decided the sermon was much too long. Finally she spoke out loud and asked her mother, "Why didn't he just write us a letter?"

DISMISS US, BROTHER, PLEASE DISMISS US

Somehow we are failing in efforts to train brethren for taking part in public worship. Some seem to have no understanding of what is needed in giving thanks at the Lord's Table, and some have no concept at all of what it means to dismiss an audience in prayer. Frequently, brethren will pray for the sick, the president, the preacher, the elders, will quote scripture to the Lord, and pray for the forgiveness of sins (when it has only been a few minutes since that same petition was raised). All of this after the audience has been standing through the invitation, closing announcements and remarks and after the same requests have been made known only shortly before. A dismissal ought to be that—a dismissal. "Let all things be done decently and in order."

CROSSROADS AGAIN

The evidence continues to mount that the Crossroads Philosophy" of the now infamous Gainesville, Florida church is cultish in design and practice. The book, *THE MASTER PLAN* by a denominationalist named Coleman, is the basis of the whole concept which includes the monopolizing of time, "soul talks", and "prayer partners." There are now about 60 congregations in this country ordered after the "Crossroads philosophy." The liberal camp is in a battle royal over it and many of them are able to see what even a few conservative brethren, including the editor of *VANGUARD*, either cannot or will not see. Some of us have been criticized for speaking against Crossroads when we have never been there. Well, I have never been drunk, but I know what is wrong with it. I have never been to Hell either, but I know enough about it to warn people against it. I can read, and fairly well understand what I read and there is enough information available about Crossroads that it is not necessary to go spend a week with them getting their guided tour in order to speak out against this evil. It is terribly naive to say that the best thing Crossroads has going for them is "total commitment." "Total commitment" to what? Is Crossroads involved in teaching or practicing error as a congregation? For starters, would someone like to take their "prayer-partner" practice and see if he can find a forty-second cousin to it in the New Testament? We urge brethren not to allow a burning desire to strike a dramatic chord for brotherhood unity to cloud judgment.

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AT EXPRESSWAY

The work at Expressway in Louisville continues in a good way. Jerry Parks is the able preacher. His efforts have borne much good fruit in the past year. Our work is peaceful and enjoyable. Art Ogden preached in a spring meeting and Weldon Warnock in the fall. Both meetings were well attended and did much to stimulate the church to greater service. In 1982 we look forward to a spring meeting with Dee Bowman and in the fall to having Roy E. Cogdill with us again. In June, J. Wiley Adams will be with us in a weekend series on "The Family." By the time you receive this paper, we will be into our winter classes for December, January and February. The editor will teach classes during these three months on "DANGERS WE FACE", "PRESSURES ON MODERN MARRIAGES", and "EZRA AND NEHEMIAH—The Restoration of the Remnant." Two years ago we began a different approach in our adult Bible classes which has produced much greater interest and more diligent study. Each quarter we offer 5 elective classes on both Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights. We allow our high school students to take part in this choice. We have no class meeting in the auditorium. We continue to offer the same courses (with the same teachers) until everyone has had each of these classes. Then new books or subjects are chosen. For instance, this past quarter, there was an option for all who would go into one of these classes on Parables, Minor Prophets, Jeremiah, Titus, Old Testament Survey, Prayer, Faith, Judgment and Opinion, The Christian and His Attitudes, Proverbs. In January we begin a new slate of classes for both Sunday morning and Wednesday night. After visiting many places year in and year out, we are convinced that Expressway has as good an arrangement for Bible classes as can be found anywhere. We would welcome students who attend the University of Louisville or any of the other colleges in the area. There are also a number of other faithful churches in the greater Louisville area which

are doing good work.

KILLED WHILE LEAVING SERVICES

Brother Harry Perkins, who served for many years as an elder at Preston Highway church in Louisville, Kentucky, was involved in an automobile accident right in front of the Preston Highway building while leaving after services on Sunday night, October 25. His wife was injured as was another sister who was riding with them. L. E. Sloan conducted services on Wednesday, October 28. Not only was brother Perkins well known by local brethren but was known and loved by many gospel preachers who have preached either locally or in meetings in this area over the years. Our sympathy to sister Perkins and the family.

NEW SUBSCRIPTION PAPERS

STUDIES IN THE SCRIPTURES is now being published by RON DALY on a bi-monthly basis. The paper is 8 1/2 X 11 and will run from 16 to 20 pages. Annual subscription price is \$8. Brother Daly is one of our very fine black preachers, possessed of great ability both in writing and preaching. The first issue of this paper was excellent. Send all subscriptions to: Ron Daly, P.O. Box 1647, Pine Bluff, AR 71613.

THE EXPOSITORY REVIEW begins in January as a monthly edited by Robert L. McDonald and published by R. L. Craig. Brother McDonald is an experienced and able preacher and writer. He presently works with a fine congregation in Odessa, Texas. The printing work of Bob Craig is always first class. Annual subscription rate is \$6 a year. Subs may be sent to: The Expository Review, P.O. Box 2375, Harker Heights, TX 76541. A prospectus has been issued and you may have one by writing to the address given above.

We offer our best wishes to these new papers and editors as they sail out on the often stormy and financially uncertain seas of religious journalism.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Those who receive and benefit from this paper are indebted, along with the editor, to the efficient and untiring efforts of Barbara C. Adams, beloved wife of the editor. She keeps the mailing list current, runs it each month by a cut-off date on to what is called a dick-strip so the printer can then slice and stick each individual address as a label, handles daily posting chores, attends to all monthly billing, handles nearly all of the business related correspondence and countless other things absolutely essential to the operation of this paper. In addition to that, she keeps the homes fires burning and makes it possible for the editor to keep up with his often hectic schedule of preaching and teaching. When she accompanies me for a meeting that means she has to work many hours in advance and then has to play "catch up" when returning home. To keep from having too little to do, she helps her mother daily (when she is at home) in attending to her father who has been a bedfast invalid since 1965. Now for several weeks she must be my chauffeur and at least

for the November issue of the paper, had to be the proofreader. Her chores are many, her burden often heavy. Somehow she manages to get it all done with grace and dignity while maintaining her sanity and her sense of humor. If I am careful, I can get this in the December paper without her knowing it until the paper arrives from the printer. Otherwise she would protest any such notice for she has never sought the limelight. I just thought our readers ought to know a little about who makes this editor tick, and who really makes it possible for you to receive your paper each month. "Honor to whom honor." "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all."

----- o -----
WE ARE GRATEFUL

Without the continuing confidence and support of our readers we would be out of business. We do not take you for granted. Thanks to all those who have accepted without complaint the necessary increase for those who were receiving the paper on the reduced rates about which we had to write several months ago. And again, many thanks to those brethren who unselfishly give of their time and talents to provide the material for this paper. We wish for all a spiritually prosperous 1982. Keep searching the Scriptures.

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DOES THE END JUSTIFY THE MEANS?

QUESTION: Is Paul's statement "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Rom. 3:8), the same philosophy as "The end justifies the means"? It seems obvious to me that Paul is condemning the latter. In what ways do you see violations today that would justify the same condemnation?—I.P.

ANSWER: I believe that our querist has a proper conception of Rom. 3:8 and perhaps his list of violations would be as good as mine. However, the request merits careful attention and such study should be profitable to all.

Let it be understood that Paul's statement, "Let us do evil, that good may come," is not approved, but rather condemned! The context shows this clearly. Some had "slanderosly reported" that Paul was teaching such. He said their "damnation is just." Paul taught that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound" (Rom. 5:20). From this, no doubt, some concluded that the more they sinned, the better it would be; that such would make for a greater show of God's righteousness. Paul condemns this again, saying, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Rom. 6:1,2). He concludes with emphasis in verse six saying, "that henceforth we should not serve sin."

Evil must never be engaged in, no matter how much "good" (in the eyes of men) may result therefrom. King Saul, together with the people, brought back from his battle with the Amalekites "the best of the sheep and of the oxen, to sacrifice unto the Lord thy God" (1 Sam. 15:15). This he did in violation of the command to "utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass" (1 Sam. 15:3). Even though sacrifice was a precious thing in the sight of God, it became evil when one had to violate another command of God in order to do it. It is never right to pit one command of God against another. Hence, Samuel said unto Saul, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the Lord, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Sam. 15:22,23).

During the personal ministry of Jesus, some Jews "did evil, that good may come" by saying, "Corban" (Mk, 7:11). The word "Corban" was a Hebrew word denoting a gift or dedication to the temple or God. When so dedicated the property or gift could not be appropriated to another use. God also commanded them to "Honour thy father and thy mother" (Mk. 7:10). They excused themselves from the latter by saying "Corban." Thus, they violated one command in order to keep another, namely, support the temple. While supporting the temple was good, it became evil when they violated a command of God in order to do it.

Some today fail to help their parents or a neighbor in time of need upon the grounds of what they give to the church. Some expect the church to care for their parents, offering the excuse that they give "what they are able" to the church. Such violates Paul's instructions, "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" (1 Tim. 5:16). Again, Paul said, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (1 Tim. 5:8). All should remember that we have an obligation to our "own" over, above, and beyond our obligation to the church—it is in addition to our obligation to the church.

Some brethren "do evil, that good may come" by not following the Lord's instructions about resolving personal differences as set forth in Matt. 18:15-17. Instead, they malign, backbite, and often work up a party spirit against a brother or sister in an effort to correct what they think is a personal injury to them. Even if the injury be real and in need of correction, making it public and working up a party spirit of opposition to the guilty is a violation of the procedure set forth by our Lord.

The Missionary Society came into being because of a desire to do good by evangelizing. However, God's pattern of church organization and the principle of the all-sufficiency of the church had to be violated in order to do this "good." All the "good" in the world will not justify violating God's pattern for his church and its work.

Likewise, some are guilty today for the same reason in their efforts to do the benevolent work of the church through organizations of men.

The sponsoring church arrangement is another example of such evil. Here, the work of many churches is accomplished through one church and under the direction of one eldership—all of which violates the limitation God imposes upon the oversight of elders, namely, "the flock of God which is among you" (1 Pet. 5:2; All the "good" done otherwise will not justify the violation of God's divine limitation.

Even our very attitude of heart may be in violation of heaven's will as we go about exposing evil and condemning sin. If so, we are guilty!

We must be careful lest we "do evil, that good may come." Paul said that the "damnation" of those guilty of such "is just."

Restoration Footnotes

Earl Kimbrough

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A HEALTHY CRICK IN THE NECK

A crick is "a painful spasmodic affliction of the muscles, as of the neck and back." Physically speaking, this is not a desirable ailment to have, but in a figurative sense, a crick in the neck may be a good sign, especially if it exists for the right reason.

Columnist George Will, addressing university graduates in California in 1977, recommended that they learn to live with a crick in the neck. He was referring to a symbolic catch in the neck muscles brought on by looking backward. "That might not be a heroic posture," he conceded, "but it is prudent."

Those ignorant of the past are condemned to repeat it, the sages tell us. It was in keeping with this sentiment that Will, quoting a teacher of his, said, "The world has suffered much from the bright ideas of clever people who are so uninformed about the past that they do not know that they are addressing old, wrong questions in old, wrong ways."

He went on to explain: "Commencement would be a melancholy ceremony if those graduating had devoted four years to looking ahead nervously to the next four decades of necessitous employment in the workaday world. Rather, education should be primarily an inoculation against the disease of our time, which is disdain for times past."

Will spoke largely in a political and economic context, but what he said in principle makes sensible application to the churches of Christ. Reading the brittle, age-burned pages of old Restoration journals, such as the *Gospel Advocate* of 50-100 years ago, is almost "instant replay" of questions, problems, and attitudes of brethren today. Only the names and Victorian peculiarities are appreciably different.

If New Testament Christians in the middle years of the 20th century had been informed on the real issues and consequences of the organ-missionary society controversy, the institutional-social gospel delusions of the 1950s and 1960s would not have set so many once faithful congregations on the road to denominationalism. All too often the Restoration movement has been romanticized and the men who led it "canonized," while the great principles of divine truth to which the movement and the men were largely dedicated have been ignored or re-interpreted in the light of a biased historical revision.

All Christians, particularly young men who will

greatly influence the churches in the decades ahead, need to develop a healthy crick in the neck from looking backward to the roots and development of the Restoration movement. This does not mean that we should live in the past, hold to human traditions, or ferret doctrinal idiosyncrasies to espouse. Nor that we should fear new ideas and methods (duly measured by the Divine Standard). But lessons may be learned from the experiences of brethren in past generations that may be learned in no other way. We can be instructed by their teaching, find encouragement in their virtues, and take warning from their frailties.

The principles involved in restoring "the ancient order of things" are as needed today as they were in the early years of the 19th century. But restored Christianity cannot survive by occasional doses of nostalgic sentimentalism regarding these principles, nor can they remain a vital force in the salvation of souls by default of their enemies. The Restoration plea must be clearly understood and aggressively advocated if New Testament Christianity is to survive and prosper into the 21st century. This is hardly possible apart from a knowledge of the events that gave birth to the plea and of the rugged road it has traveled during the past and present centuries.

As George Will said, looking backward may not be a heroic posture, but it is prudent. A healthy crick in the neck from looking backward into the history of the churches of Christ during the 19th and 20th centuries is an ailment we can ill afford to have cured.

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THE KOSCLUSKO CONFESSION AND PERJORATIVE NAMES

In the deep South there is a little college called Magnolia Bible College which is located at Kosclusko, Mississippi. Several of these small colleges have cropped up during the post war years. This one is operated by what we call the "liberal" or "institutional" brethren. Its president is Cecil May, Jr. and he editorializes a Bible question department in the college paper. Brother May makes a confession in the May, 1981 issue of the paper which I did not believe would ever be made by these brethren. He admitted he was an "ANTI!" He further stated that the term "anti" was a "perjorative name" (whatever that is). I searched through three dictionaries and could not find it. However, mine are getting a little old and might not list a sixteen cylinder word like that. I assume the perjorative name would be about the same as a 'prejudicial name.'

I see in this confession several things. One is a softening attitude towards the ones of us who have opposed these innovations throughout the years. Possibly one reason for this is that these brethren have been locked in such a bitter struggle with what they call the "classical liberals," they, therefore have become less austere towards us. Much of what he says in this brief article is true. The terms "liberal" "conservative" and even "anti" are all relative and must have some sort of comparison. I wrote an article several years ago in which I admitted that to some I was "liberal" and to others "conservative." The word "anti" is a prefix used in forming adjectives and nouns derived from them. Since it means "against" it is never complete alone. To avoid misrepresentation, I will give the article in its entirety: "QUESTION: What is the anti-church? Do you feel it is a part of the body of Christ in spite of doctrinal differences? RESPONSE: 'Anti' means against. In the Bible and 'anti-Christ' is someone who is against Christ because he denies that Jesus is the Christ (I John 2:22) or that he came in the flesh (I John 4:3). The term 'anti-church' is not exactly like that. It is a derogatory term used to describe a congregation or a person who is 'against' something which the one who so describes it is 'for.' So to the 'Disciples of Christ' or 'Christian Churches' we are 'antis' because we are against instrumental music. Those who oppose churches contributing to orphan's

homes, and cooperative efforts where one congregation sponsors a work to which several congregations contribute, and eating in church buildings, are sometimes called 'antis' by some of us, because we believe those things are scriptural and right. Those who opposed Sunday morning Bible classes at the building or multiple cups are referred to as 'anti' even by those that we call 'anti.' On the other hand, those whom we call 'anti' call us 'liberal,' because we do contribute to orphan's homes and sometimes eat in church buildings. It would be better by far to leave off perjorative names. When we need to refer to one another, it would be better to say something like, 'Those who oppose orphan's homes,' or 'Those who believe in sponsoring church arrangements.' That has the advantage of being both understandable and acceptable to the ones referred to; yet it still says what needs to be said. Whenever the gospel is preached and obeyed, the obedient hearer is saved and added to the church (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:47). It is my understanding that those who oppose orphans' homes, etc., are in the Body of Christ, are brethren, brethren in error. It is a sin not to have a heart of compassion for the homeless. It is sin to fail to provide, 'as we have opportunity,' for those in need. (James 1:27; Gal 6:10). It is not necessarily a sin, however, to believe, even erroneously, that doing so in a particular way is wrong. It becomes sin when (1) the duty is left undone, or (2) the belief that some particular way is wrong is bound on others to the extent of breaking fellowship or causing division.

One of the sins of the Pharisees was to attempt to bind traditions and regulations which God had not bound. Jesus and his disciples refused to be bound by such tradition (Matt. 15:1-9). For a person or a congregation to limit their own actions in accordance with their own conscience is acceptable and right. For them to insist that others do so to the extent of creating a faction and causing division is sin."

The thing which amused me about this article is that he rebuked his brethren for using the term "anti" and said to the people of the First Christian Church he was an "anti". This is what we have tried to tell these "liberals" all along! That all people are "anti" to some things and "liberal" to some, and "conservative" to others. At last we seem to be getting through. Brother May did cry a few crocodile tears over some who have no "compassion" for the homeless. He knows better than this. I have never found one of my brethren who did not have a heart as big as Texas for the homeless. They just oppose institutionalism; not the homeless. One might as well say we must have a "heart of compassion for the lost by preaching through a missionary society." Then charge any who do not believe in the V.C.M.S., as people who have no compassion on the lost! This is psychological rhetoric and should never be used on the polemic platform. Brother May, makes the usual mistake of using James 1:27, and Gal. 6:10 to vindicate his position of taking money out of the church treasury. I must challenge him both

privately and publicly to prove this. I insist that both passages are speaking to the individual and not the church. Another thing, he says some bind a pattern in benevolence and evangelism. Yes indeed, and I wonder if brother May will defend what he writes in public debate. If so, since we are both from the state of Mississippi this can be arranged. I believe there is a pattern for both benevolence and evangelism in the New Testament and am willing to sign a proposition to that effect. I wonder if brother May will defend what he said in his article? We shall see.

SET FOR THE
DEFENSE OF
THE GOSPEL

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THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

The gospel is a teaching process appealing unto the mind of man. Christ said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, and they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me" (Jno. 6:44-45). Christ said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. . ." (Mk. 16:15). All of this is the way that the Lord designed to save man from sin.

The gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Man could not save himself (I Cor. 1:21), so Christ came, went back to heaven, sent the Holy Spirit to guide the Apostles into all truth that the gospel might be revealed unto man lost in sin. Paul said, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek (Rom. 1:16;). This is God's power unto salvation. Since man could not save himself, then any way or scheme devised by man will not save his soul. It will take God's power to save.

(1) Men have taught that while a preacher is preaching if one will just place their hand on the radio and give their heart to the Lord, God will save them.

(2) Others have taught that if you are a sinner and want to be saved, all that is necessary to be saved is coming to a mourner's bench and morn and cry over one's sins and call upon the Lord to save.

(3) Still others have taught that if man would be saved that he must come forward and pray the prayer of faith.

(4) Some have taught that believing only in Christ would save.

(5) Many have taught that there is nothing to do to

be saved, that God will save man by his own grace in his own good pleasure and time.

(6) Some have taught salvation by a system of works.

Since all of these plans invented by man will not save him, man needs to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ and listen to His will set forth in the gospel. If man will not obey the will of Christ declared in the gospel of Christ, there is no hope of salvation that anyone can extend to him.

The gospel of Christ is a certified gospel. Men are living in a day of specialization and certification. If the farmer buys seed, he wants those seed to be "certified seed". There is a seal on the bag of seed that declares that this is "certified seed". The seed of the kingdom which is the gospel of Christ is a certified seed. When one hears, believes and obeys the gospel of Christ, he is hearing, believing and obeying a certified gospel. There is no page in the gospel of Christ that has not been certified. Paul said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12).

The gospel of Christ which is certified will germinate in the heart of the sinner willing to believe the gospel. It will purify the heart of man, Peter said, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:18-23).

Peter said, "Men and brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us: And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15: 7-9).

The gospel of Christ is also said to be the medium through which Christ calls men unto him. Many have often asked, "Preacher, were you called of God to preach?" to which I always answer in the affirmative. That is, I have been called to serve the Lord in exactly the same way that every other child of God has been called.

However, when one begins to talk with the masses of people about being called of God, nearly everyone has a different story to tell. One was in the field plowing and the Lord, so they say, wrote G. P. in the sky. They just knew the Lord was calling them, telling them to go preach. While I do not mean to be unkind, those

claiming such would have done better to have stayed in the field and plowed. The reason I say this is, I have never heard men who claim they were called of God in this way that would tell what the word of God tells one to do in order to be saved. What a tragedy it is for those wanting to know what to do to be saved, to be told by one who thinks he has been called of God, something different to what men in the first century were told to do in order to be saved.

God has but one means of calling men unto him. Paul said, "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thess. 2:13-14). God calls men **by the gospel**.

The gospel appeals unto the intellect of man and since God calls men through the gospel, it follows that the medium that God uses to call men is a logical, rational, and understandable medium. God speaks unto men today through the written word, which is the gospel. Paul said that the Lord called the Thessalonians by the gospel. Since God called them by the gospel, he calls everybody else by the gospel.

The New Testament records that the process of hearing the word of God and becoming a child of God is sometimes called a birth. John says, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus, answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen and ye receive not our witness" (John 3:1-11).

The Corinthians were begotten by the gospel. Paul said, "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel (1 Cor. 4:15). We can learn the sense in which Paul was a father to the Corinthians. He said, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase (1 Cor. 3:6). Paul was the one who went to Corinth and preached the gospel of Christ, which is the seed of the kingdom. The Corinthians heard the gospel, receiving it into

their hearts. Since this gospel which they believed was certified seed, it germinated in their hearts and began to grow. As it grew in their hearts, they believed stronger the word of God, turned from their sins and were born again into the family of God. Paul was, to the Corinthians, a father in the Lord, because he had deposited the seed of the kingdom, which is the word of God, into their hearts by preaching unto them the word of God, the gospel of Christ which is certified.

Using Great Plainness
of Speech

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BAPTISM IS ESSENTIAL TO SALVATION

As you read the Acts of the Apostles, one thing that is very clear is the fact that in every case of conversion, people did not rejoice until after they had been baptized. There must be a reason for that.

You may say, "Well, what is the reason"? The reason is that baptism is "for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38), and is therefore essential to salvation.

You may say, "But the majority of the religious world teaches that baptism is not essential to salvation, and surely the majority cannot be wrong." I ask the question, what is our standard of authority regarding religious subjects, the majority or The Bible? It is my understanding from the Scriptures that we will be judged by the Word of God in the day of judgment, not what the majority believes and teaches. In John 12:48 Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Thus it is not the word of the majority that I am going to be judged by in the last day, but The Word of God. Now in view of this, let's examine what the Bible says on this subject.

Mark 16:16

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. . ." Notice that in this passage that both belief and baptism come before salvation.

Acts 2:38

"Repent and be baptized.. for the remission of sins. . ." Again, from this passage we learn that repentance and baptism both come before the remission of sins.

Acts 22:16

"Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins. . ." Now in view of the fact that the Bible says in Mark 16:16 that baptism

comes before salvation; Acts 2:38 says baptism comes before remission of sins, and Acts 22:16 says baptism comes before the washing away of sins, what would one have to rejoice about before baptism, the majority of the religious world notwithstanding?

JUST ONE MORE DAY

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Just for a few moments, let me give you a sobering thought on which to reflect. Perhaps, you had rather not think about this particular matter, but it might do you good if you do.

Let us suppose you had just one more day to live and you knew you had only one more day—how would you live?

First, how would you react? With panic or calm? With fear or courage? You might be surprised, yourself, at how you would react.

Suppose a Sunday were to be your last day. Would you spend the day in pursuit of worldly pleasure? Or would you assemble with God's people and engage in worship of the God that gave you life? Suppose Wednesday were to be your last day, would you attend midweek Bible study and worship? Do you suppose your mind might turn to the words, ". . .not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh" (Heb. 10:25)?

If you had only one more day to live, would you spend that day with doubts in your mind regarding the question of whether there is to be a judgment or not? Whether there is a heaven or hell or not? I do not think so. John wrote, "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne: and books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of the things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Rev. 20:12). Jesus said of the separation of men in the day of judgment, "and these shall go away into eternal punishment: but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt. 25:46).

If you have sacrificed a liberal portion of your material means in support of the service of God and in relief of those about you in distress, and you realized you have only one day to live, would you spend that day regretting the fact that you sacrificed so much in His service? I am sure you would not. You would

rather be thankful for the fact that you thought seriously enough about heaven that you laid up treasure there. Our Lord said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).

Would you spend the day feuding with an enemy if you had only one day left? Would you harbor hatred and bitterness and malice? Would you think, "I've got to get in just one more 'lick' at that guy."? Or would you be more concerned with resolving your problem or conflict? Jesus charged, "If therefore thou art offering thy gift at the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matt. 5:23,24). Would it not be a good time (any time is a good time) to think about the words of Paul, "Avenge not yourselves, beloved, but give place unto the wrath of God: for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me: I will recompense, saith the Lord. But if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him to drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head. Be not overcome of evil but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:19-21).

Only one day left! What would be the tone of your voice? Should your words be harsh, biting and caustic? Or, would you not decide that it is time to speak softer and gentler words? "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and railing, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God also in Christ forgave you" (Eph. 4:31,32). Solomon, the man of great wisdom, wrote of the "virtuous woman" or the "worthy woman", ". . . in her tongue is the law of kindness" (Prov. 31:26).

What would be your attitude toward your husband or wife? Might you not say, "I love you, honey." just a little more often? Do you suppose you might think of some other ways to show your love? "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it" (Eph. 5:25). How much did Christ love the church? Enough to die for it! Wives are to love their husbands too. "that they may train the young women to love their husbands, to love their children" (Tit. 2:4).

Surely, you would not spend that "one more day" thinking about material things. I doubt that you would catch yourself thinking, "I've just got to make one more 'buck' before I die." No, I suspect you would spend a lot more of that last day thinking about spiritual and heavenly things. There is wisdom in this. "Set your mind on the things that are above, not on the things that are upon the earth" (Col. 3:2). I do not think you would spend that last day complaining about what you did not "get" materially. It would be very easy to conclude, and rightly so, "You know, I really had 'enough', after all." Paul's perspective about material things is well expressed in the following

words, "But godliness with contentment is great gain: for we brought nothing into the world, for neither can we carry anything out: but having food and covering we shall be therewith content" (I Tim. 6:6-8).

If there is something you have not been doing that you know you should have been doing—do you not suppose that you just might try mighty hard to do it that one day remaining? It is bad not to do as well as you know. "To him therefore that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).

Would you occupy yourself trying to justify yourself in the eyes of men? No, there is something that would concern you more and that is being justified in the sight of God. Take a look at the words of Paul, "For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? or am I striving to please men? if I were still pleasing men, I should not be a servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10). When the rulers of the Jews charged the apostles "not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. . . Peter and John answered and said unto them. Whether it is right in the sight of God to hearken unto you rather than unto God, judge ye: for we cannot but speak the things which we saw and heard" (Acts 4:18-20). God's favor is much more important than the favor of men.

Only one day left! How would you dress? Would you make a sensual display of your body in apparel immodestly designed? Would you take pleasure in your capacity to turn the eyes of lustful men your way? No, I think not. Not if you remember the words of Paul, "In like manner, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefastness and sobriety; not with braided hair, and gold or pearls or costly raiment; but (which becometh women professing godliness) through good works" (I Tim. 2:9-10).

How shall I live my last day? In obscene words? In smuttiness and vulgarity? In words calculated to kindle lust or lead others to sin? Certainly, this is not the way it should be. "Let no corrupt speech proceed out of your mouth, but such as is good for edifying as the need may be, that it may give grace to them that hear" (Eph. 4:29). "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one" (Col. 4:6).

Would you reason, "I've got to get drunk just one more time."? No, not if you believe God's Word and want to avoid the consequences of sin. Paul wrote of "the works of the flesh," an extended list, which included "drunkenness," and said, "of which I forewarn you, that they who practise such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21). You would not do these things of you want to go to heaven.

If you are a Christian, and you had only one day left on earth, would you spend that day in regret of the fact that you became a Christian and tried to live to the glory of God? No way! Paul, who lived a life of faithfulness, basked in the warmth of the assurance, "there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at that day;" (2 Tim. 4:8).

Seriously, friend, what if you had "JUST ONE MORE DAY?"

AN IDEAL CHURCH

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The Lord said: "Upon this rock I will build my church." This is the church that was established according to God's eternal purpose. It is an illustration of His many-sided wisdom. The church as the body of Christ grows as more people please God and are added as lively stones in this spiritual house (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 3:8-11; I Cor., 12:12-27; Eph. 2:20-22; I Peter 2:4-10). Men can never plan or build a church that could be anything but a contrast. The price for the Lord's church was fully adequate, the plan was of God, and the perfect Savior is the head. The plan for the church that is described in detail in the New Testament is the ideal church.

This article is a look at the human element in the church. This study is of the ideal local church. All the members are sinners saved by grace. If one could not worship except at some place where no member ever errs and where every member understands every passage of scripture fully, that one could never worship in an assembly. If he did find that perfect church it might not be that perfect after he became part of it. The Lord has room in His church for babes who desire the sincere milk of the word that they may grow thereby. Many have found fault and left who could have learned of more weaknesses if they had made careful and honest study of weaknesses of those they see when they look in the mirror.

What is an ideal church? What is an ideal? Your dictionary may tell you that one definition would indicate that it exists in imagination only. A definition more in our reach is that it is conforming to a standard of perfection. The standard given by the Lord is the perfect law of liberty. The Lord does not set any standard for his people short of perfection itself. He does not say seldom lie, nor does He ask that we steal very little.

We can illustrate the perfection of His standard or goal for His church by noticing His standard of unity. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Cor. 1:10). Could there be a higher standard of unity? Has any congregation fully reached this goal?

Ideals are to be pressed toward. If it is a goal set by the Lord we should press toward it with fear, trembling, and diligence. (Phil. 2:12; II Peter 1:10; Phil. 3:13,14). There are congregations with many members

who are very eager to follow the steps of Jesus who is our perfect example. No standard short of perfection is worthy of the children of God. Their ideal is to be like their Lord. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). So mercy helps, and can be expected by those who press with zeal toward the mark of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. The Lord would like for His people in any community to be "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27).

A church that conforms to the standard of perfection in spiritual matters is an ideal church. Since the teaching of Christ is that we lay up treasures in heaven the church must be interested in pleasing God rather than men (Gal. 1:10; Matt. 6:19-21). Men who love the praise of men more than the praise of God cannot qualify as members of a glorious church. It is a sad day when buildings are built, sermons are delivered, and decisions are made in an effort to impress the public rather than to please God. Some ways by which a worldly attitude may manifest itself is by soft preaching, extravagant buildings, and unholy conduct of members. Some so called churches are little more than country clubs. They have show places for buildings, and preachers who stand for nothing. An ideal church hungers for the whole counsel of God and seeks to apply it fully in the lives of the members. So then the will of God is far above the will of the people.

A chain cannot be stronger than its weakest link. A church can be stronger than its weakest member since the strong bear the infirmities of the weak, but one ungodly member might be a spot or wrinkle or a blemish. Let each and every member strive diligently to avoid being a spot on the Lord's holy church.

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life" (Phil. 2:14-16). If church members are like their worldly neighbors they do not make up a glorious church. If, instead of being conformed to this world, they are transformed by the wholesome influence of the word they will be as lights in a dark world. They will walk circumspectly and speak boldly as they ought to speak. If Paul were alive and should write to such a church he might say "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thess. 5:23).

Christians were taught to be examples and patterns so that those of the contrary part might be ashamed, having no evil thing to say (I Tim. 4:12; Titus 2:7; I Peter 2:11,12; 3:10-17). If one has no plans to be as salt of the earth, he should not pretend to be a member of the church. The Christian is bought with the price so he is a servant of Christ. He cannot please the world and Christ (James 4:4). He cannot serve God and mammon (Matt. 6:24). True conversion includes repentance, and this will lead one to make a clear cut decision to

walk the narrow way of truth and holiness that leads to life.

FORMING A BIBLICAL POSITION

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When we talk about "my position" on a particular subject or "Bro. so-and-so's position," I trust that what we actually mean is what we believe to be the Biblical doctrine of that subject. It is obvious that everybody's "position" cannot be the Biblical position because there are usually contradictions between various views. A pertinent question then that needs to be addressed is how to formulate a true position on any given subject. Most people, I think, are interested in holding the Biblical position. But many have not arrived at this view because they have gone about forming their views from the wrong standpoint. The purpose of this article is to offer suggestions for forming a true Biblical position on any particular subject. To do this it is important to examine some false bases and then the correct basis for forming a true position. **WRONG BASES FOR FORMING A BIBLICAL POSITION:**

1. Emotions. It is dangerous to formulate a position entirely from an emotional standpoint. Do not misunderstand, it is important to have emotions—to feel very deeply even about religious matters. The point is that emotions alone are not a sure foundation. Emotions fluctuate depending upon changing circumstances. Emotions are unreliable when searching for truth. This is a mistake that many people make concerning salvation. They "feel" saved and yet have not completely obeyed God's will for salvation.

2. Personal experience. This is a corollary to basing a view on emotions. Some people form their views around what has personally happened to them. These people begin with their own personal experiences and fit their beliefs to their own lives. This often results in justifying things that are in fact wrong or explaining things away that do not "fit" their experiences. Obviously this is a false basis for forming a true position because the beginning point is wrong.

3. What has always been done. This is the "old paths philosophy" which says whatever has always been done is surely what is right. Granted, truth does not change. But it just might be that what has always been done has been wrong all along. This is the smokescreen used by many brethren to justify their practices. But it must be realized that what has always been done does not necessarily constitute truth.

4. Hypothetical situations. Many people dream up hypothetical situations and formulate their positions around these. This is the basis for the old "died on the way to the baptistery" argument. Some will say that baptism is not essential for salvation based upon a hypothetical circumstance. This "method" has also

been used widely in arguments pertaining to divorce and remarriage. All sorts of complicated situations are concocted in attempts to justify divorce and/or remarriage on grounds other than immorality. One is on shaky ground when the best he can do is to offer a hypothetical situation to substantiate his position.

5. Opposite extremes. In an attempt to refute false positions, some people go so far to the opposite extreme that they arrive at another false position. This is not to say that all truth is in the middle of the road. It is simply to point out another way in which false positions are formed. For example, in attempts to counter Calvinistic misconceptions concerning the grace of God, some are leaning toward the position of discounting God's grace altogether. Neither position is right. False concepts need to be countered with truth, not necessarily with the opposite extreme. **THE RIGHT BASIS FOR FORMING A BIBLICAL POSITION:**

The key to the matter under consideration is simple. One needs to "search the scriptures daily to see whether these things are so" (Acts 17:11). The key to the matter is intelligent, unprejudiced Bible study. I offer three simple suggestions for proper Bible study:

1. Study the context. Always look at verses and passages in light of their immediate and remote contexts. This will guard against misconceptions and misinterpretations. This is the one rule of Bible study that so many overlook.

2. Study words. The Bible is a book of words. If one is ever going to correctly interpret the Bible, then one must study the words that have been revealed. When we understand what the words actually mean, we can more certainly arrive at the Biblical position.

3. Study related passages. Jesus said that we should live by "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" (Matt. 4:4). On any particular subject, we need to study all of the pertinent verses. All truth on one subject is not necessarily revealed in one verse or passage. A true position is one that takes into account everything the Bible says about the matter.

Avoiding fallacious methods for forming a position will clear the way for unprejudiced Bible study, correct exegesis, and holding the true Biblical position on any given subject.

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