



Modern-Day
Church Persecution Targets

Current Anti-Church Controversy

Introductory Comments

The Bible is the only book in the world, for which it is absolutely essential to know the author in order to spiritually understand its teachings. The author is, of course, God who inspired its writing!

Because the spirit of God with which Christians are indwelt, enables them to actually know and interact with Him. And it is the same spirit by which we (true believers) can learn his will for our lives (generally and personally); through his biblical teaching and enabling, and our prayer and meditation.

A devout Catholic man with whom I had some acquaintance a number of years ago, said, when we were discussing some religious matters, that the bible was not very interesting reading to him, because he thought there wasn't much "meat" in it. Yet, it is just the opposite with me. Why? Because he did not have the key to unlock its profound truths, and mysteries. It was not real to him, nor could it be!

Again, that key is the spirit of God which natural, fallen, unregenerate man does not possess. Despite no small measure of knowledge and wisdom which may be gained from the bible by natural, spiritually unconverted man--it is not written for, nor addressed to him! Not in an unregenerated state.

Because, again, there is no communication on that level--not even on the simplest spiritual subject or revelation! 1 Cor.2:14.

Whether in the various religions of the world--even the nominally Christian dogmas--or in secular circumstances, a person says he is searching for God, it is only his concept of God that he aspires to. It is rational within its unavoidable limitations, but human will and effort (however resolute and prodigious) can neither discover nor perceive the reality of, or in any way enter into the spiritual realm, or dimension of life that God has established exclusively for those whom he has selected to be part of it.

In fact, the scriptures specifically state that no one seeks after God--certainly not the true God, as set forth in the bible, and especially not on the specific terms required for Christians to live an obedient, God-centered life.

Sadly, but true, neither do most Christians come anywhere near meeting the demands of those conditions, even though they possess the inherent means required to meet them!

Christians today are facing a growing international movement against the fundamental truths of their faith, and ultimately the true God--intrinsically including the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit--whom only Christians (regenerated, actual believers) can personally know and have a spiritual, living relationship with.

The situation should not greatly surprise nor upset us, as it should have been foreseeable some years ago, when there began to be an increase in resistance and opposition to the historic institution of ethical and moral principles; which all, were generally established and regarded as absolute human values, by which a great majority of individuals, or society, was commonly guided, and to which many aspired to maintain integrity. It was, in a word, a standard of conduct for many years--but is now widely opposed and disregarded.

We who are the true believers must be able to see and react to these things in perspective. While it is natural and rightful for Christians to want the traditional status quo of more favorable societal conditions to continue, for basic personal peace and security, and institutional religious freedom--it was inevitable that the vitiosity of unredeemed human nature would throw off the restraints of the moral order it was unable to continue allegiance to--being ill-equipped to meet the demands of its principles.

If the spiritual degeneration of the church is true, as prophesied would happen, then an accompanying or comparative social decline was inevitable.

This is not to say that man has any justifiable excuse for acting immorally, or irreverently, and otherwise choosing the more carnal, self-indulgent ways of life. I speak mainly of natural, unregenerate man--but to some degree it is also true of many Christians.

Even some Christian indignation at secular attacks against the church and its beliefs is more creedal, or constitutionally personal, than defensive of biblically sound doctrine. In other words, some reaction to religious controversy (whether raised by unbelievers, or so-called "Christian" sources) may be more denominational, or sectarian than motivated by scriptural principles, rightly interpreted.

So, then, much of the modern church's reaction to the growing tide of criticism and assaults against it, are in the context of its Laodecian state of corrupted theology and corresponding practices.

Do I mean that the contemporary church is totally adulterated in its beliefs and teachings? Of course not, but its errors are so fundamentally serious that it is in a radically defective state, after centuries of weakening, and degeneration. Most of which is directly caused by misinterpreting, revising, and, yes, even manipulating the gospel!

In a word of application to the forestated problem of questions and objections raised against the institutions of God--denominationalism itself among the churches is biblically indefensible. Do you think it existed in the early church period? Not at all--but no doubt it didn't take many years before it began to happen. Why? Because of deviation from the apostles' tradition--which of course, is biblical doctrine, rightly interpreted and taught.

Therefore, if the historic church couldn't get it right and keep it straight, how do we expect the unregenerate --religious or not--to honor God, whom they know not, and His revelations, of which they are unable to comprehend the spiritual truth?

We appear to be entering an era (maybe even the final arena) where the lines are being drawn between Christianity (the true universal church) and the rest of the world. That is, from the latter side, preceding, a carnal versus spiritual confrontation--even a war against truth itself!

There will be less and less tacit acknowledgment of God, and things related to his spiritual world, and more and more open rebellion against His kingdom (as it exists now, and will later be more visibly established).

But we, as believers, know that God will eventually prevail --that is, in His appointed time--and while we will indeed suffer various effects of persecution, we must maintain faith and security in the knowledge that the worst of all the possible trials and tribulations, can not begin to compare with the "joy that shall be revealed in us" for all eternity!

In all of this that is stirring and going on today, we have to recognize certain basic realities that much of Christianity does not seem to be clear on--if even very cognizant, or concerned about! Some of these realities--especially the fundamental facts--are indeed awesome in their significance.

Mankind is divisible into two categories--ever since the fall: (1) those who have been spiritually redeemed and converted into Christians, and are thereby personally related to, and under the love, care, and dominion of God, and (2) all others who have not been spiritually regenerated by God (as described in group 1), and are therefore under the dominion of Satan, who is the "god of this world", subject to God's authority and control--as a consequence of man's disobedience to God in the Genesis account of His specific command to Adam (man) not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil--for in so doing he would die (first, spiritually, and eventually physically).

Until the time when God will execute final judgments upon the earth, and thereby end Satan's reign over the fallen race,

all unregenerated people are subject to Satan's influence, even powers of mental and physical manipulation and control. II Tim. 2:26, very clearly shows the subjugated state of all unredeemed (spiritually unconverted) souls, "who are taken captive by him (the devil) at his will".

While this is the continual, unrelenting situation for all who are unsaved, the text was written to warn Christians that whenever they allow themselves to be drawn away from God, or in any way disobey God's will (as revealed by biblical doctrine; that is, all scriptural teaching of principles, precepts, commands, injunctions, etc.), they too subject themselves to the "snares of the devil"--who can do everything short of the complete control, or death of Christians, as well!

But, again, only if Christians yield ground to him and give him an opening. Otherwise, staying in God's will--includes (1) total obedience to Him (which need not scare or intimidate us, because God's "grace is sufficient for us" in everything that may confront us. He always gives the ability to us to perform whatever He requires of us--which He will also make abundantly clear to us), and (2) all of which may often involve the necessity of invoking applicable scriptural promises and powers against the devil.

Living continually surrendered to God's will; rightly availing ourselves of His power and authority: guarantees the security of the believer against Satan's every means of access and effect.

Looking at the world situation today, we see much diversity of opinion and resulting confusion about the mysteries of life; whether the belief in supernatural creation is valid, or the idea of an evolutionary process is the answer.

Theories, philosophies, and religious claims abound. Who is right, and who is wrong? Is the essential truth knowable? If so, by whom, and how?

At least some basic cosmological facts must be acknowledged! Certain forces had to operate to produce the highly complex universe--from the most minute aspects of its composition to the greatest. This includes all matter--organic and inorganic; all life forms: plant, animal, human, angelic, microbiotic, and whatever other category may exist.

To ascribe the intricate wonders of the human species to an impersonal, impossible source, such as spontaneous or other happenstance process of evolution, versus a definite act of creation by an infinitely superior higher being than the creature itself--should be such an illogical, preposterous theory, that no rational person could ever live with it!

How ironic it is for evolutionists to ridicule and malign the faith of Christians, as being their "unscientific" source of belief in supernatural, divine creation. Considering their religious

obsession with nature as the independent answer to life's mysteries, surely such a scheme requires far greater imagination, or faith than creationism! I refer to strictly human, unspiritual faith. Otherwise, true spiritual faith if possessed would not espouse anything but divine creation.

Strange, that even the most intellectual minds in the world will invent some kind of imaginary explanation for things they don't know the truth about. And, then, even dare to call it science (fact instead of theory), when it is often nothing more than philosophical fantasy.

Nothing is really logical or makes any credible sense than the biblical account of creation. Whether one looks at animal, vegetable, or mineral life forms or substances--one conclusion should be unanimous: that there cannot be design (which inheres in virtually everything in nature) without a designer!

This includes precise order, and symmetry, which would seem to be indisputable in composition. Consideration of the aspects of appearance (details of beauty and form), proportion, harmony, balance, complexity, and function should be incontrovertible evidence of supernatural cause; or more specifically: purposeful, intricately designed, and infinitely controlled creation!

Whatever man constructs--whether simple or complicated--it is self-evident that it did not just happen inexplicably. Its very form or appearance shows that it was designed and created. A tree shows the same thing. It can't be uniquely what it is in composition, function, and purpose unless it was specifically made that way.

So too with man--on a much grander scale. Psalm 139:14 says "I am fearfully and wonderfully made". How can he be endowed with a brain--a magnificent cognitive, contemplative, and computing capability--unless someone with an infinitely greater capacity of those powers not only existed before him, but who both created and controls the human species. The scriptural record says that he (man) was made in His (God's) image. That is, intrinsically similar, but necessarily far inferior.

On the question of whether the truth, or answers to the mysteries of life are determinable--a creator would and did, of course, reveal such facts to man. That is, in the inspired biblical record of those and all other of His revelations.

The scriptural record of the creation of man, including explanations and implications of his nature, reveals that man was formed a trichotomous being--that is, having three elements: body, soul, and spirit!

Body - which gave him world (physical) consciousness.

Soul (mind and emotions) - which gave him mental and self-consciousness, and

Spirit - by which he had God-consciousness.

The spiritual capacity allowed him communication, and com-

munion with God--both ways; from him and to him. This would include tuition (from God), intuition (by man, of God), verbal and mental communication, and communion (worship-of God, prayer-to God, and conversation-with God).

When man fell from grace by commission of sin (disobedience to God's commanded condition - Gen. 2:17), God, as forewarned, withdrew his spirit from him, and he became a carnal creature, void of the spiritual faculty (or component of his nature) which vitally connected him to God. He became, then, literally alienated from God.

Ever since the fall, man cannot hear God, and God will not hear man in his sinful state. Neither can he (man) understand the spiritual, or supernatural aspect of God's works--in man, nature, or the universe. That is, unless and until he may become spiritually regenerated--which is a direct act of God, whereby His elect (specifically selected* ones out of the race) are indwelt with His spirit and thereby become Christians; spiritually re-united permanently with God.

*The selection of certain ones, to the exclusion of others, has no basis in merit, or human value. The ones chosen are no more or less deserving than anyone else. Sinful man's best qualities and actions are only relative in value to all other degenerate members of the race; which attributes and works are all completely unrighteous before God. The scriptures are replete with this characterization of unregenerate man's condition. Nothing about him, or anything done by him in his entire lifetime commends him to God for any valuable positive recognition, or virtue--only negative judgment.

Even a Christian's works before regeneration are similarly unacceptable to God as being anything spiritually good, as well as much--probably most--of his performance after conversion. This is because, while he is given a new nature which can enable him to do righteous things, he still possesses an old carnal nature, which often is allowed to control or influence and affect his life, negatively. In fact, while the new nature cannot sin, the old nature can do nothing but sin! Decisions to give control to the new nature must be consciously and continuously made by the Christian to overcome the natural tendency and proclivity of the old nature to act.

On the subject of the rightness or wrongness of the wide range of different beliefs in the world's religions--how is their constitutional correctness to be determined? Does not there have to be some standard or criteria by which they must be measured? Something extrinsic to the natural mind of man? Spiritual truth is obviously not only confusing, as evidenced by the innumerable different religions, philosophies, orders, etc., but obscure to the vast majority of mankind.

And the reason for such is not that spiritual truth is unknowable to anyone, but that it is exclusively the domain of

those to whom such truth has been purposely, directly revealed by the God whose truth it is! When I said before that man was created a tripartite being--body, soul, and spirit--it must be specified that the spirit transcends the other two components.

It is only in this dimension of living that man can know anything certain about the great mysteries of both the spiritual and natural (physical) realms of the universe. And that is because he has been re-connected to the creator of it all with a new dimension of mind possessed only by those regenerated by God.

Originally Adam lived with all those faculties fully in operation. We have scriptural evidence that he possessed far greater spiritual, mental, and physical powers--not only than anyone has possessed since him, but of such capacities that we can only imagine their extent. The fall resulting from the original sin of Adam, so diminished those attributes that man today is little more than a shell, or vestige of his progenitor.

But, though sin intervened and cut off man from God, so that there was no longer a natural relationship with Him--God from eternity past had decreed and instituted a redemptive provision for man to be restored to his original image and positive eternal destiny.

However, for reasons known only to God--and unquestionably within his just perfections, and sovereign province--this plan of redemption was not all-inclusive of the entire race--but exclusive, and selective. We are further told in scripture that the particular ones who would receive this spiritual renewal, are not of themselves one bit deserving of such a tremendous act of mercy and grace. It was, in a word, a completely independent decision by God, with no consideration of human merit, or any other factor external to Himself. Moreover, we who have been restored to a living vital relationship with God, must also logically conclude from related known facts (spiritual principles) that God was not obligated to redeem fallen man (not all, not one). His original judgment of eternal condemnation on account of sin could have stood permanent and irrevocable, had he not elected to do otherwise.

In the public discourse of the world today, we hear critics pose questions about, or voice objections to certain religious and spiritual beliefs and actions. What once were undercurrents, are now on the surface, and defiantly and vociferously expressed. The surge of terrorist organizations and their activities around the world are mainly composed of Muslim, or Islamic membership or following, and driven by their ideology--which is a strange diabolical mixture of religion and politics. But the "spiritual" justification they claim for their violent actions against people and nations which they label "infidels", has little credibility or authority outside their own institutional realm. And certainly not with the true God of the authentic scriptures!

The other growingly overt tide of resistance and opposition relates to fundamental Christian theology, especially its proponents in government (extending to protocols, meetings customs, etc., where God is named, honored, or invoked in prayer, ceremonies, etc.). The true Christian institution itself is the ultimate target!

If God is acknowledged as man's creator or sovereign authority, there rises a hue and cry from secularists (read: atheists, agnostics, heathens, nonbelievers, etc.) that such references are not representative or subscribed to by those of such other persuasions, or beliefs. Of course, they raise the "separation of church and state" banner, but despite their rhetoric, their anti-Christian bias is what motivates most of them.

Their attacks cause defensive counter-reactions by those they call the "religious right", evangelicals, etc.--leading to sharp, serious divisions, and conflicts. Yet, these defining differences have always been there. They were generally more subdued and controlled for generations, even centuries, but nonetheless the characteristic contrasts were very much established in the hearts and minds of the corresponding sides of the issue.

What, then, are Christians to make of and do about all this social and religious upheaval? Our reactions will tell a lot about the quality, or reality of our whole system of beliefs. If, ideally, we are sound and balanced, we will know how to handle the various issues that arise. If not, which unfortunately most Christians are not, there will be expressions of the whole gamut of emotions: anger, fear, hate, plus the mental machinations of indignation, outrage, retaliation, and any other actions and reactions; probably more flesh than spirit.

I do not mean by this that strong voices of defense and confirmation of the faith are not in order, because we would be remiss, even dishonoring to God, if we did not stand up and testify to the truth of the issues, and against the errors of the opposition.

But note carefully how you feel and act in all of this, because it is a development that forces a test upon us of our real theology. Yes, it involves scriptural truths specifically and in general, but we can only react according to our own interpretation of them. Whether we see it or not, the authenticity (or lack thereof) of our positions and character will be tested and exposed. But will we see it? There are some well-defined, even legitimate, questions raised by unbelievers which superficial, sectarian answers and statements will not satisfy or adequately address.

Much of what is said, however intellectually sophisticated, will be based on specious reasoning. Unfortunately, most of today's church has its own form of synthetic, faulty thinking. The gospel itself is misinterpreted, and hence misrepre-

sented by the Arminianism that pervades its theology. That is, the gospel message has become predicated upon the assumed necessity of the exercise of human free will.

The basis of the gospel has, by the great majority of the church, been changed from (1) the principle of monergy; that being that God is the only active agent in salvation, with man being entirely passive, to (2) a basis of synergy, wherein that both God and man are active. He (God) asks, or extends the offer of saving grace, and man must answer; either to accept, or reject that offer. So they say!

Think, then, how this affects us when confronted with the issue of public and governmental references to God, in name and word (scripture), and related activities of worship and prayer. There is no little irony, but shame, in the situation --that it is the unbelievers who raise the issues and force us to face what we really think and believe.

An Arminian Christian (who is the great majority type; 99-1?) became such when he failed to question, and ultimately prove or disprove the doctrinal accuracy of the "gospel" preaching and other teaching he first and continually heard and read. Not being properly grounded and sound in the theology of his "faith", makes him prone and susceptible to various erroneous concepts of God; as to his sovereignty, independence, and will--plus his decrees and judgments (particularly relating to the consequences of sin, and factors attending and governing salvation).

There is no justification for different belief systems among Christians--neither in the main, essential fundamentals, nor related particulars that can in any way represent factions, sects, and denominations. The base (correct core facts and principles) must be established and maintained diligently and unwaveringly, despite whatever influences and pressures are encountered, or exerted against them. No material variation, or modification may be made which could compromise the integrity of our constitutional theology, and articles of faith.

What is our heritage from God? I didn't particularly say or mean what we received from whoever might have introduced us to Christianity, or taught us their interpretation of it, or that we came to believe from our own reading and study of scriptures. Any one, or more, of which could be substantially right, or to some extent wrong, or flawed.

By heritage, I mean what God revealed and bequeathed to us in His recorded and properly translated word, or holy scriptures--which we are to live in accordance with, maintain and defend for the absolute truth that it conveys, without compromise, or alteration.

He gave the word (gospel, and associated doctrine) to the apostles, and the apostles gave it to the early church. That

is what^{is} meant in the new testament by the "apostles' tradition", which also includes Jesus as one of the sources of original teaching.

What has the church kept and promulgated as the gospel for the many centuries since the precedent referred to above? Not the apostles' tradition, but a corrupted version of it! Or, in other words, a tradition of the modifications of man, in disobedience to many scriptural charges to maintain sound doctrine --even the essence of the strong warning of Rev. 22:18-19.

Webster's New World, 4th Ed., Dictionary gives the following definitions of "corrupted": "1 [Obs.]"(but very applicable): "changed from a sound condition to an unsound one", "2 deteriorated from the normal or standard"....."containing alterations, errors, or admixtures of(texts, etc.)."

So, instead of being "keepers of the faith", we are by and large keepers of another tradition; to wit: a humanized, adulterated "gospel". Oh yes, containing all of the technically right words, but tainted with the "leaven of error" because we, they, most Christians have betrayed the sacred trust committed to them by God, whose word they have misinterpreted, and misrepresented to each other and the world; and thereby seriously dishonoring God!

It is essentially no different, but much worse, than being an untrustworthy employee, who being charged with certain responsibilities by his employer (boss, rightful authority, etc.) fails to perform his duty in any way! You might be a guard, hired to protect someone or some property, and you culpably fail to do it. Have you not broken a trust? Now you have to try to do something to atone for your disservice, so that trust can be restored, if possible. It is not all right to go on carrying that stigma, regardless of whatever good you may otherwise do in your job, or other areas of your life. "Stigma", per dictionary previously cited: "2 something that detracts from the character or reputation of a person, group, etc.; mark of disgrace or reproach."

This, then, is exactly what erroneous beliefs, and consequent mishandling of the gospel, and otherwise misliving the Christian life means. I remember, though sometimes fail to live up to, the admonition of a ship's captain when we sailors were going ashore on leave in a certain foreign port: "When you go into this town, this country, you, even individually are the U.S. Navy. You might be the only representative of it that someone or some people may see, or observe. How you act is what they may think of your organization, and your country." Though this is not verbatim, it was essentially what he said, and they were very important words to hear and heed.

The very same principle applies--even far more importantly--to the Christian's testimony. What does the average unsaved person think of the average, or typical Christian? And while

he couldn't be a proper judge of his doctrine, he might indeed make accurate observations of his conduct, character, consistency, and examples of his actions. This whole issue, again, raises the question of whether one's fundamental, constitutional belief system is scripturally sound.

While we can always say, and rightly so, that no matter how correct our understanding of doctrine may be, and acceptable our service to the Lord, it is at best only relative because of our limited capacity.

But, and this is demonstrably serious, and should be self-evident, that the great majority of believers lives far below that level. I think of one phrase that covers the whole problem: the sin of presumption! It is a universally characteristic fault of the church, or believers in general. It only has to be committed once in an important enough matter to have far-reaching effect and continuous consequences. But usually it is just the beginning of a lifelong pattern.

I am especially talking about compromising a declared spiritual truth; an unequivocal doctrinal meaning, as God intended it to be interpreted by, yes, every Christian. That last phrase alone, affords a good example of the essence, or reality of how the problem is caused.

Your reaction to its implication may indicate just how and why it happens. If my use of the word "every" makes you think that that would be unrealistic, or impracticable to think it means without exception--but more reasonably most, or even a large majority--it exemplifies a natural tendency, and inherent habit we all have. That is, to automatically question or doubt extreme statements, or commands, or propositions, because of an ingrained trait of not wanting to be told something emphatically demanding our acceptance and unquestioning obedience.

Whether your personal reason may be contrariness, unwillingness to make the commitment and sacrifice required to conform, lack of devotion to God and his principles, or whatever the root cause may be--it is the first step toward the sin of presumption. Because we soon, or eventually begin to rationalize, and temper the truth by presuming that God may be just speaking ideally, but not literally meaning it to the absolute extreme, or fullest extent. "Hath God said.....?" Yes, he has!

And, then, presumption leads to a conscious decision (however subtle, or "unintentional") to modify the meaning to something less demanding, or more palatable to humanity. The reason for capitulation--other than the typical human penchant for having varying opinions on subjects, or some form of controversy--is the fact that increasingly for centuries the awesome realities of some of God's decrees, commandments, precepts, and principles have been too much for most Christians to continue to honor and obey explicitly as God established them.

It could be categorically stated, with regard to the doctrine of election, that the sin of presumption has led to the erroneous idea of a principle of synergy, or that unfounded, willful assumption of man that human redemption is potentially possible for all mankind, and essentially the result of some cooperative action of both God and man.

This is in contrast and conflict with the principle of "monergy", whereby God is the sole active agent in every aspect of man's salvation. It being entirely God's work, by whom the objects of the plan (certain persons) are designated, or exclusively decreed to be saved. Everything from conception to consummation is independently caused to happen, or executed by God! Man being completely passive; with no element of effect on any part of the process! He is no more active in results, i.e., than a tree is in its becoming a piece of furniture. Somebody decides that the tree is going to be used for that purpose. He, or they, don't ask the tree if it wants to be a bureau, etc. You say, of course not, the tree can't comprehend such a question, nor can it communicate a knowing response.

Well, neither can a spiritually dead human being comprehend, or understandingly respond to any spiritual truth, question, or "appeal" because it is as foreign to him as light to darkness --which is a meaningful description of the contrast between the two worlds of the spiritual man, and the natural, or carnal man. The first lives with a "light" of spiritual renewal he has been given at the point in time he was converted. The latter lives in spiritual darkness, and cannot possess, or see that light in an unregenerated state.

The sad thing is, many would acknowledge and agree with that, and then keep on going the wrong way.

Even though we are weak, because of the flesh (the "old man", our carnal nature), and God in His mercy often spares us of some kind of deserved negative consequences, I don't believe He ever overlooks or foregoes His own stated principles regarding our responsibility to obey His revealed scriptural will. That is, whatever His word specifies for us to do--first, to honor Him, and secondly, to be able to receive the promised results contingent upon meeting His conditions to the letter, unmodified by human adulteration.

Examples:

II Tim. 2:15, paraphrased: study the word to be able to rightly divide it. The word "divide" might tend to have a negative, even questionable sound to it. But since we should readily realize that God would not mean it in any wrong sense, then we must learn what kind of division, or separation is required.

Too much shallow, unstudied interpretation of doctrine is done by most Christians, whereby interrelated principles are not properly considered, resulting in wrongly dividing the word of truth, or failing to do much more than dealing with a particular verse, or passage as if it were an independent, or stand-alone proof of the assumed meaning.

The guiding, essential principle is to interpret scripture with scripture (implicit in the meaning of "rightly dividing the word of truth"). I use a three-part formula to represent what I believe is involved in the study of theology, or in fact any biblical subjects, not literally obvious or certain on their face:

1. Prioritize. 2. Systematize. 3. Harmonize. The order and meaning of these words should be self-evident as a useful reminder in the process of following the injunction of the II Tim. principle.

There is a section on this subject in another paper I wrote: "The Model Church", for a fuller explanation of each part of the formula, or methodology.

Now for a look at another simple, but very serious principle that God has given us as a warning of a condition we can too easily get ourselves into. You may draw a line on how definitely it applies in every instance of its occurrence, if you dare, but I don't see how we can risk that it doesn't mean exactly what it says. And that unless personally corrected, is unlimited in its duration. And, again, we cannot presume upon God's mercy, which may be extended to us in such a situation. We just don't know when or if God makes any exceptions--so how can we risk it?

"If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me". Ps. 66:18. How comprehensively does that warning; that statement of fact apply? I believe we must extend the principle of that scripture to everything we do, or are responsible to do!

Paraphrasing, or extending the verse's application: 'If I regard error in my mind, the Lord will not hear me (?)'.

If I do, have I not broken communion, fellowship and allegiance with Him? "Can two walk together except they be agreed?" Amos 3:3. Especially, with God!

Brethren, it is vital to our faithfulness, and honor of God, that we have nothing contrary, or contradictory in our testimony.

It is too serious, even essential, that we do not let ourselves become guilty of any such fault. No excuse will ever suffice to exonerate us!

We should live with a reverential fear of having God say to us, "nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee". And take no solace that the objection may (but likely will not) be minor, or that there will always be something negative anyway; therefore, excusing our failure to work at preventing, or correcting any error that we might commit.