

IDEAL ATTITUDES CONCERNING RESEARCH
ON THE SHROUD OF TURIN

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At the outset, let me make it clear that this is a theoretical summary of attitudes which I personally consider ideally correct — or completely wrong — concerning inquiry on the Shroud of Turin. This is presented merely as a working outline. It is not, however, concocted from my own brain independently of outside experience. I think that I could offer names for every individual opinion presented here either for praise or for no-praise, but in the interest of charity, let us allow such names to remain suppressed.

My primary supposition is that the Shroud exists for the world, and therefore is the strictly private possession of no person and no group, no matter what the legal possession title might be. Legal possession should be exercised for the purpose of protecting the Shroud from destruction, harm, ridicule, and stupidity; not for any purpose of stifling research and publicity to help the world be aware of the evidence for the Shroud. Any aura of "secrecy" makes the Shroud a suspect subject for many.

Another supposition is that one should avoid veering to extreme, cynical rationalism which would prevent an open mind to objective research; or in the other direction, one should avoid veering to emotional piosity, which would likewise prevent an open mind to the results of solid, objective research. As for the pious approach, if the individual man or woman postulates that some miraculous influence exists in the case of the Shroud, this automatically prevents all discussion and examination, on the basis that a miracle by definition is beyond human experience and beyond human probing. However, the assumption that highly providential conditions of time and temperature and humidity and historical preservation existed is not the same thing as shouting "miracle." Such an assumption of a providence in the order of nature does not hinder investigation from

