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## **Forsake Not the Assembling** **- Hebrews 10:25**

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### **SIMPLY STATED**

*"For freedom did Christ set us free: stand fast therefore, and be not entangled again in a yoke of bondage."*

Galatians 5:1

### **INTRODUCTION**

Freedom is something that men seek after in this world with great enthusiasm. Wars have been fought for the cause of freedom and men are willing to die for it. But what men consider to be freedom is not really true freedom at all, for no matter how free men think they are, they are still in bondage to their sin and the wages of sin is death.

Sin and death are 2 of the greatest slave masters that hold all men coming into the world. Ah but when the Living God grabs hold of a person in salvation through His Son the Lord Jesus Christ then, and only then will a person know true freedom. That's because the Lord Jesus is about the business of setting His people free from those two greatest slave masters mentioned, sin and death. And He is the One and Only One who has the power to set men free. The Scriptures put these things like this.

**John 8:34** *Jesus answered them, Truly, truly, I say to you, Whoever practices sin is the slave of sin.*

**Rom 6:20** *For when you were the slaves of sin, you were free from righteousness.*

**Rom 7:14** *For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin.*

And...

**Rom 6:23a** *For the wages of sin is death,.....*

But there is One and only One who is able to deliver men from the slavery of their sin & its consequences. That One is the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Scripture puts it like this:

**John 8:36** *Therefore if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed.*

**Rom 8:2** *But the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.*

**2Cor 3:17** *And the Lord is that Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.*

**Ga 5:1** *Stand fast therefore in the liberty with which Christ has made us free, and do not again be held with the yoke of bondage.*

And this amazing verse in Revelation:

**Rev 1:18** *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*

And...

**Rev 3:7** *And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write: He who is holy, He who is true, He who has the key of David, He who opens and no one shuts; and shuts and no one opens, says these things:*

The Lord Jesus Christ is the Keeper of the gates of Hell & Death and no one passes through unless He allows them to. And He is the one who is able to deliver men from their greatest bondage, death & hell because of their sin by "shutting" the door and no one is able to open it. And He has shut that door for every last one whose place He took on His cross by His atoning sacrifice for their sins, the result of which the verse in Romans 6 may now be completed...

**Romans 6:23b**... *... but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

Ah-h yes... there's a glorious "but" in that verse. All men are born under sin & condemnation... but... That's the glorious Gospel message in one word... But... But what? But GOD! God has done something about mens' sin. He has not left some of us to the bondage of our sin. He has undertaken to deliver men from such bondage by sending His own Son into the world to suffer the bondage of sin and death on behalf of His people whom He has chosen to salvation.

But...

But now.... As in ages past so in our day, there are men who would attempt to erase that "But" that God has placed in His word in order to bring men whom God has delivered from bondage back under bondage. There are men who, in the name of religion and Christianity even, dare to have the audacity to try and snatch the keys out of the hands of the Son of God and put men back under bondage. They do this by claiming to themselves some sort of "*Authority*" that is supposedly given to them from God Himself, even though such a notion runs counter to the teaching of the Lord Jesus in Matt 20. See link below on No Church.

Such men claim to be "*pastors*" and "*elders*" to whom all must subject themselves and obey without question. To disobey these men is considered rebellion against God because after all these men are "*God-ordained elders/pastors*" ['divine policemen' is a more accurate description] who have been given "*authority*" from God Himself. And many such men make no bones about the notion that you had better submit to and obey them or else.

And I'm here to tell you folks that if that's not bold in-your-face bondage to men then nothing is. They claim that "*disobedience to elders is rebellion against God*" thereby placing men back under the bondage of sin. Such a practice is based on, and found within the confines of a "*church*" which is the foundation upon which the entire structure of "*God-ordained elders*" is built and the truth is that that foundation itself is made of rotted wood because the whole idea of "*church*" is found [nowhere in the entire Bible](#).

I say... if you ever want to know what religious bondage is all about all you have to do is attend a church... any church, and it won't be long before you are pressured into becoming a part of that machinery that will bring you into a bondage that you will find most difficult to escape from unscathed.

And I shall demonstrate this fact in this paper by a real, living [last time I looked] human being who calls/called himself a "*pastor*" in a "*church*" for many years who once preached a sermon wherein he says clearly and plainly that his intent is to ~*Bring You Into Bondage*~ based on what -he- claims the Bible teaches. And my hope and prayer is that anyone who reads this paper and is under such men will come to see their bondage for what it is and flee from it.

When a man is joined to Christ, he is set Free from bondage. Not only from the bondage of sin & death but also from the bondage of men. This includes man-made

religious systems and private interpretations of Scripture. See for an example, 2 Peter 1:20. Here, the Bible forbids anyone from making the scriptures say whatever they want in order to fit their own preconceived notions of religious doctrine. Outside the Scriptures ~No~ one has ~Any~ authority to bind anyone's conscience.

In these matters, the great watchword of the Reformation should ever be our cry; "*Sola Scriptura*." Let the Word be our light and, if whatever men say cannot be supported by the Word of God we have a right and a duty to reject it. As the prophet Isaiah said, "*If they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them.*" Isaiah 8:20.

Having given that little introduction, I now come to the main purpose of this paper, that being, to point out a particular teaching being set forth in certain churches and to examine that teaching in the light of Scripture. I shall now offer for your consideration a real sermon preached by a real person who once was the pastor of a real church in Montville N.J. wherein he states plainly that his purpose is to ~*Bring You Into Bondage*~ in order to get you to attend his church.

For convenience and identification, I will refer to what this man says as the doctrine of so-called "Stated Meetings of the Church."

This teaching is presented in somewhat of the following way:

*"Anyone who is a member of this congregation is expected to attend the stated meetings of the church unless they are providentially hindered."*

The "*stated meetings*" are determined by the elders or leaders of the church and the concept is often found in the church's constitution. Most of the time it is simply accepted with little or no thought as to whether or not this is a Biblical idea that was practiced anywhere in the New Testament.

It is not until time goes by that one begins to feel the pressure of such a requirement. People become uncomfortable and the sad part is that they fail to ask the obvious question that should be branded on the mind of every Christian:

***"Where is such a teaching/doctrine found in the Bible?"***

That question is the point of this paper. Whenever this teaching is followed, it brings men into legalistic bondage.

The doctrine of stated meetings has been set forth by Albert N. Martin, former pastor of the Trinity Baptist Church of Montville, N.J. Specifically, the teaching was brought to light in a sermon preached by Albert Martin entitled:

"A BIBLICAL VIEW OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP", tape reference EP-Y-3 on Jan. 18, 1987.

You might still be able to obtain a copy from that church.

In writing this paper, I am using a copy of the sermon so that I do not misrepresent the issue at hand. In setting forth this teaching, Albert N. Martin argues, quote:

*"What is our non- negotiable duty and privilege with reference to God Himself as it pertains to church membership? It is this... to be present at the stated gatherings of the congregation."*

This statement, of course cannot be found in the New Testament and must be proven either by implication or deduction. As we examine the sermon we shall see how this statement is arrived at by deductive reasoning and then show the deductions to be out of line with Scripture. Now, there is a place for making valid deductions from any given passage of scripture.

For an example, if we were to note the teaching of Jesus when He said *"Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God"*, we may safely deduce that all who do see the Kingdom of God have of necessity been born again and anyone who has been born again -can- see the Kingdom of God.

Conversely, to note the teaching of John 1:1, *"In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God"*, and then to deduce that BEFORE the beginning the Word did not exist, neither was it with God, is folly. The example is designed to show the difference between Biblical and non-Biblical deductive reasoning. We must be able to recognize the difference. Mr. Martin himself engages in non-Biblical deductive reasoning as we shall see.

Just a little food for thought, it is interesting to note that the New Testament says nothing at all about the issue of church membership. The concept of church membership is either taken for granted or naturally assumed to be a New Testament principle. Mr. Martin neither defines, nor gives any Scriptural support for such an idea.

Others have attempted to show church membership to be a N.T. teaching but their arguments are based on implication and deduction, the very areas where extreme caution must be exercised in interpreting the Bible. This issue alone is a subject of much debate and controversy. Without getting into the issue in this paper, I simply leave you to answer the question yourself:

Where is *"church membership"* found in Scripture?

Mr. Martin attempts to prove his doctrine of *"stated meetings"* using 3 lines of reasoning from the Bible.

FIRST: A reference to **Hebrews 10:25**: "*Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting one another...*".

SECOND: The ~Assumed~ complexion or constitution of the churches of the New Testament as they really existed in the minds of the writers when they wrote to them.

THIRD: What Mr. Martin refers to as the "*varied images of the nature and identity of the church.*"

The second & third points are an indication of how deeply the false doctrine of "*church*" has entrenched itself into the minds of men over the past several centuries. To see the devastating effect, all you have to do is respond with a 2 word question... "*What church*" and watch men scramble/evade/excoriate and finally condemn you as some kind of heretic. Men like Al Martin -need- a church, otherwise they'd be on the unemployment lines.

Before we come to examine these points, let me say a word about the term "*stated meeting*" itself. Just what does the word "stated" mean? Webster's 9th New Collegiate Dictionary defines it in this way: "*set down; explicitly: declared*". "*Fixed, regular*". Where else can one find a definition for the term since it is found nowhere in the Bible?!

So we see that a stated meeting is one that is fixed or regular and has been declared by somebody. This is all well and good except for one small problem. You cannot find any such thing in the New Testament. Remember, we are dealing with something that is ~*regular*~ and the only kind of regular assembling you will find in the New Testament are those fixed by God Himself in order to worship and praise Him. See e.g. John 4:20 - 24.

Furthermore, the only place you will find even these meetings fixed by God to be ~*Binding*~ on mans' conscience is in the Old Testament under the Old Covenant of the law where Sabbath keeping was binding by the God who made us. Since the Mosaic law was done away in Christ, this is now no longer binding on anybody's conscience. How much less any other kind of meeting?

Note, for an example, The verse in **Colossians 2:16**: "*Let no man judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day.*"

Men may go ahead and declare or fix all the regular meetings they feel like, but when they try to bind the minds of God's people they are out of bounds. Try as you may, you will search the scriptures in vain to try and find examples of men fixing regular meetings and then placing people under a bound conscience to attend them. Let us now examine the three lines of reasoning in the sermon. I will do so by looking at the second and third points first and saving the first for last.

Point number two: "*The ~Assumed~ complexion or constitution of the churches of the N.T. as they really existed in the mind of the writers when they wrote to them.*"

What Albert N. Martin says is that when Paul wrote his letters to the N.T. churches, he ~Naturally Assumed~ that everyone would be present when the letters were read. First of all, we start out by saying that to set forth an assumption to prove a Bible doctrine ~~even if one finds verses to support it,~~ is at best a last ditch attempt to prove a point and at the worst, an open door to make the Bible say anything you want it to, thereby playing with fire!

Further, for someone to say that he knows what a man living 2000 years ago was assuming at any given point is ridiculous and implies some kind of mental telepathy with the dead which, of course, is condemned by God. We may be able to tell a good deal of what was in the mind of Paul by what he -wrote- but we have no right to say that we know what he was assuming and then try to use it to prove a doctrine.

For an example, what would prevent someone from saying that when Paul wrote to the N.T. churches he naturally assumed that everybody would learn the content of his letters whether they were present or not at some stated meeting? Yet, for someone to try and ~Bind My Conscience~ to some teaching on the basis of this proposition is preposterous. Aside from all this, the major flaw in this approach is that it totally disregards all the well established principles of hermeneutics; the science of Biblical interpretation.

This is surprising when we consider that Mr. Martin is known for his ability to open passages of the Bible quite well to the help and edification of many a believer. The question naturally arises, "is this the best that a man like this can do to prove a point?" Let us remember what the burden of the sermon is. It is to condition the conscience to be present at ~All~ the stated meetings of the church.

Let us try to put this into a logical idea using this second point. If I am correct in my thinking, it appears that Mr. Martin is saying something like this: "On the basis of what I believe Paul was assuming when he wrote to the N.T. churches, you must make it a matter of conscience to come to all the stated meetings of the church." Biblically speaking, this is very weak reasoning, especially in the light of a very important question. What does it mean to bind someone's conscience?

The Bible speaks of the conscience as that faculty that God has put in man that enables him to discern the difference between moral good and evil. This point cannot be stressed enough. A specimen passage may be sighted in Romans 2:14,15 where we are told that the conscience is that part of us that bears witness to moral actions that one day will be judged by God. Therefore, it can be said that when one's conscience is conditioned by a particular moral precept and the person then violates that precept, he thus violates his conscience and ~sins against God!~~

If this is the direction that Mr. Martin is taking us in his sermon, then we must ask a most pressing question here:

Is missing a stated meeting a sin? ? ?

Is Mr. Martin saying that this is what the Bible teaches? If not, then what exactly -is- he saying? This appears to be a direct road to the town of Legalism! But even if we were to allow that what is being said is right, this still does not prove that ~Every~ member was present at ~Every~ meeting that had been "stated" by men, either in the N.T. or anywhere else along the line of 2000 years of the history of Christianity!

Knowing human nature and how most people function, who among us can recall in our own experience of church life a time when at any given meeting, 100 % of the membership was present. The larger the size of the congregation, the less likely will be the chance that this condition will occur.

It simply will not do to imagine that a man like Paul the Apostle, who knew human nature all too well would assume such a thing as to think that everybody would be present at all the gatherings of N.T. believers. And where did they gather? Certainly not in church buildings for there were none back then.

Now.... aside from all that, the crowning mistake upon which that point is founded is the whole structure of the false doctrine of... "Church". It is a matter of Biblical fact that when a proper study of the Bible is undertaken, it will easily be discovered that the doctrine of "Church" is found nowhere in the entire Bible. Without going into it... for that would make this paper into a book, [[See this paper](#)]... think about it.

What if there were no churches for these self-appointed elder hotdogs to operate in? Follow the dots. No church... no church buildings; no people to attend; no money; no eldership; no nuttin!! All these self-ordained, high-rollers would have to go bus tables like the rest of us peons. Enough. Do some research. [[Go here](#)]

Let us assume that this point has been dealt with and look at the third point.

Point number three: *"The varied images of the nature and identity of the church."*

On this point Mr. Martin shows his complete lack of understanding and shows he has not done his homework on the issue of "Church." As I have been saying all along, you can search the Scriptures and you will not find any "church" anywhere in the entire Bible. This comes to light by discovering that the Greek word translated as "church" in most English versions does not mean "church"... at all! Period! [Start here](#)..

What Al Martin did was to expound the nature of the ~Body of Christ~ as it is set forth in all it's varied images. And folks... the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ and any given



church here on earth are two entirely different and unrelated things. For one thing, the Body of Christ is made up of 100% saved, elect people of God whereas -No- church can make such a claim.

It may be thought by some that Al Martin is expounding the doctrine of stated meetings when, in fact, he is doing no such thing! Rather, he is simply preaching on the nature of the Body of Christ as he himself says. In regard to this fact, it may safely be deduced that every true believer is a part of the images given in the N.T. That is, everyone who is saved is a member, ipso facto, of the Body of Christ. We agree that each believer has certain duties and privileges as a part of that Body and these are clearly pointed out in the N.T.

For example, we have the privilege and duty to worship God: John 4:24. Furthermore fellowship, the Lord's supper, help/support of the needy, praying for one another and other issues can all be found in the N.T. And all these things can be engaged in without having a church involved. And they are all found in the N.T. Not so with the doctrine of stated meetings. Rather, it is arrived at by "assuming" and then read into the teaching on the imagery of the Body of Christ. And all God's children said... Eisogesis!

An excerpt right from the sermon will illustrate this in a most vivid way. After pointing out that the "church" is set forth in different images and likenesses, Mr. Martin says the following, Quote;

*"Inherent in every one of those images, one of the common denominators of all of them is this matter of the duty and privilege of each of the members being present at ALL the stated gatherings of the church."*

Really? What church Mr. Martin?

I would hope by now that the reader has been made aware enough to see the flimsiness of such a daring assertion, or should I say, assumption! Obviously Al Martin is confusing and conflating the Body of Christ with a church, which is absurd to say the least. Since not one text has been given to support the statement of "duty and privilege of EACH member being present at ALL the meetings" as being part of the nature of the Body of Christ which Mr. Martin confuses with a church, it must be read into the passages set forth, which is Eisogesis. This is done by the subtle use of the word "inherent." Mr. Webster says of this word: "involved in the constitution or essential character of something".

Thus, this teaching of stated meetings is therefore said to be part of the constitution or essential character of the N.T. church, of which there is no such thing! And if by "church" he means the Body of Christ, his entire point is unbiblical and absurd. There's absolutely no such thing as any "stated meetings" in the Body of Christ folks.

If the teaching of stated meetings, as set forth here, is part of the essential nature of some church, then why do we search in vain for examples in the N.T.? You won't find it with respect to the Body of Christ and neither will you find it for any church... even if you could find a church in the Bible. There's no *"stated meetings"* found anywhere in the entire Bible.

Furthermore, if Al Martin's absurd conclusion were true, then every assembling of Christians in the N.T. age is bound by scripture to incorporate stated meetings into their activities! Think about -that- one for a while. The fact is that this is nothing more than the product of unbiblical deductive reasoning, based on an -assumption- which is then read back into the Bible, [Eisogesis] and presented as the truth. And the entire edifice is based on a false doctrine of *"church"* to begin with. How marvelous.

This unbiblical reasoning is then used to try to hook the consciences of men by the use of such phrases as...

*"Shall I willfully and deliberately leave a hole in the wall of the church?"*

Question: What church? We hope Martin is not referring to the Body of Christ folks!

*"... Shall we so despise those privileges that we willfully, carelessly absent ourselves..."*

Question: How can a Christian "absent himself" from Christ's Body? ?

Or, in a loud, accusing tone of voice,

*"Shame on us for despising the grace of God... Do you feel the weight of it?"*

And... *"How dare I rob God of His due."*

Is missing a stated meeting robbing God of "His due"? Let each one be fully persuaded in his own mind.

We now move to the last and perhaps the most relative point of concern to most Christians. I say this because many *"divine policemen"*, i.e. elders/church leaders, refer to this passage in their attempt to support the idea of stated meetings.

Point number one: **Hebrews 10:25**: *"Not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is but exhorting one another..."*.

Mr. Martin, and perhaps many others maintain that this verse teaches that we are to be present at all the stated meetings of the/his [Al Martin's] church. Mr. Martin points out that we have 3 exhortations in the passage.

Vs. 22, Let us draw near.

Vs. 23, Let us hold fast.

Vs. 24, Let us consider one another.

Now, vs 25 is noted to be the context in which these exhortations take place, namely, the gathered assembly, not a "church." No word for "church" is found anywhere. This may be a valid approach to the passage. However, when we examine the context, we find out that the writer is exhorting us against ~~apostasy~~ and not against missing a stated meeting.

Verse 25 is, in fact a ~Fourth~ exhortation, all of which have as their goal, a caution against apostasy. It is the capstone in the whole package that is designed to keep us in the faith. Is not this the theme of the entire book of Hebrews? See, for an example, chapter 2 and verses 1-3. Here the exhortation is against the neglect of salvation, not missing a stated meeting!

Note also chapter 3 verses 12-14 where it is crystal clear that the writer is talking about falling away from the living God. If we look at chapter 12, we can see the main point that the writer is driving at through the whole epistle contained in the first and second verse which is to lay aside the weight of sin, run with patience, and keep on looking to Jesus. Therefore, we see that it makes more sense to say that Hebrews 10:25 is one more exhortation against apostasy when we examine it in the context of the whole book.

Further, when we examine the verses that follow, it also fits the bill of keeping with the context. He says that if we willfully sin there is no more sacrifice. He says that we can expect punishment and vengeance and that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God! These are words of exhortation against utterly abandoning the Christian religion, not missing some stated meeting.

Hebrews 10:25 can no more be used to prove that men ought to come to Sunday school, morning worship, evening worship, mid-week prayer meeting, annual business meetings, special meetings or any other kind of meeting fixed by a man to the binding of one's conscience, than John 1:1 can be used to prove that the Word was not pre-incarnate.

These words can, and must be used to prove that men ought not to abandon the Lord's Christ. To try to make this text teach the idea of stated meetings is like trying to put a square peg in a round hole. In the light of the theme and context of the book of Hebrews, it just does not fit.

Our next task is to endeavor to determine the meaning of the word "forsake" as it is used in the N.T. Thayer's Greek lexicon gives the following meanings: abandon, desert, leave in straits, leave helpless, leave behind among, leave surviving. A notable passage is Acts 2:27 where we read: *Thou wilt not leave (abandon, forsake) my soul unto Hades.* For the purpose of this paper, the question can be narrowed to 2 points: Does the word used mean to be occasionally absent from a thing or does it mean to totally abandon it?

In Hebrews 13:5 the writer wants to impress upon the believer the fact that Christ will never "*forsake*" him. This is our word. In order to enforce his argument, the writer uses not 1 or 2 or even 3 but ~Five~ negatives to show that God will never forsake His people. Can anyone imagine that the writer is saying that God will not show a pattern of leaving the believer from time to time? Of course not.

In fact, God does sometimes leave the Christian for a season and then return in grace. Read Job. The writer is rather teaching that God will never totally abandon His people forever. This again is in keeping with the context of the entire book. It's as though he says: "Look, dear Christian, there should be no cause for you to think about abandoning the faith especially in the light of the fact that God has committed Himself never to abandon you!"

The author's argument is Biblically logical, symmetrical, and beautiful. Another text where the word is used is 2 Timothy 4:10 where it is said of Demas that he "forsook" Paul, "*having loved this present world.*" Anyone can see here that old Demas abandoned the faith and went back to the world.

Dear reader, is not this a living example of the very thing Hebrews 10:25 is warning against? Here is a prime example of the principle that the Bible is it's own interpreter! Here I believe we have removed two foundation stones from the sandcastle of "stated meetings based on the word forsake".

The next, and final example will be like placing the dynamite charge in the building and blowing it to smithereens! In Matthew 27:46 we gaze upon our blessed King as He hung upon the cross for us. In His moment of greatest trouble, He reaches back into the Old Testament Scriptures and pulls a verse from Psalm 22:1 and with every ounce of energy cries out: "Eli, Eli, lama SABACHTHANI." And how does the Bible interpret this cry of the Son of God? The answer is found in the very next verse; "*My God, my God, why hast thou... FORSAKEN ME!!*" Who among us that have been born of the Spirit can deny that Jesus was abandoned of God for our sin? ~~This~~ is what the word means. Even Mr. Martin says this when he restates Hebrews 10:25 and uses the word abandon.

Dear, dear reader, return now to Hebrews 10:25. What is it teaching?

Don't miss a stated meeting, or don't abandon the only way to escape the judgment of God? This verse cannot be used to bind a man's conscience to come to church whenever someone declares a "*stated meeting.*" To do so is a misuse of Scripture.

In conclusion, let me say that there is no one who believes in the ~absolute necessity~ of meeting and fellowshiping with God's people in order to a healthy spiritual condition more than I do. The doctrine of the necessity of Christian fellowship is clearly set forth in such passages as 1 John Chapter 1.

What I am saying is that every believer must always take care to examine all things in the light of scripture and avoid the temptation to take anything on hearsay from someone else, no matter how gifted, how learned, or how far advanced in the Christian life or how persuasive he might be. I can do no better than to hide behind the well known theologian, Louis Berkhof. I quote from his book entitled "Principles of Biblical Interpretation".

In chapter 4 entitled, The proper conception of the Bible, under the heading entitled The exegetical standpoint of the interpreter-The relation of the interpreter to the object of his study, we read these words:

*"In distinction from the Church of Rome, the churches of the reformation accepted the important principle that every individual has the right to investigate and to interpret the Word of God for himself.... The interpretations of the Church have divine authority only insofar as they are in harmony with the teachings of the Bible as a whole.*

*And every individual must judge of this for himself. Protestants deny that God ever constituted the Church, in her appointed organs, as the special interpreter of the divine Word, and maintain the prerogative of every Christian to study and interpret Scripture.....But though it be true that the interpreter must be perfectly free in his labors, he --should not confuse his freedom with licentiousness.-- He is indeed, free from all external restrictions and authority, but he is not free from the laws inherent in the object of his interpretation. In all his expositions he is bound by that which is written, --and has no right to ascribe his thoughts to the authors.--"*

That last sentence is precisely what Al Martin has tried to do.

I close this paper with these final words:

A Church Leader's Poem:

EXEGESIS, HEBREW AND GREEK

I'M A BIBLICAL SCHOLAR SO  
HEAR WHEN I SPEAK

I'M AN ELOQUENT SPEAKER

WHY, I HAVE A DEGREE  
AND I KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS  
COME LISTEN TO ME      1 COR. 13

I'LL SET YOU ALL STRAIGHT AS TO WHAT THIS BOOK MEANS  
IF YOU'RE YOUNG OR YOU'RE OLD OR JUST IN YOUR TEENS

I'LL APPLY IT TO YOUR LIVES IN ALL OF IT'S PARTS

EVEN IF IT MEANS BROKEN LIVES AND BROKEN HEARTS.

*"Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits, whether they be of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world." "He that knows God hears us; he who is not of God hears us not. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." 1 John 4:1-6.*

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