

Positive Confession

by

Steve Phillips

Cover Art by
Timothy Phillips

ISBN 978-3430-96-7

Second Edition, 2003

THIS BOOK IS NOT FOR SALE

All materials contained herein may be freely copied and distributed by any means provided that none of the materials are offered for sale or contained as a part of any item offered for sale.

"Freely you have received, freely give" -Matt. 10:8

In any citation or translation of this work, do not attribute the text to the author unless quoting or translating verbatim.

Translation into other languages is hereby granted by the author in accordance with the aforementioned.

Published by: DAC-PRINTS 9, Idi-Ape, Basorun Rd Box 19407 UIPO Ibadan, Nigeria.

CONTENTS

- 1 COUNTERFEIT page 3
- 2 MIRAGE page 3
- 3 FAITH page 5
- 4 PRAYER page 10
- 5 GODS page 17
- 6 PROSPERITY page 21
- 7 HEALING page 27
- 8 DOMINION page 33
- 9 PRIDE page 37
- 10 OCCULTISM page 39
- 11 CHRISTIANITY page 41
- FOOTNOTES page 51

COUNTERFEIT CHRISTIANITY

Counterfeiting is a serious crime attached with severe punishments for those offending. Not only are private citizens defrauded and deceived thereby, but it is an assault against the integrity of the federal government issuing the genuine.

An imitation, deceptively similar in many particulars, is circulated in its stead. Yet once detected, it is exposed for the valueless fraud that it is. Citizens are then alerted to the distinguishing characteristics of the look-alike imposture. Only then will the worthlessness of this pseudo-currency be realized. When identified, false bank notes are not merely discarded as useless, but are reported to the authorities that the criminals responsible might be apprehended.

When seized, their printed works are confiscated while they await judgment by trial. It is no small thing this counterfeiting, this taking advantage of others by passing off as authentic what is actually a deluding lie.

The fraudsters may profit from this illicit trade, that is, until their scam is unmasked in all its treachery. Then, the citizenry indignantly despise both the forgers and their works. The people return to lawful utilization of the genuine while the thieving imitators are left to reap what they have sown at the bar of justice.

It is hoped that this volume will serve to encourage a return to the lawful and legitimate in Christianity while identifying counterfeits which have been so widely distributed to the demise and impoverishment of the unsuspecting.

1

MIRAGE

A mirage is a deception of the eye caused by layers of hot air which reflect distant objects with the appearance of reality. We are familiar with stories of parched desert wanderers who perish, staggering after shimmering pools of "water" which were never there. The water did not exist; the illusion did, but only at a distance. When one draws near to the expected point of realization, nothing but heated air is encountered.

The mirage vanishes at close hand scrutiny: What is seen then is what has been all along; nothing. Such is Positive Confession; an enticing and deluding imitation without substance. It is pursued by many, yet discovered to be a bitter disillusionment when seen for what it truly is.

Positive Confession [PC] is a term never used in the pages of Scripture. Throughout the entire Bible the word "positive" is not once to be found; neither is "negative." The Word of God does not speak of things in terms of positive or negative. Psychologists and occultists, however, do. It is from these uncertain and polluted springs that the concepts of PC have seeped into Christendom.

"Positive" is equated with "good" and "true." "Negative" is considered false and harmful. God and all that is good are attracted by "positive" words of "faith." Satan, problems, and poverty are brought upon us by "negative" words of doubt and fear. This is the essence of PC's error.

Negative does not mean bad or false; positive is not necessarily good or true. In Genesis 1, God pronounced everything He had done as very good. This was a "positive" statement which was true. The Lord told man in chapter 2 that to eat of forbidden fruit would result in his death. This was "negative," though true. The serpent told Eve in chapter 3 that she would be like God. This was "positive" but false.

Many negative "confessions" were made by people which were true. Their negative statements were not the cause of their peculiar circumstances. What they said did not bring them into their situations nor did it cause them to remain in those conditions. PC claims, "What you confess is what you possess;" but it is not so.

Visionless disobedient disciples labored all night to no avail. When asked by the Lord Jesus if they were "prospering" they replied: "No" [Jn.21:1-6]. This is decidedly negative, but it was true; they had nothing and openly confessed it. Yet this did not limit what the Lord Jesus could do for such apart from any visualization or positive decrees on their part. He sovereignly gathered 153 fish for them apart from any imagined PC from them.

Solomon rightly, yet "negatively", confessed that he was no wiser than a little child and unable to judge God's people [1 Kings 3:7-9]. Far from being reprov'd for failing to employ the techniques of PC, what he said "was pleasing in the sight of the Lord" -1 Kings 3:10.

The Lord granted what he *asked*, not what he *decreed* [1 Kings 3:11]. God makes no mention of PC at all while commending his "asking" 5 times in this one verse. In addition, the Lord gave him "what you have not asked" -1 Kings 3:13 [emphasis added]. This is absolutely contrary to the "law" of PC's "naming it and claiming it;" yet is absolutely true.

By all standards of PC, Jehoshaphat ought to have been miserably defeated by the enemy for his lack of "faith." He did not visualize himself and the hosts of the Lord as mighty warriors vanquishing the foe. His plea, negative, weak and faithless according to the doctrine of PC, should have surely brought about his demise. "We are powerless...nor do we know what to do" -2 Chron.20:12.

It was a negative confession, yet one that resulted in mighty victory by the hand of the Lord. Powerless and ignorant we certainly are; in this he spoke truth. His prayer ended though, "But our eyes are upon Thee" -2 Chron.20:12. And in this he was looking unto the Lord and not to himself for remedy.

It was due to his turning from self-reliance to complete abandonment to God that the Lord was pleased to be with them and fight their battles (2 Chron.20:15-17). Victory, blessing, and power are not to be found in us or our words, but in the Lord alone.

Paul should have confessed himself into perpetual spiritual infancy and bondage by his negative confessions; that is, if the teachings of PC were true. Thank God, they are not. Hear his "negative" pronouncements. "We are fools...weak...without honor...hungry...thirsty...poorly clothed...homeless...the scum of the world...even until now" -1 Cor.4:10-13. And then he had the "audacity" to command all Christians, "Be imitators of me" -1 Cor.4:16. He did so because PC is not true.

All Christians are to imitate his total disregard of the spurious and deluding claims of PC. No one need fear that "negative" words bring a curse upon the life, or that a "negative" lowly state of life is a result of God's displeasure for our not confessing a better one.

Neither are we to imagine that "positive" words result in blessing. The rich man was very certain about his future, yet his foolish soul was required of him no sooner had his "positive" confession passed from his mouth [Lk.12:16-21]. When one is self-assured and basking in security, PC flows smoothly from deluded lips. "I will not sit as a widow, nor know loss of children" -Isa.47:8. This is very positive but it did not materialize in reality. "But these two things will come on you suddenly in one day: loss of children and widowhood in spite of your many sorceries" -Isa.47:9.

God cannot be manipulated; PC does not force His hand. This occult formula does not obligate the living God to perform according to its imaginary claims. It did not work for exorcists "positively" employing the name of Jesus in their craft [Acts 19:13-16].

Misguided disciples may attempt to alter reality by positive affirmations, but the Word of God disregards their confident decrees. The Lord Jesus' words, echoing those of the Scriptures, solemnly warned them that they all would fall away and be scattered [Mt.26:31]. Yet, Peter led the unanimous chorus that, even though all would fall away, never would he. Even unto death he would remain stalwart and true. "All the disciples said the same thing too" -Mt.26:35.

They were positive. They believed in their words and, as one puts it, had "faith in their faith." But their confession did not awaken them from slumber in order to pray [Mt.26:36-46]; neither did it incubate and hatch the reality they so ardently had declared. "Then all the disciples left Him and fled" -Mt.26:56.

Examined closely in the flickering torch light of Gethsemane, the devotion they confessed proved to be a mirage. What they confidently asserted previously had no substance at the time of testing. The Word of God, however, was confirmed infallibly. "All this has taken place to fulfill the Scriptures" -Mt.26:56. The words of the Lord Jesus did not fall to the ground as did Peter's PC. The prophesy of the Scripture remained unshaken while the disciples' self-generated affirmations vanished into thin air.

This incident sets in sharp relief the conflicting claims of the Word of God and those of PC. There can be no wedding in this unequal yoke. Either the Word of God spoken by the Lord Jesus will prevail or the PC of men shall triumph. The Word of the Lord declared that they would fall away and be scattered; they confessed that they would never fall away while remaining faithful unto death.

The choice is between submitting to the Word of God or attempting to assert one's own will and maneuver circumstances by PC. It is an either/or decision. We cannot have both; they are mutually exclusive orientations. Submitting to the Lord's Word requires true humility; following one's own decrees is rooted in pride. This is at the core of PC.

The Lord's principle is that man shall live "by everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord" - Deut.8:3. PC's message is nothing more than what the men of Jeremiah's day unabashedly declared: "As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the Lord, we are not going to listen to you! But rather we will certainly carry out every word that has proceeded from our mouths" -Jer.44:16,17.

Everything that proceeds out of the mouth of the Lord or every word that has proceeded from our mouths: this is the issue confronting the church by the false teachers of PC. Either we obey the Lord or He obeys us: God obeying us is the raw option that PC presents.

The succeeding chapters will address various aspects comprising the tangled web of PC's other gospel. At the head of each section will appear quotes from the acknowledged leaders of this movement. The body of discussion following will evaluate the teaching of the Word of God concerning each chapter's topic.

2 FAITH

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

FAITH IS A POWER FORCE. IT IS A TANGIBLE FORCE. IT IS A CONDUCTIVE FORCE¹ FAITH IS A SPIRITUAL FORCE² POSITIVE THINKING IS JUST ANOTHER TERM FOR FAITH³ IT IS THIS FORCE OF FAITH WHICH MAKES THE LAWS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD FUNCTION⁴ FAITH IS GOD'S SOURCE OF POWER⁵ HE TOOK WORDS - FAITH FILLED WORDS WERE GOD'S SUBSTANCE. GOD FILLED HIS WORDS WITH FAITH. HE USED HIS WORDS AS CONTAINERS TO HOLD HIS FAITH AND CONTAIN THAT SPIRITUAL FORCE...CAUSING CREATION⁶ THIS IS UNIVERSAL LAW...THAT WE TRANSLATE INTO PHYSICAL REALITY THE THOUGHTS AND ATTITUDES WE HOLD IN OUR MINDS, NO MATTER WHAT THEY ARE⁷ YOUR UNCONSCIOUS MIND...[HAS A] POWER THAT TURNS WISHES INTO REALITIES WHEN THE WISHES ARE STRONG ENOUGH⁸ FAITH IN YOUR FAITH COMES BY HEARING YOURSELF SPEAK YOUR FAITH⁹ THAT'S WHAT YOU'VE GOT TO LEARN TO DO TO GET THINGS FROM GOD: HAVE FAITH IN YOUR FAITH¹⁰

Biblical faith is comprised of two elements: trust and obedience. In both cases there must necessarily be an object of faith. One must trust something or someone. Obedience must be in submission to some directive or command.

The Scriptures present God/Christ as the One we trust. It is His commands found in the Bible that we obey. We trust Him. We obey His word. This is Christian faith.

"Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them who diligently seek Him" -Heb.11:6. This verse shows clearly that the Lord is the object of faith. It is Him we are to please. We are to come to Him. We seek Him. He rewards those who believe Him. Genuine faith comes from God. It is not generated from ourselves. It could not be otherwise.

Unless God has made a promise or issued a command, nothing is there to place one's faith in. Faith cannot exist in a void. The Lord Jesus is both the "Author and Finisher of faith" -Heb.12:2. It is God who has "allotted to each a measure of faith" -Rom.12:3. "Love with faith [comes] from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" -Eph.6:23.

In every aspect of godliness, the source of all virtue is the God of heaven. Men of flesh originate nothing good from themselves. Paul said it clearly, "not that we are sufficient in ourselves to consider anything as coming from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God" -2 Cor.3:5.

Consider Abraham. "What shall we say that Abraham, our forefather, has found according to the flesh?" -Rom.4:1. He found that everything in his spiritual life originated in the Lord.

It was God who called him while yet in his native land. The God of Glory commanded him to leave that place for an inheritance yet unknown. The Lord decreed the promise of blessing to him and his seed.

And what did Abraham do? "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness" -Gen. 15:6. God spoke, Abraham believed. The Lord initiated and Abraham responded. This is faith. He trusted in the God who made the promise by His word.

Every promise given is wholly dependent upon the one who gave it. There is nothing we can do to cause anyone, including God, to fulfill their word.

We may remind, plead, or reward the one who has promised, but the decision and ability to fulfill the promise still remains with the one promising. We can only await the promised fulfillment. It is the same with God.

Simple patience, waiting in all humility for the Lord to perform what He has said, is all that we can do. We cannot force His hand. He responds to no demands or decrees of men. Some have imagined this to be true, citing Isa.45:11 from the KJV as "proof" of PC's error. It says, "Ask Me of things to come concerning My sons, and concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me."

But examined closely in other English translations, a meaning altogether different is discovered. The NASB has it this way, "Ask Me about the things to come concerning My sons, and you shall commit to Me the work of My hands." This is how the NIV translates it, "Concerning things to come, do you question Me about My children, or give Me orders about the work of My hands?" Good News says, "You have no right to question Me about My children or to tell Me what I ought to do."

That is very true. We have no right to question the Lord or to command Him what to do. We can only patiently wait upon Him to perform what He has said. It is total dependence upon the Word of God and Him who spoke it. It is what Abraham and all faithful men have done.

It is only "through faith and patience [that you] inherit the promises. For when God made the promise to Abraham, since He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, 'I will surely bless you and I will surely multiply you.' And so, having patiently waited, he obtained the promise" -Heb.6:12-15.

All that he obtained was by faith. The entire inheritance was based upon what the Lord pledged to him. "God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise" -Gal.3:18. Real faith places no confidence in self. It does not trust its own perspectives or abilities. Self is wholly abandoned, in order to be cast upon the Lord and His Word alone.

Trust must be accompanied by obedience or it betrays a lack of trust at all. For He who promises, also commands. "By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed" -Heb.11:8.

Obedience implies compliance with the demands or requests of one in authority. The dictionary defines it as being submissive to restraint, control, or command.

It is God who is in authority, not Abraham. The Lord did not "obey" Abraham's spoken "faith." Neither did Abraham place his faith in his own notions, since he was not the One who called. He was the one who responded by obeying the Lord's command. And he did this by faith.

"By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed by going out to a place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going" -Heb.11:23.

He must trust. He must obey, for he did not even know where he was going. It was the Lord who led while Abraham followed. The God of Glory commanded and Abraham responded. The Lord God promised and he patiently waited by faith for the Word of God to be fulfilled.

He did not lean on his own understanding. He decreed no path for his own feet to follow. Self in Abraham was abandoned completely. PC does none of this, showing that it is not real faith at all.

We are totally dependent upon the promise and power of God. Yet we must obey the directives in His Word or we show we have no genuine faith at all.

Israel is a testimony to this and a solemn warning to all who refuse to trust and obey as they themselves did. Spies discovered firsthand that the Lord's pronouncements about Canaan were accurate in every respect. They knew that His Word was true, but they refused to believe it.

Joshua and Caleb, however, were of a different spirit. They reproved the dual unbelief and disobedience of the rest of the people of God by saying, "If the Lord is pleased with us, then He will bring us into the land and give it to us." They insisted that they must trust God's promise. "Only do not rebel against the Lord" - Num.14:8,9. They rightly demanded that they must obey the Lord's command in His Word.

Israel did neither and the Lord's wrath was provoked against them. The ten dissenting spies died by a plague [Num.14:36-38]. The entire generation was forbidden to enter the land while being consigned to wander in the wilderness for forty years until they perished [Num.14:30-35].

How did they then respond to this Word from the Lord? They refused to submit in humility and contrition. They decreed their own self-chosen will in defiance of the edict of God.

They were "positive" yet rebellious. They had confidence in their own pronouncements but not in those of the Lord. Israel marched forth in their presumptuous dominion in complete disregard of the Word of God.

"Moses said, 'Why then are you transgressing the commandment of the Lord, when it will not succeed? Do not go up, or you will be struck down before your enemies, for the Lord is not among you!'" -Num.14:41,42. "But they went up heedlessly ...then the Canaanites came down, and struck them and beat them down" - Num.14:44,45.

PC is just this; presumptuous confidence in one's own words while disbelieving and disobeying the Word of God. And it obtains the same results as did Israel's: "Therefore, let us fear if, while a promise remains of entering His rest, any one of you may seem to have come short of it. For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard. Those who formerly had good news preached to them failed to enter because of disobedience" - Heb.4:1,2,6.

Faith is dependent upon the Word first being spoken to us by God. Then faith has a sure and unshakable object for its trust and obedience. Faith does not arise from our words, but from the Word of God contained in the Scriptures.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God" -Rom.10:17. Real faith is "faith in the truth" - 2 Thess.2:13. We are to be "nourished on the words of faith and of the sound doctrine" -1 Tim.4:6.

Nothing else will qualify as faith. No other source is to be found. We are to "trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding"-Prov.3:5.

True faith trusts in the Lord and all of His Word. PC leans on its own understanding and all of its own words. It does what the Scriptures expressly forbid. It walks by sight, but not by faith, and exposes itself as not being faith at all.

Real faith is to "walk by faith, not by sight" -2 Cor.5:7. Sight is equivalent to our own perspective and orientation, our assessment and evaluation. It is our frame of reference.

Faith has nothing to do with "sight." It has everything to do with trusting and obeying the God of heaven who has spoken in His written Word, the Bible. Genuine faith does not originate with visualized "seeing" and self-generated imagination. Faith does not work in this way.

Christianity is "faith working through love" -Gal.5:6. Real faith is effective through love. And what is love except obedience to the Word of God? "This is the love of God that we keep His commandments" -1 Jn.5:3. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. He who does not love Me does not keep My words'" -Jn.14:23,24.

Faith works by obedience to the truth of the Scriptures. It does not work by words. Without love [obedience], faith is nothing [1 Cor.13:2]. Without love [obedience], words are nothing [1 Cor.13:2]. All the words of PC are nothing without obedience to the revealed will of God in the Scriptures. Faith works in no other way.

James spends much time elaborating this point in his epistle. Simply stated, "Faith without works is dead" -Jas.2:26 [see Jas.2:14-26 for the complete explanation]. What kind of works is he referring to? The only kind that meets with the approval of God is faith working through love. What is love for God? It is obedience to His word; nothing else is faith.

Some, however, have been misguided by PC's distortion of Heb.11:1. In the KJV it reads, "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" [emphasis added]. Is faith, then, a tangible force, a spiritual commodity to be grasped and utilized to obtain one's hoped for wishes? PC would say, "Yes." But other Bible translations would not lend support to this occultist concept of PC in the least.

"Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" [NASB, ESV; emphasis added].

"Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see" [NIV, emphasis added].

"Faith means beings sure of the things we hope for and knowing that something is real even if we do not see it" [New Century, emphasis added].

"To have faith is to be sure of the things we hope for, to be certain of the things we cannot see" [Good News, emphasis added].

"Now faith is the substantiating of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" [New Translation, emphasis added].

It is obvious from the above that faith is the means of assurance and certainty of those things that we have no direct access to or contact with; things like heaven, the resurrection, forgiveness of sins, reigning with Christ, even the invisible God Himself "whom no man has seen or can see" -1 Tim.6:16.

It is only by faith, by believing the written revelation of God, that we can be sure of any of these things hoped for. Our faith rests on the certainty of the unchanging character of God whose Word never fails.

"My word which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it" -Isa.55:11.

It is this that gives us assurance in all spiritual verities. It is by this that we can be sure of all that the Lord has told us, "by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie" -Heb.6:18. And what are these

two immutable things? The previous verse tells us. "God, desiring to show to the heirs of the promise the unchangeableness of His purpose, interposed with an oath" -Heb.6:17.

The two things are these: (1) The ever consistent character and purpose of God and (2) The infallibility of His Word. God Himself and His written Word are the sure resting places for our faith. And this assurance provides "strong encouragement to take hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast" -Heb.6:18,19. This is the confident assurance and substantiating that all believers are called upon to possess: genuine faith by trusting God and obeying His Word.

It is what gave assurance to Abraham, though by "sight" and all human expectation, there was no hope. "Yet with respect to the promise of God, he did not waver in unbelief but grew strong in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully assured that what God had promised, He was able also to perform" -Rom.4:20,21.

He believed the promise because his faith was placed in God who gave it. The Lord is able to accomplish what He says, and He does, without fail or disappointment. The consistent testimony of the Scriptures is that, like Abraham, our faith is placed in God. Christians are those who, through the Lord Jesus, "are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God" -I Pet.1:21 [emphasis added].

Christ Jesus commanded, "Have faith in God" -Mk.11:22 [emphasis added]. The Thessalonians became an example "to all the believers" because "in every place your faith toward God has gone forth" -I Thess.1:7,8 [emphasis added].

Among the rudiments of the teaching about Christ, the most elemental thing is that a person have "faith toward God" -Heb.6:1 [emphasis added]. This is expounded in Heb.11:6: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him [emphasis added].

Christ, as surely as God, is the object of our faith. Paul solemnly testified "of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" -Acts 20:21 [emphasis added]. He is assuredly both the source of our faith and the object of it. "By faith in the name of Jesus, this man whom you see and know was made strong. It is Jesus' name and the faith which comes through Him that has given this complete healing to him, as you can all see" -Acts 3:16 [emphasis added].

This emphasis is so often repeated in the NT that it hardly needs calling attention to. The above cited references state this clearly as do the following [Lk.17:5; Acts 24:24; 26:18; Rom.3:22, 26; Ga1.2:16, 20; 3:22, 26; Eph.1:5; 3:12; Phi1.3:9; Col 1:4, 23; 2 Tim.3:15; Philemon 5; Jas.2:1; Rev.14:12].

It is this faith in God and Christ that saves. "Though you have not seen Him, you love Him ...and believe in Him...obtaining as the outcome of your faith the salvation of your souls" -I Pet.1:8, 9.

"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" -I Jn.5:4, 5. Faith in the Lord Jesus is the entrance into life and deliverance from the corruption of the world.

In fact, so identified are believers with God/Christ as the object of their faith, that Christianity is regularly referred to as "The faith." "The word of God kept on spreading...and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith" -Acts 6:7 [emphasis added].

References to the faith are numerous throughout the NT. It can be seen in the following: Acts 6:7; 13:8; 14:22; 16:5; I Cor.16:13; Gal.1:23; Eph.4:13; Phil.1:25,27; I Tim.3:9,13; 4:1; 5:8; 6:20,21; 2 Tim.2:18; 3:8; 4:7; Tit.1:1,13; I Pet.5:9; Jude 3.

The faith is the whole body of truth revealed in the Scriptures regarding the gospel of God in Christ Jesus the Lord. It is not to be abandoned, neglected, or modified. Any tampering with the faith as revealed in the Bible brings the judgment of God upon such daring fools.

"But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, let him be accursed!" -Gal.1:8. Would someone alter the content and the object of your faith? Let him be accursed! Would any divorce faith from its rightful object in the Lord Jesus Christ? Let him be accursed! Shall faith be drawn away from belief in the gospel preached through the Word of God? Let him be accursed!

If anyone says that "faith in my faith" is the same as the faith of the Word of God, let him be accursed! Whoever would presume that his words spoken and decreed are the object of his faith, let him be accursed!

Paul's earnest desire was that the saints of God would "with one mind [strive] together for the faith of the gospel" -Phil.1:27 [emphasis added]. Jude emphatically has this as the great and single purpose for his epistle. "I had to write and urge you to contend earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints" -Jude 3 [emphasis added].

It is from the faith that the church is solemnly warned not to fall away from. Yet some will. The Word of God is explicit. "The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits doctrines of demons" -I Tim.4:1 [emphasis added].

The object of PC's faith is self-gain, a lust for prosperity and promotion. It is wanton greed which has caused its adherents to wander away from the faith. "For the love of money is the root of all evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows" -I Tim.6:10 [emphasis added].

The self-generated pronouncements of men, the words of false knowledge, and the vain worldly babblings of professing Christians all lead to apostasy from the faith. We are warned against it. It destroys the soul.

"O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you, avoiding worldly empty chatter and the opposing arguments of what is falsely called 'knowledge' which some have professed and thus gone astray from [or, missed] the faith" -I Tim.6:20,21 [emphasis added].

The faith has been abandoned for demonic doctrines [I Tim.4:1], the love of money [I Tim.6:10], and worldly empty words parading as spiritual knowledge [I Tim.6:20,21]. There is no other conclusion that can be drawn if one believes the testimony of the Scriptures. The "faith" of PC is not the faith of the Word of God.

Faith is not a "law" of the spiritual realm. Neither is it a spiritual "force" that can be used to gain one's own ends by correctly employing the proper formula. Faith is as the Word of God declares it to be, trust in and obedience to the truth spoken by the Lord in the Bible.

PC is a religion of works through self-effort. It nullifies the grace of God while making the God of Glory to be the errand-boy of man. It is a religion of works because the decrees of men are its "scriptures," the techniques are learned procedures, and the ambitions of its devotees are self promotion and aggrandizement.

"But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace" -Rom.11:6. Assuredly the total provision for everything in the spiritual life proceeds from our Father and His Christ. This is God's grace. "Through our Lord Jesus Christ...we have obtained our introduction by faith into this grace in which we stand" -Rom.5:1,2 [emphasis added].

Grace cancels human effort/works. "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast" -Eph.2:8,9 [emphasis added]. The grace did not proceed from ourselves. The faith did not originate from our imagination or decrees. Real faith is not of ourselves. It is the gift of God.

This, PC rejects. Grace and PC's tenets are mutually exclusive. They are as different as heaven and earth. Indeed, grace comes down from above while PC springs up from the world below.

Actually, it eliminates the need for God at all. We merely need to cooperate with the "law" of PC and possess what we confess. According to this delusion, God Himself used the same technique and got what He wanted when He made heaven and earth. He followed the laws of the spiritual world and obtained the expected results.

PC would have us believe that both man and God are subject to this "law." If this is so [and we heartily thank God that it is not], then God is an irrelevant intermediary for positively confessing humans. We can bypass the Lord altogether and go straight to the source of all blessing - the law of PC.

This is the inescapable logical outcome of PC's distorted deception. It is stated as such by the "pastor" of the world's largest "church." Without hesitation he states that occultists can "apply the law of the fourth dimension" and obtain the same results as Christians using the same formula.¹¹

Occultists have no connection with the God of the Bible and the Lord Jesus Christ. Yet the same "law" works for them as well as anyone who has the "faith" of PC's other gospel.

This is not Christianity, it is another religion entirely.

3

PRAYER

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

IT IS UNSCRIPTURAL TO PRAY, "IF IT IS THE WILL OF GOD." WHEN YOU PUT AN "IF" IN YOUR PRAYER, YOU ARE PRAYING IN DOUBT¹ NEVER, EVER, EVER GO TO THE LORD AND SAY, "IF IT BE THY WILL..." DON'T ALLOW SUCH FAITH DESTROYING WORDS TO BE SPOKEN FROM YOUR MOUTH² IF YOU HAVE TO SAY, "THY WILL BE DONE,"...THEN YOU'RE CALLING GOD A FOOL³ PRAYER POWER IS A MANIFESTATION OF ENERGY...JUST AS THERE ARE SCIENTIFIC TECHNIQUES FOR THE RELEASE OF ATOMIC ENERGY, SO THERE ARE SCIENTIFIC PROCEDURES FOR THE RELEASE OF SPIRITUAL ENERGY THROUGH THE MECHANISM OF PRAYER⁴

Prayer is the most fundamental expression of faith in God. By it we demonstrate our trust in God. Through prayer we cast aside self-confidence in abject humility to seek the One worthy object of all true devotion.

"When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, O Lord, I shall seek.' One thing I have asked from the Lord, that I shall seek: That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord and to meditate in His temple" -Ps.27:8, 4.

It is through prayer that the face of God is sought. Prayer is the instinctive longing of a spiritual heart and the sincerest evidence of possessing life from above. "You have received the Spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, 'Abba! Father!'" -Rom.8:15.

Yet, in this, we are all but mere infants. None have mastered prayer. No one has discovered the secret technique of praying to God. There is none.

"The Spirit also helps our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words" -Rom.8:26. Paul said he was ignorant of how to properly pray. In this verse he broadened the scope of novices to include all believers. We do not know how to pray as we ought.

The disciples confessed that they were neophytes in this school. And they came to the only One who is truly qualified to instruct His learners. "Lord, teach us to pray" -Lk.11:1. And He has.

"Pray, then, in this way: Our Father who is in heaven, hallowed be Your name.

"Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

"Give us this day our daily bread.

"And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

"And do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

"For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen" -Mt.6:9-13.

If we are to pray aright, we must be, foremost of all, worshippers of the Most High, the Father in heaven. The greatness of His majesty and the magnificence of His works occupy every worshipping heart.

"On the glorious splendor of Your Majesty and on Your wonderful works will I meditate" -Ps.145:5. "Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His excellent greatness" -Ps. 150:2. "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; bring an offering, and come before Him; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" -I Chron.16:29.

Worshippers who love their God also love His ways. They delight in His will. They have no greater joy than seeing His purposes established among men. They pray regarding the concerns which occupy their Lord. They will pray in this manner.

"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" -Mt.6: 10. The reign of the King over his subjects prompts their prayers. That His law, as King, might be faithfully and swiftly executed by His servants is the topic of their intercession.

This theme of interceding for the progress of the kingdom of God according to His will is re-echoed in the prayers of the Scriptures. "Epaphras...always labors[s] earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God ...praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word" -Col.4:12, 3.

It is certainly the will of God that men would repent of their sins so as not to perish [2 Pet.3:9]. It was for this that Paul lifted up his voice unto God. "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation" -Rom.10:1.

"For kings and all in authority, so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity...entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings [should] be made on behalf of all men" -I Tim.2:2,1.

No other types of prayers are heard by the God of heaven except those offered according to His will. He can certainly not answer requests or demands which are contrary to His purpose. He cannot be cajoled, manipulated, bribed, or obligated to do the will of man; no matter how godly or sincere that man may be.

Not even an apostle Paul can move the hand of God to act according to His servant's repeated insistent pleadings. "Concerning this I implored the Lord three times that it might leave me. And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you'" -2 Cor.12:8,9. His requests went unheeded. It was not the will of God to deliver him despite Paul's earnestness.

To be answered, true prayer must be made as the Lord Jesus commanded, "Thy will be done" -Mt.6:10. To pray otherwise is a promotion of self-will in opposition to the purpose of God. Far from being "faith destroying words," "Thy will be done" is the only legitimate prayer that an ignorant and humble creature can offer before the courts of heaven.

Even the Lord Jesus prayed this way. And if He did, it is beyond question that it is the acceptable and well-pleasing approach to the Father. Our God and Savior "fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt'" -Mt.26:39. It was true prayer, not rooted in the wretchedness of self-will, but one of complete abandon to the design and disposal of the Father's good pleasure.

"Thy will be done" puts everything into proper perspective. It exalts the wisdom and omnipotence of God and exposes the ignorance and weakness of man. It magnifies the sovereignty and majesty of the King of Glory while declaring that His will alone is excellent in all the earth.

This type of praying accords the Word of God its proper place as exalted with and even above the name of the Lord [Ps. 138:2]. At the same time it consigns the will, words, and requests of men to where they fittingly belong, in subjection to and in silence before the Word and will of the Most High.

It is only as we pray according to His will that there is any reasonable expectation of prayer being heard and answered. "This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him" -I Jn.5:14,15.

But we must live in His will before we can pray according to it. "Whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do the things that are pleasing in His sight" -I Jn.3:22. This is what Paul did. He lived in the will of God.

Paul put no confidence in his own plans, will, or demands but submitted all into the hands of the Lord Jesus. "Always in my prayers making request, if perhaps now at last by the will of God I may succeed in coming to you" -Rom.1:10.

"If," "perhaps," and "by the will of God" are what the apostle spoke with his mouth. All of these elements are "faith destroying" words according to the deception of PC's dogmas. We thank God that this error is expelled by the Word of God.

James commands that we confess by our words the so-called "doubt" of saying, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or that" -Jas.4:15. The command of God is that the very aspirations of our hearts as well as the declaration of our lips be, "If the Lord wills."

"If" merely confesses what the Word of God has already told us: "We do not know how to pray as we ought" -Rom.8:26. "Thy will be done" clearly demonstrates that we are not leaning on our own understanding but are wholly dependent upon the revealed purpose of God in His Word.

This utter abandonment to the will of God was what governed every impulse of the heart of the Lord Jesus Himself. "I delight to do Your will, O My God; Your law is within My heart" -Ps.40:8. It motivated His every action. "He said, 'Behold, I have come to do Your will'" -Heb.10:9.

It is how His entire life was lived here below. He did not one thing at any time apart from His Father's will; apart from utter dependence upon the Word of God.

Satan tempted Him to believe and practice the devilish designs of PC. "Since You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread" -Mt.4:3. He said, in effect, "You are a 'god.'" Your words have creative power. It is left to You to visualize these stones as bread. Having fixed them in your imagination within the spiritual fourth dimension, simply confess the "reality" that they are bread. Confess your abundance. Decree

your prosperity. It is foolishness and even sinful to continue in your "poverty" and lack when the power lies within You to possess what You confess."

This, the Lord Jesus utterly refused to do. PC was a temptation from the devil. He could never employ such corrupt means to obtain His own ends, to gratify His own desires, and accomplish His own will.

The Lord Jesus did not come to do His own will. He did not come to do Satan's will. He came delighting in and to do the will of His Father. It was for this that He rebuked the devil and the devious offer to use PC's destructive techniques.

How did He resist the devil? By complete submission to the will and Word of God. "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God'" -Mt.4:4.

By every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, not by any word that proceeds from my mouth, and certainly not by anything springing from Satan's. This is what governed His every movement.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing" -Jn.5:19. "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge" -Jn.5:30.

"My teaching is not mine, but His who sent me" -Jn.7:16. "The things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world" -Jn.8:26. "I do nothing of Myself, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me...I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" -Jn.8:28,29.

"I speak the things which I have seen with My Father" -Jn.8:38. "For I did not speak on My own accord, but the Father who sent Me commanded Me what to say and how to say it...therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me" -Jn.12:49,50.

Unless the Lord Jesus saw it, heard it, and was taught or commanded to do so by His Father, He did not do it. He did nothing from Himself. Not one word or deed proceeded from His own determination or desires. This has great implications in our understanding of prayer.

It explains why a fruitless fig tree was cursed though it was not the season for figs [Mk.11:12-14]. The cause of the cursing was not a spiteful sovereign "temper tantrum" of disappointed expectation. The fruitlessness of the tree was not the reason He cursed it; for it was not the season for figs.

Being angry because His hunger went unsatisfied is no worthy explication for why He acted as He did. There is only one explanation.

He heard the command of His Father to do so. He was simply doing His Father's will. "I speak just as the Father has told Me." He heard and obeyed the Word of God. This is why the fig tree withered from the roots up [Mk.11:20,21].

This is why the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, "Have faith in God" - Mk.11:22. Faith's object is always that which God has spoken. He said what He did because His Father commanded Him to do so. He heard the Word of God and acted obediently in accordance with it.

Mountains do not move into the sea on their own accord. Neither do they move at our whim and fancy. No testimonies are proffered amidst the swaggering bravado and outlandish claims of PC's "prophets" of any mountains being so moved.

Yet the requisite is merely belief [Mk.11:23]. For a tree to be hurled into the sea, one needs only faith; and that only of the minutest sort, the size of a mustard seed [Lk.17:6]. Do the leaders of PC lack the very commodity of "faith" which they so loudly boast of? Or, is the *reason* for the performance of such miracles rest in something besides our "faith"?

Indeed it does. It rests in the will of God revealed by His Word. This is the only legitimate object of our faith. It is what we are to believe without doubting which issues in the sure results.

We are not to waywardly put confidence in our own decrees. Faith is not in our own words, self-generated from our own wishes and expectations. It is why the peddlers of PC have no mountains-into-the-sea stories to tell. PC is a misplaced faith. When trust is put in oneself, nothing good happens.

Why would anyone ever presume to say anything to a mountain [Mk.11:23]? Why did the Lord Jesus say anything to a fig tree? The answer is because it was the will of God according to the Word of His Father.

Unless it is the will of God according to the Word of the Father, we can decree and confess while believing without doubt from now until doomsday and not one stone will be removed from a single mountain. The conclusion is clearly drawn by the Lord Jesus Himself in the next verse.

"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and *ask*, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you" - Mk.11:24 [emphasis added]. "Therefore" refers to what has preceded. It tells us this: Because of faith in God based upon His will expressed in His Word, you will receive what you ask from Him.

This is true prayer according to our Lord's instruction to pray, "Thy will be done."

Along with worship and intercession, the Lord adds instruction about personal requests. Our needs in this realm fall into two categories, the temporal and the spiritual. We need food. We need purity.

“Give us this day our daily bread...and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from evil” - Mt.6:11,13.

“If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content” -I Tim.6:8. “Do not worry, then, saying, ‘What will we eat?’ or ‘What will we drink?’ or ‘What will we wear for clothing?’ For the Gentiles eagerly seek all these things; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things” -Mt.6:31,32.

We are to ask our Father for the needs of this life which He knows very well are necessities. It is the worldly minded who seek things, but do not seek God who supplies “everything pertaining to life and godliness” - 2 Pet.1:3.

Prayer is not for the purpose of amassing the things of the world which the unbelievers lust for from dawn to dusk and then dream of throughout the night. Prayer is for needs, not wants.

As with Solomon, the Lord may be pleased to add “riches and honor” which Solomon did not ask for [I Kings 3:13,11]. But prayer is not designed as an avenue for personal prosperity. It is the means of expressing to our Father that we are trusting in Him to supply our daily needs so that one can continue to do His will on earth as it is in heaven.

Daily bread is needful that we might live. But if we are not delivered from temptation and evil, our living by daily bread serves no eternal and holy purpose other than to prolong our impending destruction in hell.

The great need in life is for personal holiness. The Psalms provide eloquent and abundant testimony to this fact. Ps.51:10 exemplifies this oft repeated heart cry, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.”

We could wish that these biblical words of prayer from broken and contrite hearts might rather be heard than the vain and arrogant decrees of men. May the Lord Himself turn our hearts afresh to glory in Christ Jesus rather than strutting confidently in the dunghill of our own self-righteousness [Phil.3:3-10].

Such prayers as in Ps.51 cited, reveal that something is dreadfully wrong with us, even the best of the saints; even in a man after God’s own heart. “Behold, He puts no trust in His saints, and the heavens are not pure in His sight” -Job 15:15.

Thus, confession must form a proper and significant element in godly prayer. “Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors” -Mt.6:12. This is true confession of sin unto God, which has nothing to do with the “confession” of PC’s agenda.

There is no such thing as positive or negative “confession” to be found anywhere throughout the Scriptures. Rather, the consistent testimony of the Word of God is that confession consists of admitting our sin unto God or of confessing the name of the Lord unto salvation.

Every reference to “confess” or “confession” in the KJV is shown in the verses following. The reader may verify for himself that PC is an alien concept to the Word of God.

We are to confess, openly acknowledge and declare, our sins unto the Father. I Jn.1:9 expresses this theme. “If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Other verses showing this are these: Lev.5:5; 16:21; 26:40; Num.5:7; Josh.7:9; I Kings 8:33-35; 2 Chron.6:24-26; 30:22; Ez.10:1; Neh.1:6; 9:2,3; Ps.32:5; Prov.28:13; Dan.9:4,20; Mt.3:6; Mk.1:5; Acts 19:18; Jas.5:16; I Jn.1:9.

Only as we confess that Jesus is Lord will we be delivered from sin and saved for all eternity Rom.10:9,10 illustrates the substance of this type of confession. “If you confess with your mouth, Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved...with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.” Other passages show this as well. See I Kings 8:33,35; 2 Chron.6:24,26; Mt.10:32; Lk.12:21; Jn.1:20; 9:22; 12:42; Acts 24:14; Rom.10:9,10; 14:11; 15:9; Phil.2:11; Heb.11:13; Jn.4:2,3,25; 2 Jn.7.

Five passages speak of God or Christ as “confessing.” Mt. 10:32 gives the essence of this aspect. “Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven.” These references are found in Job 40:14; Mt.10:32; Lk.12:2; I Tim.6:13; Rev.3:5.

One verse uses “confess” to mean “to acknowledge/agree.” It is found in Acts 23:8: “For the Sadducees say that there is no resurrection...but the Pharisees confess them all.”

This is what the Word of God teaches about confession. As can readily be seen, there is not even a remote resemblance between the dogmas of PC and the doctrine of the Bible.

The Lord Jesus taught us to pray “After this manner.” His instruction about prayer encompasses the four aspects just noted: Worship (Mt.6:9), Intercession (Mt.6:10), Personal requests (Mt.6:11,13), and Confession (Mt.6:12). This is what true prayer consists of according to our Lord’s instruction.

Throughout the Scriptures, no additional elements comprising true prayer are to be found. Anything added to these and calling itself prayer is not. It is an invention of man, but not prayer that will ever gain the ear of the God of heaven.

Anything that is not biblical prayer must be abandoned. We dare not approach the throne of grace in a self-conceived scheme to "get things from God." Never shall we use any technique imagining that the Lord is obligated to perform thereby. But we must pray.

"Now He was telling them a parable to show that at all times they ought to pray and not to lose heart" -Lk. 18:1. Paul simply stated it this way, "Pray without ceasing" -I Thess.5:17.

Prayer is to be a regular, habitual, and consistent calling upon the Lord. The Christian is noted for his complete dependence upon God expressed in frequently repeated cries unto His Lord. It was so with the Lord Jesus who, early in the morning, arose and prayed to His Father in secret [Mk.1:35]. And He did this habitually.

"Jesus Himself would often slip away to the wilderness and pray" -Lk.5:16. "He spent the whole night in prayer to God" -Lk.6:12.

If the Lord Jesus, who always did what pleased His Father, prayed, how much more do we need to do so? He certainly is our example [Jn.13:15] in all godliness, prayer included. Do we pray as He did? Do we "in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let [our] requests be made known unto God" -Phil.4:6?

Note it well. Apart from worship, prayer is requesting. It is humbly asking God to act for His own name's sake. This is how the Lord Jesus Himself prayed.

"I ask on their behalf...I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one...I do not ask on behalf of these alone...Father, I desire that they also...be with Me" -Jn.17:9,15,20,24 [emphasis added].

The very nature of prayer is to ask. "All things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" -Mt.21:22. Repeatedly the Lord Jesus emphasized this in His discourses about prayer. The fundamental posture in approaching the throne of God is that of an unworthy supplicant presenting a humble request with fear.

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened...his son asks for a loaf...asks for a fish...How much more will your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him" -Mt.7:7-11 [emphasis added].

The child who demands from his father shows he has no proper sense of honor or respect. It reveals a heart bent upon his own self-will. It is not for the son to command, but to humbly request while awaiting His father's good pleasure.

Thus, PC is the antithesis of true prayer. It is anti-prayer. It cannot claim to legitimately be placed in the ranks of prayer at all. PC does not ask. Real prayer does.

Paul asked. "We have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you be filled with the knowledge of His will" -Col.1:9. "With all prayer and petition pray...on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me" -Eph.6:18, 19 [emphasis added].

Since we do not know how to pray as we ought, we need to ask for wisdom. In fact, we are commanded to do so. "But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God" -Jas.1:5.

"Let him ask" is the essence of the meaning of the word "pray" itself. The KJV uses the word "pray" 225 times in the OT. 209 times it is simply a synonym for the word "ask." Gen.27:21 is an example of this: "And Isaac said unto Jacob, 'Come near, I pray thee...'"

Prayer is asking. Apart from praise, worship, and adoration, to pray is to ask; it is what the word "pray" means. In the remaining 16 times "pray" is used in the OT, it refers to this wider general sense of addressing God in heaven, whether in worship or by request

But "to pray" is never to command. We do not tell the Sovereign Lord what to do. Not even once can anything approximating the imposture of PC be discovered in the pages of Scripture.

How then are we to pray? We are to ask. We are to ask according to the will of God and ask in the name of the Lord Jesus.

"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask and you will receive so that your joy may be made full" -Jn.16:24. Prayer is to be in Jesus' name. He assures us that any prayer offered in His name will be granted. "Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" -Jn.14:13,14.

Yet it is in this very thing that our sinful hearts rush to gratify self. The "Name of Jesus" is eagerly attached to our every utterance with the expectation that God is now obligated to honor our words and grant our desires. Thus selfish ambition is glossed over with the sanctimonious appendage, "In Jesus Name", when in reality, He had nothing to do with the words just uttered.

"In Jesus' Name" has become little more than a carnal method to get what we want. It is used as a "Christian" mantra, a formula to get results. We imagine that God must sit up and pay attention because we've used the correct technique.

Actually, this is nothing more than the occultism of the juju man in the bush. The incantation is different but the approach is not. The procedure is the same for each.

(1) Present whatever you want to get, (2) say the right words, and (3) receive what has been spoken. It must happen according to the "spiritual laws" employed; whether Hindu, Buddhist, Native doctor, or "Christian." This is basic occultism. It has nothing to do with real prayer, nor does it have anything to do with praying in the name of Jesus.

To "use" the name of Jesus in this manner is the crassest violation of the third commandment: "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain" -Deut.5:11. And there is nothing more vain than attaching the name of Jesus to requests which have arisen from our own thoughts, desires, and lusts as if they were His purpose.

Praying in the name of Jesus is a different matter altogether. If a person is to request something in another's behalf, he must present it for that person as if the person were doing it himself. It must accurately reflect the true interests and requests of the other.

David instructed his young men to greet Nabal "in my name" [I Sam.25:5]. David then directed the youths what to request when doing so [I Sam.25:6-8]. When they came in David's behalf, "they spoke to Nabal according to all these words in the name of David" [I Sam.25:9].

The request they presented was according to the will of David communicated to them by his word. Their petition had the approval and authority of David to back it up. Their request was actually David's request and accurately represented his will.

The name of David was not attached to their own self-conceived desires as if somehow "sanctifying" their self-will. They didn't "use" the name of David as a license to present and hopefully obtain their own interests. Praying in the name of Jesus is quite similar.

If person 'A' comes to person 'C' to bring the request of person 'B', 'A' is coming in the name of 'B'. If person 'A' misrepresents 'B', then it is a fraudulent claim to pretend to come in his name. He will be presenting his own requests as if they were those of 'B'.

When person 'C' goes to verify whether 'A' is truly representing 'B' and finds out that he is not, the request of 'A' will not be granted. In fact, 'A' will be shown to be a self-willed deceiver who was "hiding" behind the good name of 'B'.

Neither 'A', 'B', nor 'C' will be happy in such cases. 'A' will be found out to be a liar and liable to prosecution under the law.

Should we come to the Father with our own interests and then present them before His throne as if this was what the Lord Jesus Himself wants to do? Will we connect His name with what is really nothing more than our own desires?

How will such "prayer" be received by the Father? Will He not verify with His Son if, in fact, these requests represent His purpose and will? If they are found to be falsely presented "in" His name, they certainly will not be answered. We ourselves will be found to be false witnesses of Christ before the Majesty in heaven by attaching His name to something He never authorized.

The will of God is paramount in any genuine prayer. To represent the interests of Christ Jesus must be done if we would presume to bring them in His name.

We must pray what the Lord Jesus Himself wants to accomplish here on earth if we are to identify His name with the requests we bring. His Word tells us what His will and purpose are so we can pray according to His mind. We then can ask that His will be done on earth as it is in heaven while confidently attaching the name of Jesus to our request.

Authority to act or speak in His name is only granted if we are truly representing His mind, will, and intent. Anything else is presumption and, worse yet, it is taking the Lord's name in vain.

The Lord Jesus said to ask in His name in order that "the Father may be glorified in the Son" -Jn.14:13. Thus any genuine prayer must arise from and be motivated by His glory alone. Glory is the manifested excellence of God's character; the outshining of His moral perfections.

Self-will does not stem from or reveal the glory of God. Our prayers must be for the glory of God or they will go unheeded. Whether the words "In Jesus' Name" accompany them or not does not impress the God of heaven. Only what accords with His glory and purpose does.

What correlation exists between praying for a fat bank account and the glory of God? How does having much money manifest the excellence of God's moral perfections? It does not.

The Mammon of unrighteousness [i.e. riches, Lk.16:13-15] and the glory of God's truth, holiness, and love have nothing in common. They exist apart in separate realms, isolated and unmingled. Glory and greed cannot co-exist.

Self-focus is not "sanctified" by uttering the words "In the Name of Jesus." It is a vain attempt to "use" God to get what we want: and one that provokes His wrath. "The Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain" -Deut.5:11.

Yet taking the Lord's name in vain is not the only hindrance to genuine prayer. The stumbling blocks are numerous, but the root of each is one and the same.

"Your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear" -Isa.59:2. "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" -Ps.66:18. Already we have seen that if one would pray in God's will, he must live according to His will. The Lord Jesus stated it this way, "If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you" -Jn.15:7.

Scarcely does it need emphasizing that if one is abiding in fellowship with the Lord Jesus by obeying His Word, he will ask according to God's will and not his own. Self-willed people are neither abiding in Christ nor obedient to His Word. They therefore ask according to their own wishes, not from those which have been transformed by abiding communion with their Lord.

A corollary to this is found in Ps.106:13-15. There the people of God forgot His ways. They did not wait for His counsel but plunged headlong in repeated pursuit of their own desires.

Their "prayer" was answered: "He gave them their request, but sent leanness into their soul" -Ps.106:15. Persisting in demanding our own desires may be granted by the Lord; but it will be done so in His wrath and to our spiritual demise.

Prayer is not a technique to get things from God. It must be offered according to His will and for His glory and not from the base and unworthy motive of gaining for self. Those prayers are worthless words. "You do not have because you do not ask. You ask and do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, so that you may spend it on your pleasures. You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God?" -Jas.4:2-4.

Spiritual prostitution best describes "prayers" arising from our own selfish desires. It is what Israel did in the wilderness. It is what the church does through PC.

Only as we diligently seek to know and obey the Word of God will our prayers be ordered aright. It is from the Scriptures that we gain insight into the will of God. Only with such knowledge can we properly present our requests. "He who turns away his ear from listening to the law, even his prayer is an abomination" -Prov.28:9.

Simply put, if we will not listen to God's Word, He will not hear ours. If we have no heart to know, obey, and then to pray in His will, He has so ear for our vain words.

The Lord has not pledged to establish our will upon earth. He has, however, determined from ages immemorial to establish His will and good pleasure in all the earth.

Only His Word can inform us of what that is. The Scriptures must formulate our understanding of God and His ways if we are to pray acceptably. Any other prayer is an abomination.

Thinking that we will be heard by multiplying words over and over again is an empty expectation [Mt.6:7]. Volume of repetition does not move God to act. Only hearing His will requested in His presence will be answered.

Certainly those who use public prayers as a means of self-decoration will receive nothing from the hand of God. Their only recognition will come from like fellow men-pleasers [Mt.6:5,6]. Likewise, a hypocrite's expectation will perish along with his lengthy prayers. We cannot oppress and defraud men and expect the God of heaven to hear us [Mt.23:14].

Self-righteous fools may congratulate themselves with religious oratory masquerading as prayer. But such folly vanishes into thin air once spoken. No such prayer is entertained in heaven [Lk.18:9-14]. We will neither be heard if we regard others with contempt [Lk.18:9] nor if we hold grudges against them. If we do not forgive men when we pray, "neither will your Father who is in heaven forgive your transgressions" -Mk.11:25,26.

Many prayers go unanswered because the one uttering them does not love his wife. He is unlike Christ in his own home. He grants her no honor. He disregards her as God's gift to help him in his insufficiencies.

Recognition of her weakness as a woman is ignored and unreasonable demands are placed upon her. Rather than being cherished she is abused. It is wickedness and nullifies any prayers arising from such ungodly men.

"You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered" -1 Pet 3:7.

"So that your prayers will not be hindered:" Hindrances abound in this most holy work of prayer. All of them revolve around the hub of self - selfish desires, self-promotion, self-gain, self-comforts, self-righteousness. It is a nauseating thing, this thing of self.

Self is at the core of PC. The glory of God is a thing forgotten in its mad pursuit of its own ends. Self-conceived decrees and commands dominate the words of their confessed "prayers."

But it is not biblical prayer at all. It is an abomination.

4

GODS

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

MAN WAS CREATED ON TERMS OF EQUALITY WITH GOD, AND HE COULD STAND IN GOD'S PRESENCE WITHOUT ANY CONSCIOUSNESS OF INFERIORITY...HE MADE US IN THE SAME CLASS OF BEING THAT HE IS HIMSELF¹ ADAM WAS AN EXACT DUPLICATION OF GOD'S KIND!² WHEN YOU WERE BORN AGAIN THE WORD WAS MADE FLESH IN YOU. DON'T TELL ME HAVE JESUS, YOU ARE EVERYTHING HE WAS AND EVERYTHING HE IS AND EVER SHALL BE³ YOU'RE NOT LOOKING AT MORRIS CERULLO; YOU'RE LOOKING AT GOD. YOU'RE LOOKING AT JESUS⁴ HOST: [GOD] DOESN'T EVEN DRAW A DISTINCTION BETWEEN HIMSELF AND US. GUEST: NEVER, NEVER! HOST: I AM A LITTLE GOD. GUEST: YOU ARE ANYTHING THAT HE IS⁵

But now, O Lord, You are our Father, we are the clay,
And You our Potter - Isa.64:8

You turn everything upside down. Shall the Potter be considered
As equal with the clay? - Isa.29:16

God's Word says that we are clay. PC turns everything upside down by declaring that the clay is one and the same with the Potter. Now it is very evident that clay fashions nothing. It has no creative power.

It is the work of the Potter to mold the clay according to His own design. But if the clay is actually not clay at all, then both are potters, each with its own designs and powers. This is where PC brings us.

We are gods. The words of the clay have the same creative power as do those of the Potter. We must simply decree in faith and whatever we say will come to pass. This is the foundation of sand upon which PC is erected.

The Scriptures rebuke such careless and arrogant presumption. It is nothing but willful ignorance and preposterous pride.

We are not gods. There is but one true and living God who knows no rival or equal. All other so-called gods are things of nothing and utter vanity.

"See now that I, I am He, and there is no god besides Me" -Deut.32:31. "There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours" -Ps.86:8. "The Lord will be terrifying to them, for He will starve all the gods of the earth" -Zeph.2:11.

Note this well: "Know and believe Me and understand that I am He. Before Me no god was formed, nor will there be one after Me" -Isa.43:10.

These four passages put everything into its right perspective. Considered individually in turn, there remains nothing left of the delusion of man's godhood.

Isaiah 43:10 tells us this. The living God and Creator of all has made no gods. Neither before nor after Him has any such thing been done.

Yet, without question, God made man. And without controversy, the Lord made no gods. It is inescapably true then, that man is not a god created by the Lord of heaven.

Further, if there are so-called gods, they did not come from the Lord of Glory, but have arisen from other sources.

Only two possibilities for their existence then remain. Either they are the invention of men or they have come about from the activity of Satan. In either case, the source is corrupt, and being a "god" is nothing to be desired.

The Deuteronomy 32:39 passage tells us that there is no such thing as a god apart from the only true and living God. They do not exist. A god is a thing of nothing, a mere figment and deceptive illusion.

In fact, the Scriptures call gods and idols "vanity", "emptiness", or "non-existent" things. The alternate translation in the NASB of I Chron.16:26 says this: "For all the gods of the peoples are non-existent things (idols),

but the Lord made the heavens." And again, "We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods...yet for us there is but one God" -1 Cor.8:4-6.

Gods are nothing. They do not exist. They are nothing more than emptiness and vanity. "Behold, all of them are false; their works are worthless, their molten images are wind and emptiness" -Isa.41:29.

The Word of God is explicit. Gods are empty, vain, worthless, and false things of nothingness which do not exist at all. "There is no god besides Me."

Among all the gods, so-called, there is not even one to be found like the God of heaven. Not one of them can do anything like the God of glory. This is what Ps.86:8 has told us as previously quoted.

Is man a being created in God's class? Not according to Ps.86. Can man create by his words as God did by His? Not according to Ps.86. Neither in being nor in works are there any gods like the true and living God.

This bitter biblical pill, the promoters of godhood refuse to swallow. And so they continue in the folly of their deception.

Because of their refusal to abandon this heresy, the "gods" of earth must prepare to meet the God of heaven. "The Lord will be terrifying to them, for He will starve all the gods of the earth" -Zeph.2:11.

Now, if gods are in an equal class with and are a duplication of the Majesty in heaven, why should they tremble at all? How could they be starved since they have the same creative power as the One who is terrifying them? And why would the Lord do such a thing to His own created fellow gods?

The answer is obvious. There are no equals to the Lord of heaven. Gods are wicked impostors who will be executed in the terrifying fury of the only true God who tolerates no rivals.

No gods have ever been created by the Lord of heaven. Gods are, at best, an invention of man, and, more likely, the lie of the devil. They do not exist. There is no reality to this false, arrogant, and preposterous claim.

There are none existing who have any nature or abilities like that of the true and living God. Finally, all pretended gods will perish in terror before the Lord of all.

Between God in heaven and men upon earth is an immeasurable gulf. Deut.32:4,5 summarizes the differences. "The Rock! His work is perfect, for all His ways are just; a God of truth and without injustice, righteous and upright is He. They have acted corruptly toward Him, they are not His children, because of their defect; but are a perverse and crooked generation."

Even considered apart from the effects of sin upon him, man and God are separated by an unfathomable chasm. Vast is the dissimilarity which can hardly be quantified.

Only the true God is self-sufficient. He needs nothing to sustain Himself or to enable or inform Him. "The Lord of heaven and earth does not dwell in temples made with hands; nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all life and breath and all things" -Acts 17:24,25.

Man, however, is a completely dependent creature, frail and needing to rely on a multitude of supports to his fragile existence. "If He should determine to do so, if He should gather to Himself His Spirit and His breath, all flesh would perish together, and a man would return to dust" -Job34:14,15.

What equality exists between the Lord, who "from everlasting to everlasting, You are God", and man, "as for the days of our life, they contain seventy years" -Ps 90:2,10?

There is no limit to the power of God above, but man is feeble. "Behold, I am the Lord, the God of all flesh; is anything too difficult for Me?" -Jer.32:27. "The weakness of God is stronger than men" -1 Cor.1:25.

Never does the God of glory change. "I, the Lord, change not" -Mal.3:6. Man, however, does little else. "Why do you go around so much changing your way?" -Jer.2:36.

When we consider knowledge, man is ignorant while the Lord knows all. "The everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth does not become weary or tired, His understanding is inscrutable" -Isa.40:28. But of man we are warned that "if anyone supposes that he knows anything, he has not yet known as he ought to know" -1 Cor.8:2.

Our plans may or may not materialize, but there is no preventing of what the Lord Himself has purposed. "For the Lord of Hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? As for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?" -Isa.40:21. Contrast this with man who has no real control over his determined designs. "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" -Prov.16:9.

If we consider the moral excellence of our God, the disparity between Him and man is ever as great. "Who is like you among the gods, O Lord? Who is like You, majestic in holiness" -Ex.15:11. While of man, the question must be asked, "Who can say, 'I have cleansed my heart, I am pure from my sin?'" -Prov.20:9.

Truth is not man's native constitution who is "transgressing and denying the Lord, and turning away from our God, speaking oppression and revolt, conceiving in and uttering from the heart lying words. For truth has

stumbled in the street, yes, truth is lacking; and he who turns aside from evil makes himself a prey" -Isa.59:13-15. But the Lord's very nature is truth. "You have ransomed me, O Lord, God is truth" -Ps.3:15.

"God is love" -1 Jn.4:8, but of even the best of religious men the Lord Jesus said, "I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves" -Jn.5:42.

Imagined gods have no resemblance to the Lord God of heaven; either in their powers, being, or qualities. There is no one like Him. There are none who can do what He has done.

"By the word of the Lord the heavens were made" -Ps.33:6. "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible" -Heb.11:3.

The words of the living God have creative power because of who He is, not because of some inherent "power" in words or "faith" in them. What the Lord said became reality because it is impossible for His Word to fail.

"So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it" -Isa.55:11.

But this is not true of the words of man. Our words have no power because we have no power. They cannot manufacture reality or speak anything into existence. Listen to the Lord's rebuke of this foolish nonsense.

"Have you ever in your life commanded the morning, and caused the dawn to know its place? Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that an abundance of water will cover you? Is it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes his nest on high?" -Job 38:12,34; 39:27.

Job, at least, in response, had enough sense to answer the Lord, "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth" -Job 40:4. We could wish that the mongers of PC would do the same.

With all the hype about being "gods," one would think that this was a major theme of the Scriptures. Actually, there are only two passages where this is stated, and the second of these is only quoting the first!

Ps.82:6 is the "proof" text of the madness of PC's proponents. "I said, 'You are gods, and all of you are sons of the Most High.'"

In order to understand what this means, one must examine who these gods are in the context in which this term occurs. Verse one tells us that, "God takes His stand in His own congregation; He judges in the midst of the gods." The first thing we learn is that the true God is executing His judgment upon these supposed "gods."

Why would the Lord judge these gods? What kind of gods are they? Verses 2-5 tell us. Here is the summary of the nature and practices of these who are called "gods."

They are unjust judges [v.2] and partial to the wicked [v.2]. The needy, unfortunate, and oppressed are not helped by them at all [v.3,4]. The earth reels and revolts under their ignorant and darkened parade [v.5].

Is it true that you are "gods," or are you only unjust wicked judges who do nothing for anyone other than oppress and afflict those in need by your darkened hearts? The Lord judges in the midst of these gods and says, "You die like mere men; you will fall like every other ruler" -[v.7].

They are indeed gods; gods who are nothing more than any other sinful man who will be condemned by the Lord, the Judge of all. They are gods who differ in no way from any earthly prince.

God will judge them because they are not like Him at all. They are gods of the earth. He is the Lord over all. They have no inheritance, possession, or authority over any of their fellows [v.8].

The Lord Jesus made reference to the sixth verse of this Psalm as He reasoned with the wicked religious judges of His day. They were no different than the guilty "gods" of this Psalm.

They presumed themselves to be lofty, exalted over, and other than the common man. But they, like the gods of Ps.82, were only mere men who, as well, would be judged for their evil.

Claiming that He and the Father were one [Jn.10:30], was nothing they could tolerate. They were about to stone Him "for blasphemy; because You, being a man, make yourself out to be God" -Jn.10:33.

Observe this verse well. It was considered blasphemy for a man to claim that he was one with God. It was the grossest of heresies to imply that a man was actually equal with God.

In this, they were quite correct. It is blasphemy and the worst of heresies to maintain that men are "created on terms of equality with God" as is taught by PC's "gods."

With reference to the Lord Jesus, however, it is not blasphemy but foundational to the uniqueness of His person. "In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead in bodily form" -Col.2:9. This is not blasphemy, as the Jews supposed, but words of sober truth. He said, "Unless you believe that I Am, you will die in your sins" -Jn.8:24 [emphasis added].

But for any mortal man to make such claim of equality and "godhood" is not only a lying folly, it is speaking words to one's own destruction. He who is truly God will judge such a one.

The Lord Jesus explained who these "gods" were in Ps 82. They were the ones "to whom the Word of God came" -Jn.10:35. Why had the Word come to them? So that they might lead and judge the people of God according to the Lord's will and purpose.

Yet this is precisely what the "gods" of Ps.82 did not do. They did not judge in accordance to the truth of the Word of God which had come to them. They set aside the Word of God and proceeded upon their own wicked course of injustice and oppression of the people of God.

Very much like the Pharisaical "gods" the Lord Jesus encountered, don't you think? They were also unjust wicked men who exploited the destitute from their lofty position as "gods" over the Lord's people.

All "gods" among men do the same. They dominate others unjustly for their own ends. The Word of God that is to govern their every action and decision is cast aside for their own corrupt opinions.

Things haven't changed. The "gods" of PC do nothing else than what "gods" have done throughout the ages. The Word of God that has come to them has been rejected in arrogant self-exaltation. They are not gods at all. They are only wicked men who will perish in their delusion.

PC does, though, have a biblical origin. Its roots can be traced eons ago back to the very Eden of God. From earth's earliest age the allurements of being gods has been present among men.

The inventor of PC's godhood is the devil himself. "You shall be as gods" -Gen.3:5 was his seductive enticement to our first mother. It is his doctrine.

"He is a liar and the father of lies" -Jn.8:44. It is a lie that men are gods or can become such. Satan knew it was a lie because he did not attain to the very godhood he sought for himself.

Aspiring to exalt his "throne above the stars of God," while positively confessing, "I will be like the Most High," he was, nevertheless, "thrust down to hell" -Isa.14:13-15. Thus did Lucifer become the devil [Isa.14:12] and the anointed cherub become utterly corrupt by unrighteousness and pride [Ezk.28:14,15,17]. And those following the devil in his quest must also partake of his judgment.

A lie of the most destructive nature is the promise of being gods. It is devilish to the core and yet a most effective snare, and one increasingly in vogue in our generation.

But it is not true. We are not gods. The Word of God says this about man as created by the Lord. "Thou madest him a little lower than the angels" -Heb.2:7. Lower than the angels is far from being God. It is nowhere close to even being a lesser god no matter how it is considered.

If we truly wish to be gods, we must be prepared to receive what all gods await as their portion. The Lord executes His judgments upon every other god [Num.33:4]. He terrifies and starves all the gods of the earth [Zeph.2:11]. "The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth will perish from the earth and from under the heavens" -Jer.10:11. This is the future of all gods.

Should you still persist in your aspiration to be a god, you must answer this mocking challenge from the living God: "Declare the things that are going to come afterward, that we may know that you are gods; indeed, do good or evil, that we may anxiously look about us and fear together. Behold, you are of nothing, and your work amounts to nothing: he who chooses you is an abomination" -Isa.41:23,24.

From among men or in the spiritual realm, the task of god-making is futile. "Can man make gods for himself? Yet they are not gods" -Jer.16:20. There are no gods among men: "gods whose dwelling is not with mortal flesh" -Dan.2:11 shows the vanity of imagining this to be so.

Even if you could succeed in being a god, what will it profit you? Would it secure for you access to heaven and the salvation of your souls? Certainly not. "But where are your gods which you made for yourself? Let them arise if they can save you in the time of your trouble" -Jer.2:28.

The Lord utterly rejects recourse to gods of any variety. "Why should I pardon you? Your sons have forsaken Me and sworn by those who are not gods" -Jer.5:7. "They will make you sin against Me; for if you serve their gods, it will be a snare to you" -Ex.23:23.

Godhood has brought us into a sinful snare wherein there is no pardon, but only a certain terrifying expectation of judgment. Many claim to be gods. They may account themselves to be so, but they are nothing more than false ones.

Hagin and Hinn, Capps and Cho, Cerullo and Copeland, along with a host of others, are the gods of this generation; and the gods have spoken.

Eager followers flock by the millions hoping to attain to the same status as the gods they listen to. Their words are heeded. The teachings of these gods govern their worship. The spoken word of faith dictates their concepts of spirituality.

This is idolatry.

“This is what the Sovereign Lord says:
'In the pride of your heart you say, "I am a god;
I sit on the throne of a god..."
But you are a man and not a god,
Though you think you are as wise as a god”
Ezekiel 28:2

5

PROSPERITY

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

BEING POOR IS A SIN WHEN GOD PROMISES PROSPERITY¹ WE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS. THAT'S THE REASON WHY I DRIVE A ROLLS ROYCE. I'M FOLLOWING JESUS' STEPS² YES, YES, YES! A THOUSAND TIMES, YES! I WANT TO GET MONEY, I WANT TO GET PROSPEROUS³

Spirituality can never be gauged by material prosperity or lack of the same. Neither soft costly garments nor beggarly rags give any indication of the condition of the hearts of the wearers.

Herod donned royal apparel and delivered his address [Acts 11:21]. John, clad in rude camel's hair, also spoke his message [Mt.3:4]. History and the holy text of the Bible have recorded the testimony and fate of both. Their outward station in the things of this world did not determine their spiritual state.

On the other hand, Joseph of Arimathea was both a rich man and a disciple of our Lord [Mt.27:57]. But the lame beggar at the Temple's beautiful gate was neither [Acts 3:2].

Riches, whether present in abundance or lacking in impoverishment, do not indicate the soul's relationship to the God of heaven. To maintain that financial prosperity is God's will for all of His children, or that poverty is sin, or that wealth is something to be sought after, is simply not true. In fact, if anything, we are warned about the effect of riches upon the heart and the snare they bring to those focused upon them.

Fruitfulness cannot develop in a heart possessed with desire for wealth. Such longing is referred to as choking thorns which overtake and cancel the progress of the Word of God in a man. "The deceitfulness of riches choke the word" -Mt.13:22.

Riches deceive. Many delude themselves into thinking that they can serve the God of heaven while pursuing wealth upon earth. It can never be. No man can serve two masters.

"You cannot serve God and Mammon" -Mt.6:24. The Lord is our one and only Master who has bought us as His own possession [I Cor.6:19, 20]. He must receive our exclusive devotion. No rivals are welcome.

But wealth is no less a master. It has devotees and servants as well. Demands are placed upon those in its service. The lives of its followers are directed along its broadened way.

For this reason, wealth is called "Mammon." It is a lord, yes, a god. Mammon governs the actions of its lovers as do any other gods those of their own servants.

Devotion to and longing after prosperity is no different than obeying another god. It is ever as much idolatry as burning incense at one of a thousand Hindu shrines. Prosperity is merely a euphemism for coveting, and coveting is assuredly idolatry.

"Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature...evil desires and greed, which is idolatry" -Col.3:5. "For this you know with certainty, that no...covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God" -Eph.5:5.

These are sobering words for those promoting, as well as those longing after prosperity. Be warned, the Lord Jesus has commanded, "Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed" -Lk.12:15.

Every form of greed is to be utterly cast out of the heart. Not to do so is to harbor an idol within. Its name is Mammon and no one who sets up his altar shall ever enter the kingdom of heaven.

You may gain the whole world through the delusion of prosperity and yet lose your own soul [Mt.16:26]. Even if you have an abundance, your life does not consist in these things [Lk.12:15].

It is only a deceived fool who focuses his interests upon the things of earth. Only a tragically and willfully misled simpleton will congratulate himself with the wealth he has obtained. He may repose in abundance, but the day of reckoning will come to one and all without respect of persons.

"And now who will own what you have prepared? So is the man who stores up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" -Lk.12:20,21. Yes, a man may be rich with treasures of earth and have no enduring riches of value at all. Earthly prosperity does not equate with the "riches of His glory" -Eph.3:16. You may perish with full pockets, for prosperity is no indication of God's approval or blessing.

Woes are pronounced upon those who want their rewards, comforts, and riches now. "Woe to you who are rich...Woe to you who are well-fed now...Woe to you who laugh now" -Lk.6:24,25. Why is this a cause of remorse and cursing? Because "you are receiving your comfort in full...You shall be hungry...you shall mourn and weep" -Lk.6:24,25.

"Blessed are you who are poor...who hunger now...who weep now" -Lk.6:20,21. Why is this a blessed condition? Because "yours is the kingdom of God...You shall be satisfied...You shall laugh" -Lk.6:20,21. The present possession of the poor is the kingdom of God. Their future expectation is fullness of joy for "your reward is great in heaven" -Lk.6:23.

The possession of the rich is fleshly comfort in this life only. There is no kingdom of heaven awaiting them. Their future expectation is privation amidst weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Earthly treasure is nothing to amass. It is forbidden. "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth...but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven" -Mt.6:19,20. It is commanded to accumulate riches in heaven. There is a reason to do so.

"For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" -Mt.6:21. Many delude themselves into thinking that their hearts are really set on the things above though their money continues to increase under their watchful eye below. It is not so. The location of the treasure betrays the occupation, orientation, and abode of the heart.

Treasures on earth testify to a heart focused upon corrupt things. Neither the riches of this world nor the heart so absorbed will enter the glories of heaven. That heart has no portion above because it is serving Mammon's money below.

Gentiles, who are "separated from Christ...having no hope and without God in the world" -Eph.2:12, "eagerly seek all these things" -Mt.6:32. It is clear; the pursuit of prosperity is what occupies the ungodly. It is no concern to the upright.

What to eat, drink, or wear are no cause of worry for the believer [Mt.6:31]. "Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things" -Mt.6:32. He will supply the necessities of life for His own.

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you" -Mt.6:33. Which things? Food, drink, and covering sufficient for the day, not the lustful extravagance longed for by the wicked.

Seeking His kingdom and righteousness is not a technique to insure material gain. Anyone who imagines this to be the case is far from that kingdom. It is "men of depraved mind and deprived of the truth who suppose godliness is a means of gain" -1 Tim.6:5. Their minds are corrupt and truth has perished from those who employ religion to make money.

"But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all evil, and some by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows" -1 Tim.6:9,10.

Wanting money is itself a snare and temptation. It is a foolish and hurtful lust. Pursued, it will hurl its aspirants into ruinous destruction.

This love, this devotion to and occupation with money, underlies the multiplicity of evils springing from corrupted hearts. The desire itself is enough to impel the feet into perilous paths far from the faith. The end of this pursuit is suicidal with griefs unnumbered.

Longing for money is the love of it. Desiring wealth is the condemnation warned of. Wanting to obtain riches already has derailed one from the faith. Only ruin, destruction, and untold sorrows await those plunging along prosperity's corridor.

Christ Jesus has warned us. He has sounded the alarm like a clarion, "You cannot serve God and Mammon" -Lk.16:13. "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him" -Lk.16:14.

Without hesitation the Lord Jesus rejoined them: "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God" -Lk.16:15.

Loving money, highly valued by men, is an abominable detestable corruption in the sight of God.

Yet the "reverend anointed men of God" love it. In every generation they have fondled this "filthy lucre" - I Pet.5:2 and required it from unsuspecting donors to fund their empires of ease and extravagance. In days gone by they "merely" plundered the people of God in their avarice lust to amass wealth for themselves.

Today they go beyond that. Now, they have taught their devotees to imitate them. They have invented a doctrine of covetousness which is eagerly imbibed by aspiring millions longing to gain the same wealth as their mentors. But "the getting of treasures by a lying tongue is a vanity tossed to and fro of them that seek death" - Prov.21:6.

Prosperity's "gods" have reared countless congregations of coveting idolaters. They follow what their "gods" have directed. The "gods" do as their god has directed them. And the great god Mammon governs them all. This is the naked and horrid reality of PC's "gospel" of prosperity.

True prosperity is being "free from the love of money, being content with such things as you have; for He Himself has said, 'I will never leave you, nor forsake you'" -Heb.13:5. Contentment is an unspeakable blessing.

A heart at rest, free from agitated aspirations, is "gain" indeed. "Godliness with contentment is great gain" -I Tim.6:6; a great possession and enrichment of the truest sort, not with treasures of earth, but with those of heaven.

"If we have food and covering, with these we shall be content" -I Tim.6:8. To the child of God who is content with His Father's provision, "better a dry crust with peace and quiet than a house full of feasting, with strife" -Prov.17:1. The godly man cares not whether he feeds on crumbs or dines in fineries.

His aim is not his own pleasure or prosperity. His longing and desire is that Christ will "be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death" -Phil.1:20. The man of God finds contentment in Christ, not in things.

"I have learned to be content in whatever circumstances I am" -Phil.4:11. The circumstances were not vital to Paul's contentment, the Lord Jesus is. David had learned this as well. "You have put gladness in my heart, more than when their grain and wine abound" -Ps.41:7.

Prosperity was unnecessary for David's gladness. It was irrelevant to Paul's contentment. True prosperity is that spiritual abounding and abundance that has its source in the unlimited "riches in glory in Christ Jesus" - Phil.4:19.

This prosperity is present whether earthly gain is or not. There can be no parallel drawn between riches here below and the spiritual riches in Christ above. Listen to Paul's testimony, one which is a pattern for all genuine believers.

"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" -Phil.4:12,13.

Christ is the key to spiritual prosperity. Only those who are intent upon Him will be content in this life. Riches or poverty have nothing to do with true prosperity. Those who are oriented to the wealth of earth are content with nothing; neither with the Lord Jesus nor with what they hope to gain by their tireless efforts.

Their hearts are always at unrest in the ceaseless uneasiness of worldly pursuits. "He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves abundance with its income. This too is meaningless" - Eccl.5:10.

This is not prosperity; it is an evil affliction and vexation of spirit. It is a worthless expenditure for a fleeting vapor which will expire with the man pursuing it.

"Naked a man comes from his mother's womb, and as he comes, so he departs. He takes nothing from his labor that he can carry in his hands. This too is a grievous evil: as a man comes, so he departs, and what does he gain, since he toils for the wind?" -Eccl.5:15,16.

He gains nothing. Prosperity is a worthless, meaningless, life-devouring pursuit. It consumes the soul in its cancerous decimation of all spiritual aspirations. It is the enemy of all godliness. It is the root of all evils. Many are its victims slain thereby.

"But thou, O man of God, flee these things" -I Tim.6:11. What things are to be fled from? The previous two verses tell us: Wanting riches, loving money, and longing after it. Rather, we must seek true riches which the Lord gives from His storehouse in the heavens.

There is nothing to compare with the riches of the true knowledge of God. He that possesses this is prosperous indeed. "Take my instruction and not silver, and knowledge rather than choicest gold. For wisdom is

better than jewels; and all desirable things cannot compare with her” -Prov.8:10,11. These are the true treasures which we can, yes, and must, pursue in all holiness of obedience.

Wisdom’s treasures of counsel, discretion, and power will be freely shared with those who love and diligently seek her [Prov.8:12-17]. This is a true prosperity which, through endless ages, will abide undisturbed after the world and all its works are burned up. Hear what she says.

“Riches and honor are with me, enduring wealth and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, even pure gold, and my yield better than choicest silver. I walk in the way of righteousness, in the midst of paths of justice, to endow those who love me with wealth, that I may fill their treasuries” -Prov.8:18-21.

These are the treasures the Lord Jesus commanded us to store up in heaven. It is what the Scriptures say that true prosperity is. Here is how it is described.

“Be careful to obey all the law Moses My servant gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful” -Josh.1:7,8.

If nothing else is clear from this passage, this at least is. To prosper is to diligently know and obey all that is written in the Word of God. This is the essence of true prosperity as we have already seen in Proverbs 8.

Joshua was commissioned with a specific appointment to “give this people possession of the land” - Josh.1:6. How can he discharge this divinely given command, to prosper successfully in the thing for which he was sent? The Lord gave him, and us, the answer: Diligently know and obey all that is written in the Word of God.

Meditation is that practice of repeatedly reflecting upon the Word of God to extract its every significance. It is the process whereby the Lord’s message becomes nourishment for the soul. This word “meditate” is also translated as “chew the cud.”

Sheep, cows, and goats lose no nutrients from their food. They chew and re-chew the same grasses repeatedly. While one is swallowed, another is brought up into the mouth from their multi-chambered stomachs. Thus over and over the same substance is thoroughly broken down and digested.

Rumination is the proper word to describe this process, whether of sheep in the pasture or of those of the Great Shepherd in His fold. To muse, ponder, and reflect upon the written Word of God is the only way that strength and understanding can be gained to make our way prosperous. Only as we know God’s Word can we obey it. And it is only as we obey it that we will have good success.

Success is not to be thought of in terms of financially rewarding business ventures. Biblically, it is much different than that. This same word “success” is used in Ps.119:99 where it is translated “insight.” “I have more insight [success] than all my teachers, for I meditate on Your statutes.”

Prospering successfully results from obeying the wisdom gained from reflecting upon the written Word of God. This is true prosperity. It is a spiritual reality possessed by obedient souls independent of physical circumstances.

Some of the most spiritually prosperous and successful men in all of history were impoverished in the goods of this world. In fact, as a general summary of the Lord’s ways, James says, “Listen, my beloved brethren: Did not God choose the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which He promised to those who love Him?” -Jas.2:5.

Poor according to the world’s estimation, yet rich in the spiritual everlasting sense. The Lord has not chosen the rich of this life. He has not chosen to make the poor enriched with earthly prosperity.

Consider this: “The poor you have with you always” -Jn.12:8. And again, “Truly I say to you, it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven” -Mt.19:23. Both of these statements were spoken by our Lord Jesus. They at least tell us that it is not the will of the Father to turn poor people into rich people. If it was, very few would ever enter heaven since “it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God” -Mt.19:24.

Those few rich who are genuine Christians are exhorted to abandon any hope in the uncertainty of their riches. Their true riches are in God, good works, and in giving, not in their earthly abundance [I Tim.6:17-19].

The majority of believers, however, are not rich in this world and have no biblical expectation of becoming so. Neither do the servants of God.

Paul, for his faithfulness as a minister of God, ought to have been rewarded with great prosperity. That is, if the doctrines of PC were true. His own life tells whether they are or not.

“To this present hour we are both hungry and thirsty, and are poorly clothed, and are roughly treated, and are homeless” -I Cor.4:11. Again he says that he is “poor, yet making many rich, as having nothing yet possessing all things” -2 Cor.6:10.

These are not PC's expectations for being prosperous. They are rather the evidence of a sinful lack of faith, according to their harangues against the truth. And Paul is not the only one who falls under their condemning censure for lacking "faith" for prosperity.

The worthies of all generations, the greatest men of God who have ever lived "were all commended for their faith" -Heb.11:39. As to faith they were full. As to worldly possessions, they were impoverished.

"They went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated [men of whom the world was not worthy], wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground" -Heb.11:37,38. True God-honoring faith can never be measured by the quantity of one's earthly attainments. Possessing money has nothing to do with possessing faith.

If anything, the desire for wealth testifies that there exists no faith at all. Lust for gain, and faith in God are not synonymous. Lovers of self and lovers of money are. Both are the antithesis of faith.

Nothing good is ever to be said about pastoral thieves, about those who fleece the flock to feed themselves. Charlatans and dupes are not commended for their faith but rather are condemned for their lies and greed. They may parade as pastors" but they are not.

"Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves" - Mt.7:15. They ravage, pillage, and destroy with rapacious greed, and they are in the church. "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them" -Acts 20:29,30.

Perverse "prophesies" and devastating doctrines impelled by cunning covetousness are what fill the mouths of these wolves. Their teeth are sharpened knives, maiming and destroying their prey unmercifully. But the Lord will deliver His flock from their jaws and destroy these "pastors," bringing their treacherous ways upon their own heads.

"Prophesy against the shepherds of Israel. Thus says the Lord God, 'Woe, shepherds of Israel who have been feeding themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flock? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool, you slaughter the fat sheep without feeding the flock.

"Those who are sickly you have not strengthened, the diseased you have not healed, the broken you have not bound up, the scattered you have not brought back, nor have you sought for the lost; but with force and severity you have dominated them.

'As I live,' declares the Lord God, 'Surely because My flock has become a prey, My flock has even become food for all the beasts of the field for lack of a shepherd, and My shepherds did not search for My flock, but rather the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed the flock;

'Therefore you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord;,' thus says the Lord God, 'Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will demand My sheep from them and make them cease feeding sheep. So the shepherds will not feed themselves anymore, but I will deliver My flock from their mouth, so they will not be food for them'" - Ezk.34:2-4,8-10.

Devices to extract money from the unsuspecting abound in their "ministries." Their prosperity is no result of faith; it has been received through cleverly devised schemes to take money from men. It is fraud, not faith.

"Holy" oil to anoint one's wallet will be sent through the post in return for your donation. Prayer handkerchiefs will be rushed to your home as soon as your offering is received. Photos of so-called men of God "praying" for your requests can be had if they can first get your money.

Hundredfold returns upon your ministry gifts are promised by the hucksters of this other "gospel." Threats of cursing are leveled against those who would dare to fail in sending their tithes into the prosperity preacher's "storehouse." Sowing seeds of "faith" [i.e. giving money to the impostor pastor] will insure your harvest of increase [i.e. God will give you back more money than you "invested"].

Simony is the proper name, for such lies. It is trafficking in Divine things, presuming to gain spiritual benefits by the "selling" or "buying" of heavenly commodities. A Samaritan sorcerer was the President and Founder of this now international "ministry."

This magician did not even blush when he "offered them money, saying, 'Give this authority to me as well'" -Acts 8:18,19. It is the mind-set of the man that interests us with respect to PC's prosperity.

He thought that if he gave money to men of God he would get what he wanted in return. He imagined that if he sowed his "seed of faith" he could get things from God. If he paid the price, he would obtain the same "prosperity" and possessions that the Apostles had.

Witchcraft employs such methods but not Christianity. The "prophets" of PC have raised multitudes of disciples to follow Simon Magus, while they, quite willingly receive the money which Peter refused. Peter's rebuke rightly falls upon these sons of Simon as they originally did upon the deluded sorcerer of Samaria.

"May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have no part or portion in this for your heart is not right before God. Therefore repent of this wickedness of yours, and pray the Lord that, if possible, the intention of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity" -Acts 8:20-23.

Did Simon repent? We do not know. We do know, however, that the merchants of PC have not. They continue unabated, to pilfer the people of God while selling their wares in the name of the Lord.

These men are far from apostolic in their character. They certainly do not resemble Peter in his refusal to receive tainted contributions. Neither are they like Paul.

"We are not like many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ, we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God" -2 Cor.2:17. They are like the many but unlike Paul. Spiritual things are utilized by them for their own enrichment in material prosperity.

As in any business venture, there must be four elements; a seller, a buyer, goods, and a price. PC sells the tantalizing prospect of prosperity to its buyers in the church for an agreed upon amount. But the only gainers from this scam are the sellers. No goods are actually delivered to the buyers. They pay the merchants but continue to remain empty handed.

Promises of prosperity are false. The Word of God makes no such assurances and certainly not with any price tags affixed to the blessings of heaven. The anxiously sought after material gain will never be realized by the gullible and disobedient masses. The reasons are two.

First, the Lord never promises wealth as a blessing, inheritance, or expectation to His people. The second reason is that the judgment of God is upon both the preachers of prosperity and their donors alike. "He who oppresses the poor to increase his wealth or he who gives to the rich, will only come to poverty" -Prov.22:16. This Scripture is very clear. No one will ever prosper giving to the "ministries" of prosperity preachers.

Only false shepherds sell the things of God for personal gain. Those who support them and buy their investment plans are destined to disappointment and destruction.

"Thus says the Lord my God, 'Pasture the flock doomed to slaughter. Those who buy them slay them and go unpunished, and each of those who sell them says, "Blessed be the Lord, for I have become rich!" And their own shepherds have no pity on them'" -Zech.11:4,5.

God's judgment is upon such unholy business. These are wicked, self-seeking, and greedy men with no compassion on those they devastate. They swindle the flock while shouting, "Hallelujah! I am prosperous!" Only one other passage better describes the methods and effects of these rogues.

"Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute. In their greed these teachers will make merchandise of you with false words" -2 Pet.2:2, 3. These are the teachers of prosperity; greedy, selling fables, and man-made propaganda in order to enlarge their own revenues at the expense of the people of God.

By them the way of the truth is blasphemed. By them the people of God are exploited with lies masquerading as the promises of God. And by them vast segments of Christ's professed church are ruled by covetous idolaters who have no inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

Isn't it time to call this for what it really is? It is wickedness.

May the Lord Himself drive this avarice lust out of His Father's house and overturn their money tables that we may return to biblical sanity and true worship once again.

"Better is a poor man who walks in his integrity
Than he that is perverse in his ways,
Though he be rich"
Prov.28:6

6

HEALING

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

I BELIEVE THAT IT IS THE PLAN OF GOD OUR FATHER THAT NO BELIEVER SHOULD EVER BE SICK¹ HE HEALED YOU 2,000 YEARS AGO. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO TODAY IS RECEIVE YOUR HEALING BY FAITH² DIVINE HEALING IS SOMETHING WE ALREADY POSSESS. WHEN THE DEVIL TRIES TO PUT A SYMPTOM OF SICKNESS OR DISEASE ON MY BODY, I ABSOLUTELY REFUSE TO ACCEPT IT. I REBUKED SATAN AND REFUSED HIS LYING SYMPTOMS³ USE YOUR FAITH, AND THEN YOU WON'T NEED MEDICATION⁴

Health is normal; disease is the periodic exception to this. It is therefore reasonable to state that God has made man to live in good health. Believer and unbeliever alike enjoy this blessing. However, both become ill at different times and for various durations. All will eventually die.

How do we account for such things? Are disease, disabilities, and death traceable to the devil, ourselves, to God, or to a combination of all of these? Is the cause to be found in our personal spiritual shortcomings or devilish demonic afflictions? Perhaps the reason for ill health is what the Preacher said: "Time and chance overtake them all" -Eccl. 9:11.

Can we attribute all illness to the presence of micro-organisms, chemical imbalances, genetic structure and the like? Or is the overarching and mysterious providence and sovereignty of God the ultimate answer to the question?

Discovered in the Scriptures are two broad categories that explain the presence of disease in the world. One is the organic and physical and the second is the volitional and spiritual.

Naturally occurring causes account for many illnesses. Others are due to sinful choices of men. Still others can be directly traceable to the supernatural activity of either Satan or God.

We must carefully consider the origin of the sickness before a proper cure can be applied. Many maladies arise from purely natural causes.

Is poison deadly [Mk.16:18] because Satan has made it so? Does it destroy because I told a lie earlier the same afternoon? No. It kills because of its very properties. Neither the subjective condition of the one drinking it nor devilish activity makes it so.

It didn't become lethal, either because one sinned or due to Satan cursing it. Poison kills those who drink it *because* it is poison. Poison has known properties and predictable results whether ingested by unbeliever or Christian alike.

Excessive wine or too much honey have the same effect upon those indulging it; they both vomit [Isa.19:14; Prov.25:26]. While there may be a decided element of choice in consuming excess of either, the vomiting is directly attributable to the volume of the substance taken, not to the sin of over indulgence. It certainly was not a demonic attack that produced the purging, nor can it reasonably be said that God's supernatural intervention caused this "sickness."

In all the cases considered whether poison, wine or honey, the amounts taken had known and expected consequences. The same can be said for the malaria parasite carried by tropical mosquitoes. The fever resulting is traceable to the parasites harbored and transmitted with their bites.

These are physical, organic, and chemical causes for disease that need no "spiritual" explanations. They result neither from demonic assault nor are a judgment from heaven due to unbelief or spiritual failure in a person's life.

"Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" -Jn.9:2. To the minds of the disciples, disease and disability must surely be linked to a personal moral failure which provokes God's judgment.

To them, there is but one explanation for illness. Sin and disease exist in a cause and effect relationship in their assessment. Are you sick? Then sin is certainly the cause, according to their truncated reasoning.

"It was neither that this man sinned, nor his parents" -Jn.9:3. The Lord Jesus' answer clearly dispels any such erroneous imaginations. There exists no necessary cause and effect relationship between disease and personal sin.

Satan had not blinded him. Neither his own sin nor that of his parents was to blame. How is it that this man was afflicted even from birth? "It was so that the works of God might be displayed in him" -Jn.9:3.

Throughout his life and into manhood, this man dwelt in darkness due to no fault of his own. The evil one had no hand in bringing about his condition. His plight was due to the sovereign will of God.

Sickness served the Lord's eternal purpose in his life. He is not only "Jehovah Rapha," the Lord who heals, but He is also as He described Himself to Moses. "The Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes him mute or deaf, or seeing or blind? Is it not I, the Lord?'" -Ex.4:11.

Indeed, it was the Lord who had done so with this man. There is no other explanation possible in his case. Only one conclusion can be drawn from this incident.

Disease, even life-long afflictions, can be the will of God for an individual. This is a sobering reality for any man to contemplate. It does not explain all illnesses, but it does some and must be taken into account in any analysis of the reality of sickness.

Others were decidedly afflicted by Satan. "And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit" -Lk.13:11. Only the Lord Jesus can cure such.

No medicines or religious activities loose someone from this type of ailment. This, too, is sobering to consider. Yet these alone - physical causes, the will of God, and the work of Satan - are not the sole reasons behind sickness.

Bethesda was the scene where the Lord Jesus encountered a man "who had been ill for thirty-eight years" -Jn.5:5. After healing him, the Lord Jesus "found him in the temple and said to him, 'Behold, you have become well; do not sin anymore, so that nothing worse happens to you'" -Jn.5:14.

Corinth experienced similar infirmities due to their own sin. At the Lord's table, sin was not judged in this assembly. Therefore, they themselves were judged by God. "For this many among you are weak and sick, and a number sleep" -I Cor.11:30. Sickness due to personal sin is likewise a sobering reality to contemplate.

Four causes for illness are discovered to us from the Scriptures. First, natural causes can afflict disease, disability, and distress upon sinner and saint alike. It is an unavoidable consequence of living in an imperfect world where all are subject to death.

Second, acute sickness and even chronic conditions, may be sent from God in order to manifest His glory thereby in the one so afflicted. A third cause for some disorders is the direct result of demonic activity. Finally, one's own sinfulness may be the root of present maladies.

Circumstances, God, Satan, or sin account for all sickness. All illnesses being traceable to the devil as the cause is the faulty premise which results in PC's faulty conclusion.

Satan is not the cause of all illness. To rebuke the devil or refuse his "symptoms" is a false and foolish diagnosis for healing all sickness. The "devil" one may be casting out may actually be the Lord Himself who brought the illness for his own glory. A deliverance session will not cure what an antibiotic can. Claiming healing by "faith" will never be effective if personal sin is harbored in the heart.

Treating disease as if all symptoms have arisen from a single cause is a faulty and even fatal diagnosis. The devil is simply not the source of all sickness. Therefore, rebuking him while claiming healing by "faith" can never be the solution to all ills. If the cause of the ailment is not correctly understood, useless and even harmful remedies will be prescribed. It is with these useless and harmful remedies that PC abounds.

Healing of bodily illnesses is not to be found in the atonement of Christ; remedy for spiritual sickness is. This fundamental failure to distinguish the type of healing referred to accounts for much of PC's error.

Isaiah 53 is one of the most remarkable prophecies regarding the death of the Lord Jesus to be found in all of the OT. In it, His death for the sins of man is fully described.

"Pierced for our transgression...crushed for our iniquities...chastisement for our peace...the iniquity of us all was laid on him...like a lamb led to slaughter...cut off from the land of the living for the transgression of My people...Thou shalt make His soul an offering for sin...He will bear their iniquities...He bore the sin of many" -Isa.53:5-8,10,12.

It is in this context that the phrase, "By His stripes we are healed" is found. This is how it reads: "But He was pierced for our transgression, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our peace fell upon Him, and with His stripes we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" -Isa.53:5,6.

From what malady have we been healed by His death? Is it the illness of the body or the sickness of the soul? Clearly it is the latter. "Transgressions, iniquities, peace, turning away, iniquity of all" are properties of the soul, not of the body.

Peter, quoting this passage in his epistle, infallibly confirms this: "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His stripes you were healed" -I Pet.2:24 [emphasis added]. It was sin, not disease, that He bore on the cross and for which He died. Righteousness, not healthy bodies, was to be the resultant outcome of that death.

We are sick people: "Where will you be stricken again, as you continue in your rebellion? The whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head there is nothing sound in it" -Isa.1:5,6. It is from the wasting plague of sin that we need a remedy.

"As for me, I said, 'O Lord, be gracious to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You'" -Ps.41:4. The tragedy and devastation of spiritual blindness far exceeds that of the bodily affliction. "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit" -Mt.15:14.

For this reason the Lord Jesus endeavored to arouse the awareness of men to their true condition. Physically healed or not, a greater deadly disease is ravaging every man within his own breast. "It is not those who are well who need a physician, but those who are sick. I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance" -Lk.5:31,32.

"Righteous" men have no interest in a doctor, for they imagine all to be well within. Sinners know they are sick, that things are not the way they ought to be in their own hearts. They seek for the Physician's remedy.

Only the death of Christ for sin can heal this iniquitous disease which threatens our very life, and that for all eternity. The sole prescription that avails to cure the evil of our constitution is that of healing by His stripes.

Christ's death did not secure physical healing for all believers in this life. The blood of Jesus was not shed for that purpose. The NT never attributes the blood of Christ as accomplishing anything other than our redemption from sin.

I John 1:7 is representative of this truth: "The blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin." Other references are as follows: Mt.26:28; Lk.22:20; Rom.3:25; 5:9; I Cor.11:25; Eph.1:7; 2:13; Col.1:14,20; Heb.9:12,14; 10:19; 13:12,30; I Pet.1:2,9; I Jn.1:7; Rev.1:5; 5:9; 7:14; 12:11.

Jesus' blood on the cross was not shed to provide physical healing. It is the exclusive remedy for sin, uncleanness, and spiritual sickness of soul. It is in this sense only that "by His stripes we are healed."

Making this phrase pertain to physical healing completely ignores two of the biblical reasons why a person may be ill, namely, God's purpose and natural causes. It attempts to explain all disease in terms of unbelief or satanic attack.

Biblically, this cannot be done and still accord with the text of the Scriptures. It makes out any believer who is ill to be either faithless or under demonic delusion and attack. "Real men of faith are never sick because they believe in the healing paid for 2000 years ago on the cross." So says PC.

But it is a lie of the most heartless type. It places the blame for all infirmities upon the individual for his lack of "faith." Such teaching informs the sufferer that demons are deluding and dominating him. Unbelief is the cause, faith is the cure, saith PC.

Real men of faith do become ill, and some of them, chronically so. It is what the Word of God testifies. Witness Paul's experiences.

"As you know, it was because of an illness that I first preached the gospel to you. Even though my illness was a trial to you, you did not treat me with contempt or scorn. Instead, you welcomed me as if I were an angel of God, as if I were Christ Jesus Himself" -Gal.4:13,14.

Paul was ill, but not because of unbelief on his part. He did not fail to "claim" his healing by "faith;" there was no such promise for him to "claim." He and his preaching were the means of their conversion and a source of great blessing to the Galatians.

His was a true work of faith and self-sacrifice even when suffering during his sickness. It was no small affliction, a minor inconvenience such as a headache. It was a trial to them. They had to somehow care for him until sufficiently recovered. Yet they did not despise him as if he were a second-rate Christian who had not even enough faith to believe the very "gospel" of healing that PC would imagine He must have spoken.

Instead, they welcomed him as the self-sacrificing man of God that he was. The illness merely reinforced the self-abandoning message he brought in the true gospel. They witnessed his genuine faith in the Son of God who saves from sin even though Paul suffered in His service.

On another occasion, Paul was afflicted with a "thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me" - 2 Cor.12:7. Though he implored the Lord three times that it might be removed, the Lord refused and allowed it to remain [2 Cor. 12:8-10].

Any "minister" of PC admitting to such a condition would promptly be rebuked as a faithless man from whom the "anointing" had departed. Three times he "confessed" his healing to no avail. The high priests of PC must surely conclude that this Paul is really another "Saul;" a man from whom the Spirit of the Lord departed to be left with a satanic tormenting thorn. He is "Ichabod;" no faith and no testimony.

Yet as we examine the Word of God, we find no such evidence of reproof and rejection by the Lord whom He faithfully served. It was not so with Paul nor with other godly servants who experienced various sicknesses.

Daniel "was exhausted and sick for days" -Dan.8:27. The immediate cause was not his lack of faith, but the greatness of the revelations granted him by the Most High. Gabriel himself was sent to interpret the visions to this faithful man of God [Dan.8:16]. And far from being sent to rebuke Daniel for the littleness of his faith and failing to "claim" healing, Gabriel called him "greatly beloved/highly esteemed" -Dan.9:23.

Here was a man who fell sick due to his intense spiritual earnestness. His very spirituality and faithfulness accounted for the infirmity he experienced. It was the Lord's will for him to be in this state, and it was not sent as discipline from the hand of God. Neither was the devil afflicting him.

Even the great prophet Elisha became sick. He who had a double portion of the spirit of Elijah [2 Kings 2:9,10,15] "became sick with the illness of which he was to die" -2 Kings 13:14. Elijah suffered no infirmity or pain, but was caught up directly into heaven without passing through death as other men [2 Kings 2:11,12].

Elisha, however, became weakened with illness until he finally died of that sickness. Shall we fault him? Can we legitimately scorn him for his lack of "faith"? Or should we rather humbly bow before the throne of the Sovereignty in the heavens and confess that His ways are past finding out; but that He does all things well? The latter is the only spiritually sane response.

What shall we say about the beloved Epaphroditus who "was sick to the point of death" -Phi.1.2:27? PC would say he should have refused the demonic symptoms and claimed healing by faith. His failure to do so only shows that he was not a true man of God, at least according to them.

The Word of God describes him as quite the contrary. He was the close companion of Paul who referred to him as "my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, who is also your messenger and minister to my need" -Phil.2:25. Faithful, devoted, and selfless better describe this servant of God instead of the false and cruel assessments of PC.

He was healed after his near death experience, but not by "claiming" it by "faith." The Scripture says, "Indeed he was sick to the point of death, but God had mercy on him" -Phil.2:27. He was healed by the mercy of God, not by applying a formula, "using" his faith, or rebuking demonic symptoms.

Mercy was the source of his healing; mercy, the compassion of God to alleviate suffering and misery. Mercy can never be reduced to a principle or system. These would make God the servant of law which obligates His performance. But mercy is never a requirement or obligation.

God is not bound to show mercy to men at any time. "For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy'...so then it does not depend on the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy...so then He has mercy on whom He desires, and He hardens whom He desires" -Rom.9:15,16,18.

The NIV puts these verses this way, "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy...it does not, therefore, depend on man's desire or effort, but on God's mercy...therefore God has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy, and He hardens whom He wants to harden."

Healing, and any other of God's mercies, is completely removed from the hand of man. It is not dependent upon man's desire, effort, or claims. If we would receive healing or any blessings, we are wholly cast upon the Lord and are at His complete disposal. Whether to show mercy or not is His prerogative alone.

We cannot obligate mercy nor is God compelled to perform anything in response to our will. "Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again?" -Rom.11:35. He only is "required" to do what He has pledged Himself to do in His Word. He will do what He has stated and promised, not because of us and our feeble faithfulness, but because "it is impossible for God to lie" -Heb.6:18.

PC is forever attempting to reduce faith to a formula, a technique to obtain, and steps to guarantee results from the "God" that is bound by spiritual "laws." Healing is part of this system. It is thought to be an automatic product of meeting certain criteria. "It is yours as a purchased right which merely awaits your refusing of the symptoms and claiming it by faith. God must surely respond to such faith."

This is not mercy, it is law. No blessings have ever come to anyone on the basis of law. All works of law are under a curse [Gal.3:10]. Biblical healing is granted according to mercy, not by complying with codified systems such as PC. It is completely contrary and opposed to the ways of the Lord.

During His brief ministry of some three years, the Lord Jesus healed many of their diseases and infirmities. "He went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil" -Acts 11:38. Yet He did this out of His heart of mercy and compassion, not because they had "claimed" anything from Him or that they had healing owed to them as an obligation.

"He saw a large crowd, and felt compassion for them and healed their sick" -Mt.14:14. "Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes; and immediately they regained their sight" -Mt.20:34. Jesus stretched out His hand and touched him, and said to him, 'I am willing; be cleansed'" -Mk.1:41.

The man from whom the legion of demons had been cast out of was told to "report to them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He had mercy on you" -Mk.5:19. "When Jesus saw her, he felt compassion for her...and the dead man sat up...and Jesus gave him back to his mother" -Lk.7:13,15.

In this way the Scriptures of the prophets found their fulfillment. Throughout His ministry the Lord Jesus healed the multitudes, being moved with compassion. "He cast out the spirits with a word, and healed all who were ill. This was to fulfill what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet: "He Himself took our infirmities and carried away our diseases" -Mt.8:16,17.

By healing the maladies of men during those years of ministry, He "carried away our diseases." This is how that prophesy was fulfilled. He did not carry away our diseases by His death on the cross. That was how our sins were taken away, not our diseases. Sicknesses were removed during the days before the cross by His acts of mercy upon the afflicted.

He heals today in that same manner, moved with compassion according to the will of His Father. No one has ever been healed by pressing a claim upon Him. No grounds for such claims exists, and invalid claims are not honored, even among men.

That all believers be healed of all diseases is simply not true. It is not the will of God that all believers be healed. "There were many lepers in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet; and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian" -Lk.4:27. Elisha was a man of great faith, one of the greatest in all of history. Miraculous signs and wonders were performed through him.

Dead were raised, food was multiplied, many were healed of the effects of poisonous fare, and one leper was cleansed. There were many in Israel, but not one of them was healed except an idolatrous foreigner. The prophet, a man of God through whom extraordinary miracles took place, only healed one leper among the multitude of sufferers.

Healing is according to the will of God by His mercy. Elisha could not heal at will. He had no option, ability, or commission to do so. God alone heals. As such, we are at His discretion as to whether healing will be granted or not; and it is just that, granted, but not an expectation upon demand.

No widow of Israel was assisted during long years of famine in the days of Elijah. Only one widow woman in heathen Zaphath tasted of the mercy of God in those bleak times [Lk.4:25,26]. Strange, the prophet who was miraculously fed himself by heaven's supply did not distribute relief to the poor afflicted women throughout the famine ravaged land.

Strange indeed until we read that "Elijah was sent to none of them" -Lk.4:26 [emphasis added]. Elijah did what he was told. He obeyed the will of the Lord revealed unto Him. He did not distribute miracles on a wholesale basis to all takers.

Undoubtedly the takers could have been many at such a time. Yet God did not send him to do this. It was not the will of God. We may conjecture why this was not the Lord's will, but there is no controversy that it was not His purpose.

The miraculous, including healing, is at the command of God whose prerogative it is alone to bestow His blessings upon whom and when He chooses. "It does not depend on the man who wills [healer or healed alike] or the man who runs [healer or healed either one], but on God who has mercy."

Certainly it does not depend upon any scheme invented by man. Healing cannot be produced even by those in whom the miraculous was unquestionably at work. Elijah and Elisha did not and could not perform the works of God whenever they chose. Neither could Paul.

"Trophimus I left sick at Miletus" -2 Tim.4:20. Paul spoke these words, the man of God who was mighty in word and deed. Was it Trophimus who lacked faith or was it Paul? Who sinned, this man or his apostle that he should thus be left sick?

It was neither that this man sinned nor the apostle, but that the will of God be manifest in both. Faithfulness and spirituality can never be gauged by external criteria. Riches or poverty, sickness or health give no clue as to the condition of one's heart before God.

"Though our outer man is decaying, yet our inner man is being renewed day by day" -2 Cor.4:16. The NIV says: "We are wasting away." The wasting effects of sin and death are at work in the bodies of every man, even in trusted servants of God. It was so with Timothy.

"No longer drink water exclusively, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments" -1 Tim.5:23. There was no one like Timothy who had a kindred spirit with Paul, who was wholly concerned about the things of Christ [Phil.2:20-22]. Yet he had a chronic affliction, an on-going disability.

His faith was not lacking. Paul's faith was not lacking. The remedy for his troubles was not faith. Rebuking the devil was not prescribed by the apostle. Refusing the symptoms is a meaningless exercise. Pleading

the finished work of healing on the cross is a false refuge and useless confession. No prayer cloths [Acts 19:11,12] were dispatched by post to effect his cure.

Paul said, in effect, "Take a natural physical remedy. Use a medical means to ease your distress." No healing was claimed. We have no right to claim anything. Healing is by the mercy of God, and He may even direct us to use very common and seemingly "unspiritual" means to assist in the healing process.

Those who seek the physicians rather than the Lord [2 Chron.16:12], are really no different from those who seek the Lord but refuse any physicians. Neither one is exercising biblical faith. For Timothy to have refused to obey the directives given to him to help his condition would have been direct disobedience to the Word of God.

The conclusion is obvious. A believer can be obediently serving God and be afflicted with even chronic illness. A second thing is this: a believer can be receiving medical treatment through natural means and still be obeying the Word of God by faith.

Timothy did. Observe this third principle, to insist that healing must be by "faith" alone without ever using natural medical means is nothing but unbelief. It is a denial of this portion of the Word of God.

Havoc has resulted from PC's carnal, yet deceptively "spiritual" emphases. Many people have become discouraged and disillusioned to believe in the Lord Jesus at all because their "faith" repeatedly did not produce the results promised to them. PC is, at best, misleading.

Carnal men are viewed as spiritual because they give testimony of having been healed. But being healed, even if from a genuine miracle of God, does not make one spiritual or even a believer at all.

Hezekiah was divinely healed yet he "gave no return for the benefit he received, because his heart was proud" -2 Chron.32:25. His outer man was renewed while his inner man decayed through self-exaltation.

Even those whom the Lord Jesus Himself healed did not necessarily spiritually benefit any more than Hezekiah did. You may be healed by God and yet have no genuine faith in Him in the least.

"Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of His miracles were done, because they did not repent. 'Woe to you...you will descend to hell'" -Mt.11:20,21,23 [emphasis added]. Every conceivable healing they received except that of the heart. They were willing to take from Him but unwilling to receive Christ Himself. And this took place where most of His miracles occurred. We can only conclude that most of these miracle recipients did not repent.

"Though He had performed so many signs before them, yet they were not believing in Him" -Jn.12:37. The heart of man wants benefits for self but does not want the God who gives them. It is happy with healing but not with repentance from evil. Receiving miracles is no evidence of possessing spiritual reality in the soul. Neither is performing miracles.

One may be a prophet, speaking to multitudes in the name of Jesus. Demons may flee at your command in Jesus' name. Signs and wonders can be performed in abundance and all done in the name of Jesus. All these outward external works one may boast in only to be cast into hell at the end of it all.

"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness'" -Mt.7:22,23.

Note it well, the Lord Jesus said, "I never knew you." It was not that they at one time were true believers but had fallen away. Never at one instant had they ever done anything supernatural by the power of God. Not at one time had they ever had any actual connection with the Lord Jesus.

Miracles, healings, signs and wonders were all done apart from the Lord Jesus altogether. And it will not be a few to whom this applies. The word of the Lord Jesus is that "many" will have this tragic testimony.

Many will take His name in vain by their reckless boasting of supposed miracles and healing. None will be held guiltless. The masquerade will come to its fatal climax with deceiver and deceived both banished from the presence of Him they falsely laid claim to throughout their darkened days.

Whether taught or believed, false doctrine is no small matter.

7

DOMINION

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

GOD HAS TO BE GIVEN PERMISSION TO WORK IN THIS EARTH REALM ON BEHALF OF MAN...YES! YOU ARE IN CONTROL! SO, IF MAN HAS CONTROL, WHO NO LONGER HAS IT? GOD...WHEN GOD GAVE ADAM DOMINION, THAT MEANT GOD NO LONGER HAD DOMINION. SO, GOD CANNOT DO ANTHING IN THIS EARTH UNLESS WE LET HIM¹ [GOD SAID] "YOU ARE UNDER AN ATTACK OF THE EVIL ONE AND I CAN'T DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT. YOU HAVE BOUND ME BY THE WORDS OF YOUR OWN MOUTH"² FAITH-FILLED WORDS ARE RULING THE UNIVERSE TODAY³

Behold, let me tell you, you are not right in this, for God is greater than man- Job 33:12

Who gave Him authority over the earth? - Job 34:13

Who has appointed Him His way? - Job 36:23

Do you know the laws of the heavens?

Can you set up God's dominion over the earth? - Job 38:33

Small gods need help. With limited power and insufficient wisdom, they are unequal to the tasks lying before them. Sacrifices and incantations from their priests provide the needed edge to access and influence the affairs of men.

All traditional religion is a shared regency between god and priest. By it a measure of dominion is obtained by both over a limited sphere of influence. Occultism is characterized by such a symbiotic relationship.

Dominion is exercised by the priest who "channels" the spiritual forces he both manipulates and is manipulated by. He becomes an object of reverence in the eyes of the uninitiated because of the powers he manifests. As such, he is accorded a god-like status along with the god he serves.

Both his god and he are happy as their cooperative kingdom is established and expands. Through priestly advise, proposals, and contributions, the small god merges his will with that of his human agent to perform their will upon earth. Across the globe this phenomenon pertains.

But it cannot be found in the Word of God. The Lord of glory is no small deity. He is the self-sufficient Sovereign who needs nothing, since He is the source of all life and breath and all things [Acts 17:25]. No co-regency of man and Maker will be discovered therein. The true God is not dependent upon His creatures to establish His reign or perform His will on earth.

"They did not believe in God and did not trust in His salvation. Yet He commanded the clouds above and opened the doors of heaven; He rained down manna upon them to eat and gave them food from heaven" - Ps.78:22-24.

Manna, the parting of the Red Sea, and water from the rock were all sent from the sovereign God of mercy. The only contribution the people of God made was unbelief, complaint, rebellion, and insult of the God of heaven.

Far from being restrained, the Lord accomplished His purpose for His own glory despite the condition of Israel. "They rebelled by the sea, at the Red Sea. Nevertheless He saved them for the sake of His name, that He might make His power known" -Ps.106:7,8.

God acts for His own purposes and for the sake of His name whether men believe Him or not. The Lord is pleased with belief but does not need it to accomplish His design. Our God does whatever He pleases.

"Our God is in the heavens, He does whatever He pleases" -Ps.115:3. "Whatever the Lord pleases, He does, in heaven and earth" -Ps.135:6. "He stands alone, and who can oppose Him? He does whatever He pleases" -Job 23:13.

Alone, in His utter uniqueness, stands the unmoved Mover of all the affairs in heaven and earth. None is His equal, His rival. Nothing else influences Him but His own sovereign decrees issued from all eternity. He does whatever He pleases without mishap, delay, or needing correction.

Doing whatever we please is corruption, for we who perform the doing are corrupted. Our will and longings must conform to His untainted and holy purposes or they remain polluted in their self-promoting lusts. Only the Holy One can do as He pleases and yet remain holy. All that pleases Him is His own holy will. Nothing else is given a moment's reflection.

"To whom would you liken Me and make Me equal and compare Me, that we would be alike? For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times things which have not been done, saying, 'My purpose will be established, and I will accomplish all My good pleasure'" -Isa.45:5,9,10.

From the outset, the final resolution of all things was not only in view but was established. It was as good as accomplished. For Him to decide is to infallibly achieve: to speak is to create.

History has an eternal and prior determination in the unalterable good pleasure of God's will. What kind of contribution are we imagining to make along the way in light of such declarations?

No one a His counselor. He abides apart in solitary limitless wisdom and unsearchable knowledge. "His understanding is infinite" -Ps.147:5. What can we tell Him, what advise do we dare to bring before His courts?

"Let all the earth fear the Lord...for He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast. The Lord nullifies the counsel of the nations; He frustrates the plans of the peoples. The counsel of the Lord stands forever; the plans of His heart from generation to generation" -Ps.33:8-11.

We were not present at the eternal forum of Father, His Son, and the Holy Spirit. What would we have had to contribute if we were? Anything beyond the confession of Job would be utter rubbish at that august conclave. Repetition of his realization is pertinent still. "Behold, I am insignificant; what can I reply to You? I lay my hand on my mouth" -Job 40:4.

Good, it is as it should be. Our opened mouths would only be cast away as so much irrelevant and impertinent drivel. The matter is settled, the counsel of the Lord stands firmly and immovably permanent throughout the epochs of time. "Can anyone teach God knowledge?" -Job 21:22. Man's counsel is discarded as so much ignorant and distorted diatribe.

"Who has directed the Spirit of the Lord, or as His counselor has informed Him? With whom did He consult and who gave Him understanding? And who taught Him in the path of justice and taught Him knowledge and informed Him of the way of understanding?" -Isa.40:13,14.

Though we multiply schemes and aspirations or even demands, our will cannot possibly prevail. The counsel of man is nullified, both by the decree of God and due to its inherent folly and benighted perspective. "Many plans are in a heart, but the counsel of the Lord will stand" -Prov.19:21. One must be set aside in preference for the other, and assuredly it will not be the counsel of the Most High.

Nothing can frustrate His plan. "The Lord of Hosts has sworn saying, 'Surely, just as I have intended so it has happened. And just as I have planned so it will stand'" -Isa.14:24. Intentions established from eons must be executed in time. None of His purposes shall fall to the ground unaccomplished. No devious subtlety or onslaught of the mighty can deflect His design.

"His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and His kingdom endures from generation to generation. All the inhabitants of the earth are accounted as nothing, but He does according to His will in the host of heaven and among the inhabitants of earth; and no one can ward off His hand or say to Him, 'What have You done?'" - Dan.4:34,35.

Which kind of power can weaken or strengthen the hand of the everlasting God? How could any space at all be created for the ways and thoughts of man in the counsels of God? If there had been, then the will of God would certainly have been derailed. Nothing proceeding from man's darkened understanding [Eph.4:18] could ever be approved by the God who is Light, void of darkness at all.

"For the Lord of Hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched out hand, who can turn it back?" -Isa.14:27. Even from eternity I am He, and there is none who can deliver out of My hand; I act and who can reverse it?" -Isa.43:13. "I know that You can do all things, and that no purpose of Yours can be thwarted" -Job 42:2.

At the end of the day, even the wickedness of man shall be seen to have served the foreordained counsels of the Most High. No sin, or rebellion and wicked schemes can foil the stainless will of God. "There were gathered together against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, along with the Gentiles and the peoples of Israel, to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose predestined to occur" - Acts 4:27,28.

We typically quickly pass over such passages. They are deeply disturbing to us. We imagine that we are in control, that we are exerting our own wills independent of any restraints or unwelcome influences. Verses like these dispel these ignorant and arrogant assumptions with one felled blow.

Mighty kings, reigning empires, and the chosen nation of God all fulfilled long-standing determination of God appointed before the first dawn shown forth. Wicked and vile, with inexcusable malice and hate, were their treacherous and cowardly deeds perpetrated. Yet the predetermined purpose from everlasting was accomplished withal.

Man is not in control as he vainly imagines. The God of heaven so superintends His universe that, not only is one star not misplaced [Isa.40:26], but nothing can deter His good pleasure.

All things are subject to His will, animate and inanimate; willing or unwilling. "All things are your servants" -Ps.119:91; but the Lord is no one's servant. The Creator commands all, but is Himself directed by none. His decrees alone prevail in heaven and upon His earth.

"He loads the clouds with moisture; He scatters His lightening through them. It changes direction, turning around by His guidance, that it may do whatever He commands it on the face of the inhabited earth, whether for correction, or for His world, or for lovingkindness, He causes it to happen" -Job 37:11-13.

All are dependent upon Him but He looks to none to assist or support Himself. He is the source and not the recipient of blessing and life's sustaining supply. "The eyes of all look to Thee, and You give them their food in due time. You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing" -Ps.145:15,16.

Control of creation is not in the hands of the created. The Creator's dominion extends over all, irrespective of His creatures' counsel. Great and small are subject to His most excellent will. "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father" -Mt. 10:29.

There is room for but one Sovereign in heaven and earth. No co-regency of equals exists between God and man. They are not equals, He has no equal.

Sovereign is defined by the dictionary as being "independent of, and unlimited by, any other: possessing, or entitled to, original and independent authority or jurisdiction." Man is not independent of or unlimited by others, especially God, the Omnipotent. Not even Adam had original and independent authority. The Lord is "the Blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords ...to Him be honor and eternal dominion!" -I Tim.6:15,16.

Earthly thrones and monarchs are at His disposal. "The Most High God is ruler over the realm of mankind and He sets over it whomever He wishes" -Dan.5:21. The Lord God, the Omnipotent, reigns!

"It is He who changes the times and epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings" -Dan.2:21. "He it is who reduces rulers to nothing, who makes the judges of the earth meaningless" -Isa.40:23. "God is the Judge; He puts down one and exalts another" -Ps.75:7. "He makes nations great, then destroys them" -Job 12:23.

To Him alone belongs unrestrained authority with unlimited power. He is the benign despot. "Power and might are in Your hand so that no one can stand against You" -2 Chron.20:6. Nothing and no one can circumvent His unalterable decrees.

"Nothing will be impossible with God" -Lk.1:37. His will is not determined from, dependent upon, or delayed by the deliberations of underlings. "Thus says the Lord of Hosts, 'If it is too difficult in the sight of the remnant of this people in those days, will it also be too difficult in My sight?' declares the Lord of Hosts" -Zech.8:6.

"Jesus said to them, 'With people this is impossible, but with God all things are possible'" -Mt.19:26. Man is incapable. The gulf between their capacities is greater than that of a man and an onion.

Limited describes man in every way. "His days are determined, the number of his months is with You; and his limits You have set so that he cannot pass" -Job 14:5. His frail and tenuous existence hangs uncertainly before him, the would-be "sovereign" of earth.

"My times are in Your hand" -Ps.31:15. Fleeting days, "swifter than a weaver's shuttle" -Job 7:6, like a vanishing morning mist, decline and terminate without our consultation. Abruptly they expire without our consent or cognition.

Knowledge is partial and plans are ineffective if their origin is human. "Man's steps are ordained by the Lord, how then can man understand his way?" -Prov.20:24. "The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps" -Prov.16:9. In the final analysis, man understands little, plans in ignorance, and ends up executing the ultimate purpose of God despite his decided upon intentions.

Dominion or limitation? "Dominion and awe belong to Him who establishes peace in His heights" -Job 25:2. Limitation, weakness, and ignorance belong to him whose plans are not established upon earth.

"I know, O Lord, that a man's way is not in himself, nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps" -Jer.10:23. If man is not equipped to guide his own path, what kind of "dominion" will he exercise? Or how could he even contemplate directing the Majesty in the heavens? Only one with a crazed inflammation of grandeur would presume to speak one word of "advice" from such a destitute storehouse of counsel.

Our breath is in His hand, our knowledge is deficient, and our plans are overruled by Sovereign decree. These are poor qualifications for exercising dominion upon earth. We are far less fit to rule than we imagine.

"You cannot make one hair white or black" -Mt.5:36. Such a task ought to be rudimentary to those whose words have creative power, especially if they are the presiding monarchs of a spiritual kingdom. But we cannot do so. The Lord Jesus has informed us Himself of the impossibility.

Man is actually quite impotent. His folly and incompetence to influence the world by exercising dominion through decrees is exposed by the Lord's inquiry. "Can you lift up your voice to the clouds, so that an abundance of water will cover you?" -Job 38:34. No, you cannot. Man has no dominion in this realm. It is the prerogative and province of God alone to decree, command, and control His creation.

What type of contribution can man conceivably make to Him "who is able to do far more abundantly/exceedingly abundantly/immeasurably more than all that we ask or think" -Eph.3:20? The best and highest of our own thoughts and aspirations are surpassed by His infinitely superior will and power. What justification is there for a co-regent who has no capability to make any worthy, significant, or needful supplement to the All-sufficient One's predetermined and infallibly executed program?

Man's presumed "dominion" is, at best, irrelevant. At worse, it is a wicked presumption and arrogant intrusion into an uninvited realm as an incompetent impostor. Man is not qualified to exercise dominion.

Heb.2:8 says it all: "But now we do not yet see all things subjected to him." A limited reign under the sovereign decree of the eternal King of the ages is yet the future prospect of man. At that time, it shall be the will of God for man to exercise his God-ordained partial rule. It is not so now.

Now we do not see this dominion. Now man is too weak, ignorant, corrupt, and incompetent to rule himself, much less anything else. Certainly he is absolutely incapable of advising or commanding the God of glory. That he shall never do. In coming days he will be qualified to exercise a limited domain over beasts as described in Genesis 1, but not now.

When the Lord Jesus returns in majesty for His glorious reign here, "the wolf will dwell with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the young goat" -Isa.11:6. Things will return to its Edenic setting; no violence or perversion, with man having dominion over the animal kingdom. In that day, wolf, leopard, and lion will be under the domestic care of man. "And a little boy will lead them" -Isa.11:6.

Dominion, in that day, will be for even the small boys. Now, it is not for the most exalted, and absolutely not for the presumptuous pretenders of PC.

The Majesty in the heavens does whatever He pleases. He not only receives no counsel, He rejects it. Nothing can frustrate His predetermined plan.

All things serve Him and are subject to His will. His sovereignty extends over all earthly rule and reign. Nothing is impossible for our God.

Searching and solemn is this question laid at the feet of the peddlers of PC: What kind of "god" are you serving that he is limited or "bound" by man?

The one they have described bears no resemblance to the God of glory revealed in the Scriptures. Who, really, is their god? Is He actually any different than the small gods of the nations served by idolatrous priests?

You decide for yourself.

YOURS, O LORD, IS THE GREATNESS AND THE POWER AND THE GLORY AND THE VICTORY AND THE MAJESTY,
INDEED EVERYTHING THAT IS IN THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH;
YOURS IS THE DOMINION, O LORD, AND YOU EXALT YOURSELF AS HEAD OVER ALL

I Chronicles 29:11

8

PRIDE

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

JESUS KNEW HIS WORTH. HIS SUCCESS FED HIS SELF-ESTEEM. AND HE BORE THE CROSS TO SANCTIFY YOUR SELF-ESTEEM. AND THE CROSS WILL SANCTIFY THE EGO TRIP¹ SELF-LOVE IS A CROWNING SENSE OF SELF-WORTH. IT IS AN ENNOBLING EMOTION OF SELF-RESPECT...AN ABIDING FAITH IN YOURSELF. IT COMES THROUGH SELF-DISCOVERY, SELF-DISCIPLINE, SELF-FORGIVENESS, AND SELF-ACCEPTANCE. IT PRODUCES SELF-RELIANCE, SELF-CONFIDENCE AND AN INNER SECURITY²

Little needs to be said about self-esteem. It is merely another name for pride thus making it abhorrent to the Lord. "I hate pride" -Prov.8:13, puts it at once into its proper perspective.

PC has promoted the monstrous heresy of exalting man to the status of a god. Without revisiting that presumption, suffice it to say that "every man at his best is altogether vanity" -Ps.39:5. The best that we may account ourselves to be is actually nothing more than utter emptiness. This is the true assessment of things.

It buttresses what the Lord Jesus said to His disciples, ever aspiring to promote themselves as great, and even greatest, in the kingdom of God. "When you shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have done only that which we ought to have done'" -Lk.17:10.

That is, when we have done all of those things. It is only then that we may boast of our earning the title of "unworthy." We have not yet arrived at that lofty recognition. Up to today we abide as less than unworthy.

Humility and shamefacedness are rather our fitting portion in this life. It is only those who are thus "poor in spirit" -Mt.5:9 who have any hope of attaining to the kingdom of heaven. All others find that the Lord has set His face against them in determined opposition [Jas.4:6].

Self-exaltation provokes the God of heaven to expel from His presence all who are thus corrupted. Lucifer, through ambition for recognition, exaltation, and godhood, became the devil and was cast down to hell, to the sides of the pit [Isa.14:12-15].

Religious men, viewing others with contempt while "praying," "God, I thank You that I am not like other men" -Lk.18:11, will never be justified before the courts of heaven. Thinking oneself to be likened unto God and unlike other men are the twin roots of this evil called pride.

Self-conceit brings one and all into the "condemnation of the devil" -1 Tim.3:6, whether discovered in angels or among men. There is really nothing to commend this deluding lie of pride. "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself" -Gal.6:3.

Something when nothing is the height of folly and arrogance. Inflate this beating of his own drum from "something" to godhood and the ludicrous becomes scandalous; yea, blasphemous.

O that we might turn from this wretched vaunting of self and learn from Him who is "meek and lowly of heart" -Mt.11:29! Here was Someone who is truly "something," yet truly became "nothing" for the sake of others. It is Christ Jesus the Lord.

"Who, being in the very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

"And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" -Phil.2:5-8.

Let it be in you. "Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" -1 Pet.5:6. The time for such exaltation is not, nor could be now. But it is always seasonable for lowliness of mind.

Humility flourishes in the dust. It is from whence we arose, it is what we are, and what awaits this mortal flesh. "You are dust and to dust you shall return" -Gen.3:19.

In the dust, the mighty and lowly alike embrace. There beneath the sod, worms do their work without respect of persons. No pomp abides below.

What are we, really, but gloryless dust; unnoticed, trodden down, and lifeless apart from the breath of God? This is the unflattering verdict upon all that we conceive ourselves to be.

Dust: It is from here that we see ourselves as we are in fact. Only prostrate there will we discover the Lord of glory as He is. And Damascene dust is a most fertile field for the budding of this comely grace of humility.

Paul discovered it to be so. In a brilliant flash through now blinded eyes, he saw clearly for the first time in his life. In the dust, his God of ancestral tradition was abandoned and the Lord of glory was apprehended. It was there that he had to admit that he knew not the very God he presumed to serve. "Lord, who are You?" -Acts 9:5, was the penitent supplication from this former pompous Pharisee.

His mission, entourage, and fanaticism were forgotten in one instant. The curried favors obtained and invested authority of Jerusalem's high priest ceased to inflate his conceits [Acts 9:1-9]. Swelling thoughts of self no longer inflamed his breast.

Stripped of all its pretensions, his heart now had only one occupation; knowing and serving the Lord Jesus. Self was forgotten, nay, deserted for the excellence of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord. This is what humility is made of.

When we see ourselves as we truly are mirrored in the Word of God, pride is exposed for the folly that it is. Even apart from sin considered, our curriculum vitae are far from impressive.

We are as grand as grasshoppers [Isa.40:22] and permanent as the morning mist [Jas.4:14]. The sum of our achievements is less than nothing and void of value [Isa.40:15,17]. This is man, insignificant [Job 40:4] as a writhing worm [Job 25:6] whose glory fades and vanishes like the wilting grass [Isa.40:6,7].

Turning from considering our weak constitution as creatures to that as it has been defiled by sin, the diagnosis becomes even bleaker. The Lord Jesus summarizes our pathetic condition with this withering indictment.

"Sinful, adulterous, evil, wicked, wretched, miserable, poor, blind, and naked" -Mt.12:39,45; Lk.11:29; Rev.3:17.

Is it from this putrefying rubbish heap that "a crowning sense of self-worth and an ennobling emotion of self-respect" is generated? We must be mad. "But as it is, you boast in your arrogance; all such boasting is evil" -Jas.4:16.

All things considered, we have nothing but one thing to boast of. Boasting is sinful. It demotes and ignores the God of glory while promoting and advertising the baseness of man.

Boast we may in the cross alone; God forbid that we should boast in anything but. Through it "the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world" -Gal.6:14.

Crucified, now there is something to boast in. God has put to death by a final violent act all that I am. Self, the arch enemy to myself, to God, and to man, has been executed. This is cause for rejoicing.

Crosses do not sanctify self-esteem. By the cross, rather, it is exterminated. This flesh, which profits nothing [Jn.6:63] and in which dwells no good thing [Rom.7:18], is condemned. We may boast in it no longer [Ga1.6:13].

God's sentence on all my attainment and presumed worth is to crucify it. There is nothing else that justly could be done. All the refined, learned, and sanctimonious among men recoil in revulsion at such a notion. That is, until they be struck down in the dust.

While reclining on velveteen sofas, mounting rostrums, or parading in the sanctuary, the infection of self-esteem thrives. The dirt approaching Damascus quickly quenches this fever.

Few wish to taste it. To prostrate there with all pomp and pretension stripped does not flatter the flesh. Neither does the cross. But neither is there any other remedy for what we are.

If we must boast, let it be in what pertains to our weakness [2 Cor.11:30]. This is what Paul was proud of, what he exulted in, and promoted to commend his credentials. Here is the highest he could conceive of about himself.

"In Damascus the governor under king Aretas had the city of the Damascenes guarded in order to arrest me. But I was lowered in a basket from a window in the wall and slipped through his hands" -2 Cor.11:32,33.

Dust, a basket, and the cross were all that Paul could truly glory in. Outside Damascus he was accosted by the risen Christ and cast to the dust. Inside, he also found cause to boast in a Damascene basket.

Vilified, scorned, and hunted as a loathsome beast was his lot. They had accounted him to be off-scouring scum, unfit to draw another breath. Death's sentence hung over his head as he withdrew, cornered and defenseless, from these relentless assailants.

Powerless, Paul awaited his fate holding on to but one glimmer of hope. Help may yet come from above. And it did, and that in the form of a basket.

From above, he was lowered to freedom and safety. Looking up he saw the source of his salvation from certain doom. He, however, could do nothing to effect his rescue except abide in the means of his deliverance as so much pitiful cargo.

The strength to save was not of himself. The means were none of his own devising. His only participation was to enter and abide. Humbled, humiliated, and helpless aptly describe the basket's occupant.

This is something to boast about. Abiding in a basket, he was saved apart from his own efforts. It is what this thing called Christianity is comprised of.

"For while we were still helpless, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly" -Rom.5:6.

A cross, at the right time, for the helpless and ungodly. A basket, at the right time, for the powerless and condemned. Dust, at the right time, for the proud and self-willed.

WHERE THEN IS BOASTING? IT IS EXCLUDED - Rom.3:27

THEREFORE, AS IT IS WRITTEN, "LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD" - I Cor. 1:30

9

OCCULTISM

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

THE MAIN THING IS THAT WE SHOULD KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF VISUALIZATION¹ SPIRITUAL THINGS ARE CREATED BY WORDS. EVEN NATURAL, PHYSICAL THINGS ARE CREATED BY WORDS² THERE IS A POWERFUL AND MYSTERIOUS FORCE IN HUMAN NATURE...IT CONSISTS OF VIVIDLY PICTURING, IN YOUR CONSCIOUS MIND, A DESIRED GOAL OR OBJECTIVE, AND HOLDING THAT IMAGE UNTIL IT SINKS INTO YOUR UNCONSCIOUS MIND, WHERE IT RELEASES GREAT UNTAPPED ENERGIES³ THE NATURAL WORLD IS TO BE CONTROLLED BY MAN SPEAKING GOD'S WORDS...THERE WAS CREATIVE POWER THAT FLOWED OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD, AND YOU...HAVE THE SAME ABILITY DWELLING ON THE INSIDE OF YOU...THIS IS NOT THEORY. IT IS FACT. *IT IS SPIRITUAL LAW.* IT WORKS EVERY TIME IT IS APPLIED CORRECTLY⁴ YOU MAY WONDER HOW WE CAN INCUBATE OUR SUBCONSCIOUS...THE ONLY WAY FOR US TO INCUBATE IS THROUGH OUR IMAGINATIONS...THROUGH VISUALIZATION AND DREAMING YOU CAN INCUBATE YOUR FUTURE AND HATCH THE RESULTS...SO MEN [CHRISTIANS OR OCCULTISTS], BY EXPLORING THEIR SPIRITUAL SPHERE OF THE FOURTH DIMENSION THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONCENTRATED VISIONS AND DREAMS IN THEIR IMAGINATION, CAN BROOD OVER AND INCUBATE THE THIRD DIMENSION, INFLUENCING AND CHANGING IT⁵ A VARIETY OF APPROACHES TO MEDITATION...[ARE] EMPLOYED BY MANY DIFFERENT RELIGIONS AS WELL AS BY VARIOUS NON-RELIGIOUS MIND-CONTROL SYSTEMS. IN ALL FORMS...TM, ZEN BUDDHISM, OR YOGA OR...MEDITATION OF JUDAEO-CHRISTIAN TRADITION...THE MEDITATOR ENDEAVORS TO OVERCOME THE DISTRACTIONS OF THE CONSCIOUS MIND...IT IS IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER THAT MEDITATION IN ANY FORM IS THE HARNESSING, BY HUMAN MEANS, OF GOD'S DIVINE LAWS...WE ARE ENDOWED WITH A GREAT MANY POWERS AND FORCES THAT WE DO NOT YET FULLY UNDERSTAND. THE MOST EFFECTIVE MANTRAS EMPLOY THE "M" SOUND. YOU CAN GET THE FEEL OF IT BY REPEATING THE WORDS, "I AM, I AM," MANY TIMES OVER⁶

Worldwide, occultists share the same essential formula. Reduced to its simplest elements, it can be summed up thusly:

The mind of man through images creates reality by spoken words
which releases powers either positive or negative.

This is at the core of occultist practices witnessed among Hindus, Buddhists, Sufi Muslims, Shamans, Native Doctors, Spiritualist Prophets, Mind-Science Cults, New-Age Channelers, and PC. Yes, and PC.

Despite its thin veneer of Christian sounding labels, at the heart of PC's orientation and practices is traditional mainstream occultism. By their leaders' own admissions, one does not need to be a Christian at all in order to employ and profit by these techniques.

"They are simply formulas discovered to be universal spiritual law. Even God Himself tapped into this power of creative imagery through the spoken word. He was the acknowledged Grand Master of PC who most successfully had "faith in His faith." These are the occultist beliefs of PC which have been gleaned from dark sources.

The Lord specifically warns His people against being ensnared by these practices. The command is "that you do not inquire after their gods, saying, 'How do these nations serve their gods, that I also may do likewise?'" - Deut 12:30. Yet the adherents of PC have done so. They have been ensnared while following occultists' techniques by which their gods are served.

"Why should the devil have all the benefits and blessings of this spiritual secret?" asks a PC leader. The answer is clear. He should have it because it is not of God. It has not arisen from the Scriptures and is rejected by the living God. And, in reality, it is of no benefit and blessing at all, but rather a lying deception.

In previous chapters it was shown that the terms positive and negative are not used even once in the Word of God. Positive is not to be equated with good neither is negative with bad. We do not "possess what we confess." In the final analysis, we must choose between submitting to the Word proceeding from the mouth of the Lord, or following our own word proceeding from our own mouth.

Real faith is trusting in God whose promise is contained in the Bible while obeying His commands therein. Faith has nothing to do with visualizing and decreeing by our own words. PC distorts and denies "The Faith" which was once for all delivered to the saints and turns it into an occultist formulary.

Actually it eliminates the need for God entirely. We merely need to go straight to the fount of all blessing - the law of PC - and confess what we will. This is raw occultism.

If we are to pray aright it must be according to the will of God and not in the self-willed presumption of commanding our own decrees. Confession is of our sin unto God, not of our words into reality. Real prayer consists of humbly asking, not in arrogantly decreeing.

"Using" the name of Jesus as an incantation to insure obtaining what has been positively confessed, is nothing more than occult methodology. It is taking the Lord's name in vain and will be judged as such. Prayer is no technique to get things from God or to tap into reservoirs of spiritual power.

Becoming gods was a lying promise of the devil which PC has embraced. There are no gods in heaven or earth but that are lying vanities, things of nothing. The words of men have no inherent power as do those of God Most High.

PC's leaders have exalted themselves to the realm of godhood. Their devotees flock to their feet hoping to attain to the same status with its attendant wealth. Their spoken words of "faith" dictate their followers' beliefs and actions. This is the essence of idolatry; serving false gods according to deceptive promises.

Prosperity is a synonym for covetousness; and covetousness is idolatry. It is what PC is made of and what is eagerly sought by all those longing after this root of all evil. God and Mammon cannot both be served, contrary to their rationalizing practices of simony.

Healing, or any other blessing from God's mercy, cannot be reduced to a formula of "law." Only small gods join in league with men on the principle of law to effect their wills upon earth. The true and living God abides apart as the unrivaled Sovereign with unlimited dominion over all in heaven and earth.

Any other imagined god is not the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one presented by PC is a figment, a powerless myth. He is bound by law and the decrees of men. He is impotent apart from man's "faith." This god is no God at all and differs in no respect from the local deities enshrined by the heathen across the globe.

Pride stains the religion of PC a deep crimson which no amount of "confession" can purge. And we know the God of heaven is opposed to the proud. He is opposed to PC with its occultist roots and practices.

PC is a deceptively false system stemming from pride and lust for gain. It has created an imaginary deity constrained by decrees of its co-regent gods on earth.

This is not Christianity. It is another religion altogether.

Herein is the conclusion of the matter. May the Lord have mercy on us.

10

CHRISTIANITY

THE FALSE TEACHING OF PC SAYS:

“WE CAN’T HAVE FAITH PREACHING.” “YOU CAN’T HAVE CONFESSION STUFF.” “YOU CAN’T DO THIS, YOU CAN’T DO THAT.” WHO CARES? WHO CARES? LET JESUS SORT OUT ALL THIS DOCTRINAL DOO-DOO. TO HELL WITH YOU! GET OUT OF MY LIFE! GET OUT OF THE WAY! I SAY GET OUT OF GOD’S WAY! QUIT BLOCKING GOD’S BRIDGES OR GOD’S GOING TO SHOOT YOU IF I DON’T! I DON’T EVEN WANT TO TALK TO YOU OR HEAR FROM YOU! I DON’T WANT TO SEE YOUR UGLY FACE!¹

Christianity is grounded on several irreducible orientations. These fundamental perspectives are its hallmarks which distinguish it from competing religious claims.

Four-legged furry animals could be a variety of things. Further describe them as having divided hoofs, and you have eliminated many as not being the ones referred to. Tell us that they bleat and we may say it is a goat or a sheep. If its "fur" is gathered as wool, it will be readily identified as a sheep.

Sheep are neither cows nor goats though they may share certain qualities in common. It is only as specific truths are enumerated that it becomes obvious that the animal is one thing and not another. Ignore these distinctive characteristics and many things may be mistakenly taken for a sheep.

Recognizing a sheep amidst a menagerie of beasts is not a difficult task suited only for highly trained veterinarians. A child may do so accurately though the flock may vary in size, color, markings, and other outward particulars. Rarely will even a youth mistaken a sheep for a goat.

Described in generalities though, many things may be erroneously thought to be sheep. This is not to say, however, that all particulars must match identically for one to be classed as a sheep. To insist thus will unjustifiably eliminate some that are actually sheep. Neither criteria will helpful or accurate. One is too broad while the second is myopically narrow.

Either way, one will not be provided with any useful or truthful means to determine what is Christian or otherwise. On the one hand, many may be welcomed into the fold who are not sheep at all, while, conversely, numbers may be cast out who should rightfully be admitted.

It is this that should caution any attempt to describe what, in principle, is Christian or otherwise. Excesses on either end of the spectrum propel the one establishing them beyond what Christianity is in fact. To claim that goats are sheep or that only those with white wool qualify, alike are errors.

In our assessment we must be comprehensive without being exclusive. What is not must be recognizable while including what actually is. Yet we cannot legitimately reduce Christianity to mere creedalism.

Men who are reprobate in heart and godless in behavior may ascribe to the most orthodox of creeds. But this will not make them Christian. Admirable virtues of character may grace others who have no belief in anything resembling Christian truth, and thus, will not be qualified either.

Only a proper orientation to truth will demarcate one as a Christian. Pharisees were conversant with the Scriptures yet were bereft of the life and love of God [Jn.5:39-42]. Cornelius, on the other hand, had many commendable and even godly traits, but was not constituted "Christian" apart from embracing the truth yet to be presented him in the gospel [Acts 10:1,2; 11:13,14].

Thus, neither being virtuous nor a doctrinaire will make one a Christian. Only truth making its proper impress upon the life will avail for one to cross the threshold into Christianity.

Yet not every teaching of the Word of God must be, or even could be, embraced in order to gain entrance through the door into the sheepfold. The import of these truths may indeed be critical to spiritual

progress and suitable associations within the flock, but they will not be the distinguishing characteristics that constitute sheep from non-sheep.

Nevertheless, we must not imagine that particular verses or teachings of the Scriptures can therefore be relegated to a sub-class of "secondary" or "non-essential" truths. This is not so, for "the sum of Your word is truth, and every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting" -Ps.119:160.

All of the Word of God tests us as to our orientation to God Himself. It exposes what impress His truth is making upon the life of His own. This will determine what degree of spiritual advancement will occur and the stewardship one may be entrusted with. But these numerous particulars will not classify one as a Christian or not.

In its totality, the Word of God is to be obeyed and the life brought into conformity with its truths. As specific texts are illumined to the heart, one is tested as to the reality of one's profession of being Christian. "The word of the Lord tested him" -Ps.105:19.

Though unmistakably recognizable as sheep, there will certainly be a vast diversity among them as to maturity, strength, outward markings, usefulness, quietness, compliance, or stubbornness. Differences are clearly discernible among the flock without constituting some goats who may differ in some respects from other sheep.

Yet there are, and must be, criteria to differentiate sheep from goats and Christians from religious men. How shall Christianity be recognized as such by God, ourselves, and others? Six pivotal intertwined beacons illumine what Christianity truly is.

Briefly stated, they are these:

GOD IS GREATER THAN MAN

I DESPISE MYSELF AND REPENT

SALVATION IS FROM THE LORD

YOU DESIRE TRUTH IN THE INNER MAN

WITHOUT HOLINESS NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD

LOVE THE LORD...NEIGHBOR...BRETHREN...ENEMIES

These are the things which distinguish Christianity from other systems of faith and practice, by whatever names they may hail. Let us examine them one by one in order to grasp their import in this critical area of consideration.

GOD IS GREATER THAN MAN
Job 33:12

Elementary as this seems, it is a bedrock orientation which supports all that rests upon it. A superficial dismissal of this as self-evident will leave one yet unenlightened and, in this respect, unchristian in his heart of hearts.

Typically, the obvious is recognized while bypassing the profound. By shallow common consent, God is certainly bigger than man in His knowledge, "size," and power.

But herein lies the distortion of this fundamental outlook. With such an assessment, man has become the measuring stick of God. We erroneously imagine that God is like man, only there is more of Him.

Man has knowledge, so God must have all knowledge -omniscience. Humans possess a measure of ability therefore God must be endowed with all power -omnipotence. People exist in many places, hence we project that God must be present everywhere -omnipresence.

Thus we measure the greatness of God on a human scale and attribute to Him human qualities of a grand caliber. This kind of god we can stand back and admire much as we do our Olympic starlets. They are developed and capable of feats far exceeding our own. Extend this concept beyond our capacity of comprehension and we have our god.

This is, however, a god to be applauded, but not prostrated to. We may thrill at such a being but we will not fear him. We are excitedly happy to have him endorse our program so as to parade our own experience in proximity to this "hero." But we will not have known the true God.

Somehow, this god has become like one of us, only more so. We gleefully chant, "I have a very big God-O, who is always by my side." With him we can do exploits. Yes, together, much like the Philistines and their champion of Gath -bigger, stronger, and admired.

God is not greater than man, though, in the sense that the Greeks imagined their pantheon of deities to be. Their gods were merely personifications of humanity, passions and all, on a superhuman level.

However, the greatness of God is to be measured on a divine scale of glory. It is this glory that makes Him greater than man.

Glory is God's manifest excellence of character. It is the outshining of His moral perfections which transcend both our comprehension and certainly our experience. Glory can only be measured on a qualitative scale, not a quantitative one.

We begin to apprehend it in the "light of the gospel of the glory of God in the face of Jesus" -2 Cor.4:6. It is Christ Jesus who is "the radiance His glory" -Heb.1:3. He is the outshining of all the perfections of God. In Him, truth, holiness, and love are discovered in their essence. These are the elements which comprise God's glory.

This greatness of glory invariably instills fear in the heart of man. The intensity of God's moral excellence terrorizes the most undaunted because we are so utterly unlike Him.

"The glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire" -Ex.24:16,17. "Hide in the dust from the terror of the Lord and from the glory of His majesty" -Isa.2:10,19,21. "The temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God and from His power and no one was able to enter the temple" -Rev.15:8.

We are surely discerning only the fringes of His ways, but the thunder of His power who can understand [Job 26:14]? Little do we comprehend because our native constitution is completely foreign to that of the Most High. When considered in His glory, God is categorically other than man.

Glory is the impassable gulf between God and man. God is true while all men are liars [Rom.3:4]. The Lord is the Holy One yet the heavens themselves are not clean in His sight, much less man who drinks iniquity like water [Job 15:14-16]. God is love, and to love Him is the greatest of all obligations [I Jn.4:8; Mt.22:36-38]. Yet men rather love self, money, and pleasure [2 Tim.3:2,4] while being hateful and hating one another [Tit.3:3].

The greatness of God is the condemnation of man. It is the magnitude of His glory which lends immeasurable weight to Rom.3:23, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

This falling short renders men condemned [Rom.1:18], corrupt [Eph.4:17-19], and helpless [Rom.5:6]. But man is agreeably entrenched in this state. Apart from the intervention, conviction, and mercy of God, we are determined to continue as such [Rom.1:32].

We have exchanged the glory of God for a perversion [Rom.1:23] which causes no alarm to wayward hearts. But when the glorious God reveals His glory, things are brought into their rightful perspective.

"You thought that I was just like you; I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes. Now consider this, you who forget God, or I will tear you in pieces, and there will be none to deliver. He who offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his way aright I shall show the salvation of God" -Ps.50:21-23.

When we see God as greater than man, we shall order our way aright.

I DESPISE MYSELF AND REPENT

Job 42:6

When caught, even hardened criminals may regret their misdeeds due to the consequences facing them. They may even abhor their actions. Scarcely do men, however, hate themselves.

Few apprehend the weight of glory belonging only to the Most High. Correspondingly, only this minority are appalled at the miserable blight of what is discovered within their own breast.

Apart from the revelation of the Lord Jesus we should never raise an alarm as to our native constitution. Misbehavior we may admit, however reluctantly. But to affirm that good proceeding from self is a categorical impossibility for man, few will agree.

To these in the majority, God is not that great and man is certainly not that bad. Such arrogant delusion casts the Lord down from the perfections of His glories while elevating man to realms of that excellence.

It is not possible to be constituted Christian with such an orientation. Forgiveness, eternal life, and heaven will never be gained thereby.

"The flesh profits nothing" -Jn.6:63. Nothing good is forthcoming from it for nothing good dwells within it. "I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwells no good thing" -Rom.7:18.

Let us reflect here for a moment. It is not merely that certain types of behavior are reprehensible and unfit us for heaven. Fornication, theft, and drunkenness are particular evil activities that must be shunned to be sure.

Yet abstaining from such will not suit one for heaven. Restraining oneself from the multiplicity of wicked deeds catalogued in the Scriptures will not resolve the malady of this thing called the flesh.

Strip the tree of its fruit and the tree remains. The sap continues to saturate its every fiber. That enlivening vitality yet permeates the whole though fruit and leaves alike may be wholly absent.

This is the problem. Something is fundamentally amiss with the root stock. By native constitution all that stems from it extends and develops from that source. Change the tree and you have altered its fruit. Purge all fruit and the trunk remains unaltered.

The flesh profits nothing. Even if one could dwarf or eliminate all outward evidence of these malignant fruits, it would profit nothing. At best, for sake of discussion, one would only have brought himself to a neutral state; nothing bad, but nothing good either.

He is profited nothing by such an imaginary gain. To abolish all traces of unhealthful fruit does not replace them with good fruit. It only brings one to a state of profitlessness. For surely the purpose of any tree is to bring forth good fruit, not merely to curb the poisonous.

Paul takes us the next step further. "In my flesh dwells no good thing." Here we pass from the profitless to the disastrous, the useless to the destructive. There is something positively corrupt and evil about me at the core of my being.

A refined and delicately cultured socialite may recoil in horror should she lose her composure in a public display of spite. Afterwards, she may be mortified and bemoan how she could have done such a thing.

Her grief and dismay is not over the discovery to her heart that there is nothing good dwelling in her, but in that she had not maintained the good which she imagined she possessed. Her shame is that her carefully nurtured charade was flawed.

She has gained no insight from the event. Undaunted, her opinion of self remains unaltered as she quickly regains her composure and plunges ahead in redoubled delusion.

Some years ago a Roman Catholic Reverend Father in America assaulted me by beating me upon the head before the shocked eyes of some one hundred of his parishioners. I was preaching the gospel outside the cathedral following their Christmas Eve midnight mass.

Later that same night, after the crowds had dispersed, this same man came to me deeply distressed over his violent outburst. He apologized profusely repeating phrases like, "I don't know what came over me. I'm normally not like this. I don't know what possessed me. I'm very sorry."

He was visibly shaken by his actions, but not shaken to the foundations. His amazement was that he was capable of such an act. Up until that time he viewed himself as dignified, as above such coarse and vulgar behavior.

What baffled him was that his deed did not tally with his self-assessment. In his mind he was better than that. He was at a loss as to explain how such a phenomenon could occur. Something good surely dwelt with him according to his inflated conceits. It must have been something outside of himself that was responsible for such an outrage. He could conceive of nothing else.

He gained no insight from the event. His robes were ruffled and his knuckles sore, but his heart was unmoved. He disbelieved that nothing good dwelt in him.

But it is true. Nothing good dwells in self.

Let us imagine again that we have a tree which has never brought forth any tainted fruit. All that is produced is good and pleasant. Nothing putrefying has ever been encountered on its branches.

All of this, the best and most excellent produce, is carefully cultured and conscientiously nurtured. The day arrives in which presentation is to be made in the court of the king.

Confidently, heaping bushels of shapely fruit are brought before the throne. But as the threshold of the palace is traversed, blight begins to develop and disfigure their fair skins. Further along the stately corridors, rancid dark slime begins to ooze from their centers.

By the time this offering is set at the footstool, maggots squirm profusely spilling upon his majesty's velveteen cushions while choking rank odors stifle his very breath.

Furious, armed guards are commandeered to drag you to the dungeon to there be tortured awaiting your execution. In horror and disbelief, you protest that the offering was immaculate when harvested. It was the finest and most wholesome known to man and fit for a king.

It appeared as such until brought into His presence. What was "perfect" in the eyes of the man, metamorphosed between the time of its production to its presentation before the throne.

At the feet of the King, this blessing was turned to a curse, the good became evil, and the honorable transformed to reproach and disgrace. And the offerer is condemned for his blasphemous outrage in the courts of heaven.

"All our righteous acts are like filthy rags" -Isa.64:6. It is not our wicked acts that are accounted as such, but our best. The purest and holiest of our aspirations and attainments are as filth. The most righteous performance ranks with the disgust of a menstrual cloth. They are one and the same.

While here below, man attributes righteousness, goodness, and acceptability to his deeds. From his astigmatism, all seems to be well as he gazes upon his righteous acts. But we do not see clearly.

Neither the socialite, the Rev. Father, nor the "righteous" man will enter heaven. In all three, self was the bedrock of their confidence. Self is esteemed in each. And if this is the case, the essence of Christian orientation has been repudiated.

Righteous acts are impossibility for sinful men to perform. Those who disagree betray confidence in self, in the flesh, which automatically constitutes them unchristian. It is not possible to esteem self and be a Christian.

"If anyone comes to Me and does not hate...his own life, he cannot be My disciple" -Lk.14:26. You cannot be a Christian if you do not hate your own self. This is not self-esteem; it is self-denial, self-mortification, losing self, and putting it to death.

The two are not compatible; esteeming self and hating it. The Lord Jesus says it is to be hated. In the three examples cited, self was loved and trusted. It was not hated and, therefore, they were not disciples of Christ.

Job despised himself and repented. Our three examples did neither. The disagreeable actions of the first two embarrassed themselves enough so as to wish to not repeat those deeds. But it was self that was ashamed. There was no repentance of what they were by nature. Self was not abhorred; loss of face was.

In each, self commanded the "repentance" so as to preserve self intact. There was no abandonment of self but rather a re-trenchment of the same, only with additional resolves to garrison self from future exposure to danger. Self was far from hated in both.

Our third aspirant to the throne commended his own efforts as not falling short of that glory of God previously described. This is the height of presumption and folly, to imagine that stinking foul rottenness is equivalent to the righteousness which God requires.

He did so because self was viewed as an adequate base from which to proceed. Here, self was exalted to the apex of arrogance and delusion. What the flesh brought forth was expected to be received with hails of acclaim.

Foul religious rags do not cover the shame of our nakedness. To our third man, he accounted his deeds righteous only because he disbelieved the Word of God. His perceived goodness actually only compounded his guilt and added to his eternal discomfort, being a repudiation of and insult to the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

Self is to be despised, rejected, hated, crucified, abandoned, and denied. This is fundamental to Christianity. Apart from this, one cannot be properly constituted Christian at all.

Humility is the only rational and obedient response of a sinful man to the God of glory.

SALVATION IS FROM THE LORD

Jonah 2:9

Willfulness against a Divine command, fleeing the presence of God, and imperiling his fellows by sin's consequence; this describes the prophet Jonah. A tempest of wrath descended from an angry heaven with no prospect but that of certain doom.

Cast headlong into the raging billows, all hope perished as he descended in the watery depths. Judgment encountered the rebellious and embraced him in its grip.

Apart from the intervention of heaven, all is lost. Unless God delivers, there is no rescue. It is only as there is a divinely sanctioned savior that wrath will not consume to the uttermost.

A great fish sent by decree from above served to save Jonah. He was safe only as long as he remained in his deliverer. Perils rushed about him threatening their terrors should he foolishly attempt his own escape.

His efforts availed nothing. His wisdom was useless. Good deeds he had none. Helpless and condemned only aptly describe his state.

He was saved by abiding in his savior. Any other refuge was certain death. And it was here, in the belly of a fish plunged in an inky abyss, that the memorable words were uttered: "Salvation is from the Lord."

The movement in Christianity is from God to man [Jn.3:16], heaven to earth [Lk.19:10], and from above to below [Jn.3:27]. All human systems reverse this order, placing unfounded confidence in their own abilities.

Salvation, to them, is a cooperative affair. Man does his best while God makes up the rest. It becomes a divinely funded self-help program.

Christianity is none of this. The Lord Jesus stated it simply: "Apart from Me, you can do nothing" - Jn.15:5. This expresses a profound reality with respect to salvation and all of Christian experience.

Nothing is contributory other than Christ. If it has not arisen from the Lord Jesus Himself, it is worth nothing. We learn by this that all of man's efforts, religion, and ideas are meaningless with respect to gaining heaven.

A person who supposes that he can gain admittance into heaven on this principle of combined achievement will forever be banished from that place. The reasons are numerous.

First, he will be shown to have put his confidence in his own flesh which, as we have seen, is profitless and corrupt. Secondly, he can only proffer as his contribution righteous deeds which are actually repulsive filth [Isa.64:6]. Since he is resting his hopes of heaven upon such an offering, and that offering will surely be cast out as an obnoxious affront to the Majesty on high, he himself will be cast out with his rubbish righteousness.

It has not met with Divine approval. And if his righteousness were necessary to add to the righteousness of Christ, he will not have met any criteria which could be accepted by the Judge of the universe. Our righteousness is a non-righteousness and, as such, must certainly be rejected.

Thirdly, he will be found out to make God into a liar since He has said that man has fallen short of His glory. This man says, in effect, "These deeds have not fallen short of Your glory." And, consequently, God has spoken untruth. This, in itself, is more than adequate grounds to be cast into hell-fire.

Fourthly, this delusion of self-effort annexed to the work of Christ, nullifies the cross of Christ. It renders the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus as an irrelevant tragedy [Gal.2:21]. For if there is even one thing that I, as a sinful man, can perform which merits God's approval, then I can enter heaven on that basis. And if one, why then not two, or twenty, or twenty thousand?

This one "righteous" deed, then, did not necessitate Christ's death since it was already acceptable just the way it is. And this was performed by the man apart from the influence, grace, or merits of Christ Himself. As such, self-righteousness becomes a legitimate grounds for gaining heaven apart from the redemption of Christ Jesus. This could never be.

Fifthly, it makes salvation no longer dependent upon grace [Rom.11:6] in direct contradiction to the clearest of scriptural statements [Eph.2:8,9]. Works and grace are mutually exclusive and self-contradictory principles. One nullifies the other.

To pay any amount to the giver for a free gift received, no longer qualifies it as a free gift. But salvation is a free gift [Rom.6:23].

The greater the value of the gift renders the paltry contribution of the receiver so much more an offensive insult to the giver. Who would be happy with a recipient who insisted on adding his part-payment of some small pittance to a gift paid for by the giver worth untold millions?

What favor would he ever gain from the giver? Furthermore, how would he be received when even his foolish insistence on contributing was discovered to be a check written against a bankrupt account?

Either salvation is from man or it proceeds from God. There is no amalgam forged between the two. If what we have demonstrated in our contemplation of the glory of God and the corruption of our natural selves in the flesh is true, then salvation must originate in and be executed by God Himself. Otherwise, no one could ever be saved.

Salvation is God's work for man and in man. Unless it is "God who is at work in you, both to will and to do for His good pleasure" - Phil.2:12, we are of all men most to be pitied.

Law, of whatever category, establishes a standard of compliance but provides no power to meet the demand. It is left for the individual to attain to the requirement laid upon him to the best of his ability. Law requires but does nothing to supply.

Thus, self-effort is all one has recourse to in order to match up to the Law of God. Had the Lord told Jonah to find a fish, enter its belly, and cause it to spit him up upon land after three days, he would have miserably perished. Jonah, who had caused his own problem, was not, and could not have been, part of the solution. That was wholly of God.

It is for this reason that the curse of God is placed upon any who would attempt to alter the gospel message [Gal.1:6-9]. There is no other gospel. There is no other message which saves because there is no one but God who can execute such a work.

It is not dependent upon the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy [Rom.9:16]. That is to say, it is not man's decrees or formulas followed which move the hand of God. He cannot be obligated so as to perform out of necessity what the creature has required Him to.

"Who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to him again?" -Rom.11:35. It was God who so loved that He gave. While yet sinners and enemies, Christ died for us Rom.5:6,8]. We love because He first loved us [I Jn.4:19].

Man did not request that the Father send His Son into the world to save them. People did not devise the remedy of a cross to resolve their plight in sin. The only contribution that we have made concerning the cross was to crucify the Son of God thereon.

And this act resulted in our condemnation, not our salvation. This was the climax of the guilt of a wretched humanity's hatred of and revolt against the Most High.

The cross only issues in forgiveness by God's design and mercy. Man's design for that event was only cruelty and hatred with no thought of securing, or even needing, deliverance from his own miserable self-righteousness.

Only God could have devised and obtained salvation for man through the cross. There is no other means of salvation available or possible. The only hand man had in that whole affair was to smite His head, lash His back, and pierce His hands and feet.

Salvation is from the Lord.

YOU DESIRE TRUTH IN THE INNER MAN

Psalm 51:6

Kisses of an enemy are no affection at all however profusely they are lavished [Prov.27:6]. Hearty salutations and warm gesticulations may yet mask seven abominations within the heart of one's "friend" [Prov.23:6-8]. Pearls of praise may roll from lips whose hearts are far removed from the God of their "devotion" [Mk.7:6].

True religion has as its object the transformation of the inner man. Religion has as its object the reformation of the outer man.

Christianity focuses upon inwrought character rather than human achievements [2 Pet.1:4-11]. Both testaments verify this emphasis. "For You do not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; You are not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise" -Ps.51:16,17.

It is this that makes all external observances impotent to save. No ritual, formula, or liturgy will avail to deliver from the wrath of God. None of these things issue in salvation.

Neither baptism, circumcision, Sabbath-keeping, speaking in tongues, performing miracles, communion and holy days, tithing, fasting, nor positive confession can effect that inward transformation necessitated for salvation.

Simon Magus was indeed baptized, but yet remained in the gall of bitterness and the bondage of iniquity because his heart was not right with God [Acts 8:13-23]. Those insisting on circumcision to initiate or enhance spirituality discover that they have fallen from grace and been severed from Christ [Gal.5:4].

Observing every jot and tittle on the Sabbath may actually be an abominable trampling of His courts [Isa.1:12,13]. One may speak in tongues and not lack in any gift while remaining completely carnal and in danger of being reprobate [I Cor.1:7; 3:1; 2 Cor.13:5].

Do you prophesy, perform miracles, and cast out demons in Jesus' name? Christ may still proclaim, "I never knew you!" [Emphasis added Mt.7:21-23]. Sunday by Sunday, holy communion is received though some continue weak, in sickness, and some have even died under the judgment of God [I Cor.11:28-30].

Holy days and solemn assemblies can actually be hated by the Holy One when the celebrants' hearts are defiled within [Amos 5:21-24]. Tithe as you may with exactness down to the smallest of seeds, unless justice, mercy, and faithfulness reign in the heart, you shall be condemned [Mt.23:23].

Fasting may be nothing more than a religious masquerade to conceal strife and wickedness [Isa.58:3-8]. Circumcision fitly exposes the folly of placing confidence in the external act rather than the transformation of the inner man.

Circumcision is an external religious act performed by the hand of man which modifies the flesh but does not excise it altogether. The one receiving it becomes distinguished from his fellows, "set apart," as it were. He can boast that he has done something which has rendered him "acceptable" to God.

It provides an outward indication that the man is "consecrated." But the consecration is nothing more than the removal of a certain aspect of the flesh. The flesh itself abides intact.

The man has survived the religious event. This is the problem with all religion of externalism. However decorated or regimented, it is nevertheless the flesh that lives on.

He has changed the outward man by his own effort. The heart, however, remains unmoved save for that sense of self-satisfaction [pride] resulting from his form of self-improvement.

No grace from God is needed for such a religion. All can adequately be performed by man without the slightest enablement from the Lord Himself. This is what makes it another religion.

All of the above listed activities, yes, all of them, including positive confession, can be performed by men who have never known the true and living God, whose hearts are far from Him. In fact, the motivation for emphasizing externalism is wickedness and its results are profitless.

Hear the plain pronouncements of the Word of God. "Those who desire to make a good showing in the flesh try to compel you to be circumcised, simply so that they will not be persecuted for the cross of Christ...but they desire to have you circumcised so that they may boast in your flesh" -Gal.6:12,13. This is the wicked motivation.

The less than profitless results are seen in the first part of this same 13th verse. "For those who are circumcised do not even keep the law themselves."

Thus, circumcision is nothing more than an act of the flesh, to promote the pride of the flesh, so that the flesh might be paraded before man and God and man. It does nothing to turn the heart to worshipping God in Spirit and truth or obeying Him.

We must not neglect to note two further things from the above text. First, externalism [epitomized by circumcision] is a substitute for the cross. Externalists do not want the cross [elimination of the flesh] or the scorn attendant upon embracing true religion.

To them, the religious event is an adequate approximation for what God truly desires, that is, truth in the inner man. And it is this that will condemn them. It contravenes everything we have seen thus far.

Secondly, externalism takes God-given practices and perverts them into another religion. The only exception to this is positive confession. It was never given by God, found in any form in the pages of Scripture, but rather arose from occultist sources.

It is when the external God-given practices are promoted as vehicles to right standing with God that another religion has been invented. All of the examples cited previously are proffered as generating righteousness by complying with their requirements.

Thus the very sanctioned practices of the Scriptures within their appropriate God-given contexts, become positively evil when taken from those contexts. The distortion of the externalist makes them into a curse and not a blessing.

For this reason Paul emphatically says that "The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" -2 Cor.3:6. True, the Law is holy, righteous, and good [Rom.7:12], but it is the perversion of it by the externalist which makes it into a religion of death.

The very requirements of this Law are fulfilled in us, not through the weakness of our flesh, but by walking in the Spirit [Rom.8:3,4]. It is the working of the Spirit in the inner man which gives life and righteousness [Rom.8:5-11].

The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, not with our flesh [Rom.8:16]. It is only as we are joined to the Lord as "one spirit with Him" -I Cor.6:17, that we are transformed and fit for His presence.

This can never be accomplished through externalism. Externalism never reaches the heart from which all evil proceeds [Mk.7:21-23], and therefore only adds to a man's condemnation and guilt.

"But if you are led by the Spirit you are not under law" -Gal.5:18. This is the liberation of true religion. It empowers, directs, and enlivens from within the man while delivering from the bondage of self-effort to keep codes.

The law comes with demands and imposed requirements but with no ability provided. One is left with his own pitiable self-resources which can never comply with the standard necessitated.

God's marvelous solution to our utter incompetence is to both provide and perform within the genuine believer what is otherwise sheer impossibility. This is what is known as the New Covenant.

"I will put My laws into their minds, and I will write them on their hearts" -Heb.8:10. The New Covenant is truth in the inner man. It is an impartation of the life of God within. External constraints and ordinances have no relevance to him who is so governed and empowered from within.

Systems, codes, and formulas all become worse than obsolete in its light. Laws and techniques to modify the external religious person are exposed as so much meaningless, deceptive, and worthless rubbish in its presence.

It is in the receiving of the truth that a man is saved [2 Thess.2:10]. It is the truth that will set one free [Jn.8:32]. Externalists are ever learning but never able to come to the knowledge of the truth [2 Tim.3:7].

They have an appearance of godliness, but theirs is a self-made religion. There is no power in them to deliver from fleshliness. Nothing is provided therein to remedy the true problem indwelling the heart of man.

"Since you died to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: 'Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!'"

"These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings.

"Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence" - Co1.2:20-23.

God desires truth in the inner man.

WITHOUT HOLINESS NO ONE WILL SEE THE LORD

Heb. 12: 14

It is only the pure in heart that will see God [Mt.5:8]. This is a clarity of soul that is in-wrought by God Himself. He is light and nothing shady or darkened is to be found in Him or clinging to Him at all.

To lurk in the shadows or shift along on lightless paths shows that purity of heart is absent. To claim otherwise is a lie [I Jn.1:5,6].

Purity is that uniform consistency of character free from taint or corruption. Nothing foreign or offensive is found concealed within. What is observed on the surface is what is discovered throughout no matter how one may slice it.

The inner man is identical with the outward. Character and conduct are one. No discrepancy is noted between the two. It is this that makes for purity.

Both a divided hoof and cud that was chewed constituted an animal clean for the Israel of God [Lev.11:1-8]. The walk, along with the inner parts together, must be pure if true holiness is to exist.

Yet holiness must not be construed as a rigid austerity or monkish isolation. It is rather evidenced in a free concourse with defiled humanity without becoming tainted within thereby.

The Lord Jesus was recognized to be the friend of sinners though He never befriended sin itself. He lived as separated unto God in heaven but never as removed from sinful men of earth.

Little children drew close to His side though He was the Holy One of God [Mt.19:13-15]. Holiness did not terrify or repel them as it did the Pharisees.

Having no truth in the inner man, and thus only a self-generated righteousness, they hated Him. His true holiness exposed their bankrupt man-made substitute. This they feared, despised, and sought to destroy [Jn.8:39-59]. It is the same with all unholy religious men.

They neither love righteousness nor hate lawlessness. Yet this is what true holiness is comprised of. It is what filled the Lord Jesus with gladness above that of any man [Heb.1:9]. Only purity produces joy or any other blessing from God.

Compromise destroys holiness. Any unhallowed element tolerated defiles the inner man as leaven does dough. It permeates throughout the whole. One cannot truly love righteousness without hating its deadly counterpart.

One eliminates the other as light does darkness. An imagined ninety percentile achievement in holiness will not justify the absent ten percent. The ten will actually nullify the ninety because they will intermingle with the ninety in the recesses of the inner man.

Holiness is a matter of the heart. A divided heart is itself a great evil. That double-minded man can expect that he will receive nothing from the Lord [Jas.1:6-8].

All evils proceed from within and defile the man [Mk.7:20-23]. Therefore, purity of heart is the great requisite of life. Without this, no man shall see the Lord.

In the previous discussions are outlined the compelling reasons for this and the only source for such holiness of life. Only God Himself can purify the heart of man. Only true religion can be the source of this purity. No invention of man can secure it.

Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord.

LOVE THE LORD...NEIGHBOR...BRETHREN...ENEMIES
Mt.22:37-39 Heb.13:1 Mt.5:44

Real Christianity is summarized in love for God and man [Mt.22:37-39]. It is the greatest commandment and, hence, the most important. Self is not included in this list; God and others are.

Love to God is, in essence, obedience to His Word. "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments" - I Jn.5:3. Any religion which professes to be true yet does not obey the commands of God is one which does not love Him. "He who does not love Me does not keep My words" - Jn.14:24.

Sentiment is not love. Neither happiness, attraction, nor enthusiasm qualifies as love to God. Spiritual gifts in abundance are no indication that the love of God is present [I Cor.13:1-3].

Thus it is not our feelings or religious activities that evidence love for God. Obedience "from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed" - Rom.6:17 is the sure testimony that love for God is present in a man.

And, as with all other virtues of Christianity, it is not possible to love apart from God who is love. It is His very nature and characteristic of His life. Love is of God. It does not spring up as a natural fruit out of human soil.

"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love" - I Jn.4:7,8.

Without love, there is no knowledge of God. Apart from love, we have never received the life of God and cannot be called His child. Along with truth and holiness, love is imperative.

The tangible proof that we possess this love is in our treatment of our fellows. Men are to be loved, for God so loved the world. If one is indwelt by this God, he too will love as a natural consequence of his union with God.

Hatred, disdain, or neglect of others shows that our religion is worthless. It is not possible to love God without loving men. As well, we cannot love men without also loving God. They are inseparable.

"If someone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen" - I Jn.4:20.

True love is indiscriminate. God loves all, saint and sinner alike. The sun shines on both. Rain waters the crops of each. All these blessings come down from above, from God who is love.

If we love only those who love us, we are no different than others who do not know the true and living God at all [Mt.5:46,47]. Even sinners do the same. Being as the rest of humanity only demonstrates that we are not children of the God who is love.

We are to love others as we love ourselves [Mt.22:39]. Our love for ourselves is not contingent upon our performance. We love ourselves even when we disappoint ourselves.

Even when we sin and act wickedly, love for self does not abate. We continue to feed and clothe ourselves. We do not punish ourselves by withholding the basic necessities of life.

This is the measure of our love to others. If we do not cease loving ourselves when we sin or act in a disapproving manner, neither should we cease loving others when they do the same.

For this reason, we are to love enemies [Mt.5:44]. God loves even His enemies and does them good [Rom.5:8,10]. We are to love likewise [Rom.12:9-21].

It is only those who are indwelt and possessed by the God of love who can do so. The same God who loves from heaven, loves upon earth in those in whom He dwells. God in real Christians loves men of whatever state and strata.

True love esteems others as more important than itself [Phil.2:3]. It does no ill to its neighbor. As such, "love is the fulfillment of the law" - Rom.13:10.

All men will know that we possess true religion if we love one another [Jn.13:33]. All men will know that we have not true religion if we do not.

Genuine religion is not self-focused. Self is not loved, esteemed, pampered, and indulged. Rather, no thought is given to it as it seeks to give and not gain; to lose itself in sacrificial service to others.

"We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" - 1 Jn.3:16.

How will men know that we are of the truth?
How will we ourselves know that we are genuine?
How will God Himself recognize us as His own?

What is this thing of Christianity, really?

FOOTNOTES

CHAPTER 2 FAITH

- 1 Copeland, Kenneth (The Force of Faith [Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1989], p.10)
- 2 Capps, Charles (Changing the Seen and Shaping the Unseen [Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1980], p.15)
- 3 Peale, Norman Vincent ("What Does it Take to be a Christian?" [in Plus: The Magazine of Positive Thinking], April, 1986, p.3)
- 4 Copeland, (The Laws of Prosperity [Fort Worth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Publications, 1974], p.19)
- 5 Copeland, (Freedom From Fear [Fortworth, TX: Kenneth Copeland Ministries, 1980], p.12)
- 6 Capps (Dynamics of Faith and Confession [Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1987], p.28,29)
- 7 Hill, Napoleon and Stone, W. Clement (Success Through a Positive Mental Attitude, [Pocket Books,1977], p.55)
- 8 Peale (Positive Imaging [Fawcett Crest, 1982], p.77)
- 9 Capps (How to Have Faith in Your Faith [Harrison House, 1986], p.64)
- 10 Hagin, Kenneth (Having Faith in Your Faith [Rhema, 1980], p.5)
- 11 Cho, Paul Yonggi (The Fourth Dimension [Logos, 1979], p.44)

CHAPTER 3 PRAYER

- 1 Hagin (Exceedingly Growing Faith [Tulsa, OK: Faith Library, 1980], p.4,5)
- 2 Hinn, Benny ("Rise and Be Healed!" [Orlando, FL: Celebration Publishers, 1991], p.47)
- 3 Price, Frederick K. C. ("Ever Increasing Faith" [Program on TBN: 16 Nov., 1990])
- 4 Peale (The Power of Positive Thinking [Fawcett Crest, 1983], p.52)

CHAPTER 4 GODS

- 1 Hagin (Zoe:The God-Kind of Life [Tulsa OK: Kenneth Hagin Ministries, Inc., 1989], p.35,36)

2 Capps (Authority in Three Worlds [Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1982], p. 16)

3 Hinn ("Our Position in Christ #2 -The Word Made Flesh" [Orlando, FL: Orlando Christian Center, 1991], Audiotape # A031190-2, side 2)

4 Cerullo, Morris ("The Endtime Manifestation of the Sons of God" (San Diego: Morris Cerullo World Evangelism Inc., n.d.), Audiotape sides 1 and 2)

5 Conversation between Paul Crouch, host, and Kenneth Copeland, guest, [*Praise the Lord* Broadcast on Trinity Broadcast Network, July 7, 1986]

Chapter 5 PROSPERITY

1 Tilton, Robert (Success-N-Life television program [27, Dec., 1990])

2 Price (Ibid. [1 Aug., 1989])

3 Copeland (as quoted in Time Magazine [Feb. 16, 1986], p.69)

Chapter 6 HEALING

1 Hagin (Healing: The Father's Provision [Word of Faith, Aug.1977], p.9)

2 Hinn (Ibid., p.44, 32)

3 Savelle, Jerry (If Satan Can't Steal Your Joy ... [Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1982], p.9,10)

4 Price (Faith, Foolishness, or Presumption? [Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1979], p.94)

Chapter 7 DOMINION

1 Price ("Prayer: Do You Know What Prayer is ...And How to Pray?" [The Word Study Bible. Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1990], p.178)

2 Capps (The Tongue -A Creative Force [Tulsa, OK: Harrison House, 1976], p.67. Emphasis in the original)

3 Kenyon, E W (Two Kinds of Faith [14th edition, Lynwood, WA: Kenyon's Gospel Publishing Society, 1969], p.20)

Chapter 8 PRIDE

1 Schuller, Robert H (Living Positively One Day at a Time [Revell, 1981], p.201)

2 Schuller (Self-Love, The Dynamic Force of Success [Hawthorn, 1969], p.32)

Chapter 9 OCCULTISM

1 Cho (Fourth Dimension, Volume Two [Bridge Publishing, 1983], p.27)

2 Hagin (Words [Faith Library, 1979], p. 12)

3 Peale (Positive Imaging [Fawcett Crest, 1982], Introduction, p. 1)

4 Capps (Tongue, p.130-136)

5 Cho (Fourth, p.39-44)

6 Schuller (Peace of Mind Through Possibility Thinking [Fleming H. Revell, 1977], p.131,132)

Chapter 10 CHRISTIANITY

1 Crouch, Paul ("Praise-A-Thon" Program on TBN [2 April, 1991])