

# *Now Concerning Spiritual Things*

*an historical account of one man's walk with God*

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## **A Brief Review of A Course In Miracles**

In November of 1997, I was talking about the Lord with a very special, long time Christian friend of mine who said, "I know where you are coming from." She later said to me, "You probably wouldn't approve of what I am doing." A week later she sent me a book entitled, "**An Introduction To A Course In Miracles.**" After reading the book, I understood the reason for her two remarks. Here are seventeen excerpts from the book which give me great concern over its contents from a spiritual point of view and which are contrary to the walk with our Lord I have had for thirty-seven years. My comments on the excerpts are brief by design.

**1. Excerpt:** "[The Course] combines the insights of contemporary psychology, with the spiritual wisdom of the East, and much of the essence of Christianity." (Preface).

**1. Comment:** A mixture of *contemporary psychology, spiritual wisdom of the east and much of the essence of Christianity* is in direct conflict with what the Bible teaches and amounts to spiritual adultery. Christianity is not a religion. It is a relationship with Jesus as Lord who said, "My sheep hear My voice and I know them, and they follow Me." (John 10:27). Jesus also said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6).

**2. Excerpt:** "A Course in Miracles is therefore . . . a course in mind training." (Page 1).

**2. Comment:** Christianity is a kingdom governed by a King. One enters the kingdom by being born again of water and the spirit (John 3:5), not through *a course in mind training*. Once one is born again, as one is faithful, his mind begins to be renewed as it is enlightened by the Holy Spirit. (Romans 12:1, 2; Titus 3:5).

**3. Excerpt:** "Because [The Course] sees all human ills as rooted in mental illness, it sees all solutions as lying in mental healing." "[The Course] is to teach us how to return to the eternal Self we thought we lost." "Some of the most penetrating insights into the human condition have come from the East,

especially the religions of Hinduism and Buddhism." (Page 3).

**3. Comment:** The assumption that all human ills are *rooted in mental illness* appears to be an apology for contemporary psychology. There is no record of mental, spiritual or physical illness in the Bible before sin entered into the world. There are two types of sin: the fallen nature of man through the Adamic sin, and sins committed by the descendants of Adam. Jesus paid the price for both on the cross through the shedding of His blood. (Hebrews 9:22) Salvation is in His name only. (Acts 4:12). The *eternal Self* referred to sounds very much like the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in Genesis 2:16 & 17, which Satan used to tempt Adam and Eve. Satan points to self, never to God. The *penetrating insights* appear to be another invitation to the beguiling ways of the enemy. In this paper, my criticism of contemporary psychology pertains to elevating the profession to a position equal to Christianity, or mixing it with Christianity, as a supposed "improvement" (1) over what Jesus said and did, and (2) over the Bible as inspired by the Holy Spirit.

**4. Excerpt:** "The world we live in ....this world of suffering, of disease, old age and death -- is an illusion. It is not reality at all but only a dream." "[The Course] claims it was authored through inner dictation by the author of Christianity, Jesus Christ." "[The Course] is clearly intended as a purification, of traditional Christianity." (Page 4).

**4. Comment:** *The world of suffering, disease, old age and death* is not an illusion. It is the actual condition of man caused by sin. "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in *Christ Jesus* our Lord." (Romans 6:23). The cure for all of these was wrought by Jesus on the cross. The choice given to every man, through the blood of Jesus is to be born twice and die once or to be born once and die twice. The claim that the Course was authored by Jesus Christ, while clearly denying the existence of sin, is in total contradiction to the scriptures. If Christianity needs to be purified, then Jesus is impure, which is unthinkable, since scripture testifies that He lived a sinless life. (2 Corinthians 5:21).

**5. Excerpt:** ". . . both our condition and its

cornerstone, sin, are somehow dreams.” (Page 5).

**5. Comment:** If the above were true, Jesus would never have gone to the cross.

**6. Excerpt:** “Healing our relationship with the world also heals our relationship with ourselves. We become innocent, peaceful and joyously happy.” (Page 6).

**6. Comment:** This is precisely the opposite of the teaching of Jesus. Jesus taught that to effect meaningful change *in the world*, man had to be changed within, so as not to be *of the world*. That is the way it has happened in my life. That’s the way it must happen for Jesus said, “The kingdom of God is within you.” [Luke 17:21 (b)].

**7. Excerpt:** “. . . the key to healing the human condition is within our grasp, within our own hearts and minds.” (Page 7).

**7. Comment:** *The key to healing the human condition is within our grasp* when we turn loose of self and turn to Jesus for salvation, which quickens (makes alive) man’s spirit and puts him in communion with the Lord who is the source of life. See 2 Corinthians 3:6.

**8. Excerpt:** Authors of The Course (or writers, as they claim), William (Bill) Thetford (1919-1988), Ph.D., a clinical psychologist at Columbia University who was an agnostic, and Helen Schueman (1909-1981), a clinical psychologist by training (Ph.D, 1957 from New York University) a self-professed “militant atheist,” attest that “for as long as two people ‘join in sharing one goal,’ God [through the Holy Spirit] will enter into their relationship, because He has been invited to come in . . . what difference does it make how the invitation is written?” Does the paper matter, or the ink, or the pen?...If any two are joined, He must be there.” (Page 9).

**8. Comment:** Two people can join in sharing a common goal and be nothing but pawns of the enemy, unless Jesus is Lord of both lives, and unless that common goal will glorify Him. See John 17:1 - 5.

**9. Excerpt:** Helen’s three months of startling visionary and psychic experiences included vivid mental images, both waking and sleeping...the most important images centered on a large black book...shown variously in an ancient treasure chest...a gold cross on it, or the word “Aesculapius” -- the Greek god of healing -- written on it. (Page 10)

**9. Comment:** Visions and dreams in the last days were prophesied to God’s servants in Joel 2:28 - 32. But Satan also has his counterfeit of such things through psychic phenomena. For example, because of

king Saul’s sin, the Spirit of the Lord departed from him and a distressing spirit from the Lord troubled him. Saul then so departed from God that he consulted a medium at En Dor to conduct a seance for him. Upon Saul’s request the medium brought up what I believe was a “familial spirit,” sometimes called a “familiar spirit,” who spoke to Saul. (1 Samuel 28:7 - 25). On three occasions, magicians of king Pharaoh, by the power of Satan, performed miracles equal to those performed by God through Moses. (Exodus 7:11, 22; 8:7). Dreams of Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing, is sufficient evidence for any mature child of God to identify a device of the enemy. Every effort to communicate with a spiritual entity or power other than that of God is expressly forbidden by God’s word. See Deuteronomy 18:9 - 12.

**10. Excerpt:** [Helen] “. . . was convinced that the author was Jesus, as The Course itself claims, and on one level she seemed to have a very deep and intimate relationship with him. Yet, consciously, there was extreme fear and resentment concerning Jesus.” (Page 12 & 13).

**10. Comment:** Intimacy with Jesus does not prompt fear and resentment, it prompts love. God is not the author of confusion. (1 Corinthians 14:33). The Holy Spirit pours God’s love into our heart, (Romans 5:5) and His perfect love casts out fear. (1 John 4:17, 18). The origin of fear and resentment concerning Jesus is of Satan and his devices.

**11. Excerpt:** “Because we believe that we have sinned, we feel that before we can be happy, before we can be close to God, we must right the scales of justice and pay for what we have done. Yet this, too, is a dream. We do not need to appease an angry God by paying for our sins. We are not truly guilty, we just feel guilty.” (Pages 19 & 20).

**11. Comment:** All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23; 5:12). The Bible states that Jesus had to *right the scales of justice* by paying the penalty for our sins with His sacrifice on the cross in order to redeem us. And that was not a dream. God’s anger is vented toward Satan, not man. God is angry with sin, not the sinner. His enemy was and still is Satan who deceived man and caused his downfall. God’s desire is that all should come to Him for salvation. (2 Peter 3:9).

**12. Excerpt:** “Sin, therefore, is an illusion. It is something we are psychologically incapable of performing. It has literally never happened. (Page 26).

**12. Comment:** Sin is not an *illusion*. It is

acting in disobedience to God's word. If sin never happened and if we are psychologically unable of performing sin, then the death of Jesus on the cross was a mistake made by God which is unthinkable to those of us who know Him.

**13 Excerpt:** "The key is to realize that the sin we see in the other is an illusion, a dream that hurts us, a laughable mistake." (Page 29)

**13. Comment:** See the comment #12 above.

**14. Excerpt:** "One day, in the distant future, the very fabric of time and space will unravel, the world will vanish, and we will be back in Heaven, with our Father, again." (Page 31).

**14. Comment:** The end time events according to God's calendar are the Rapture (1Thessalonians 4:16 - 18), the Tribulation (Revelation 7:14), the second coming of Christ (Zachariah 14:4; Acts 1:11), the millennial reign of Christ (Revelation 20:4) and the new heaven/new earth (Revelation 21:1).

**15. Excerpt:** "The Holy Spirit's temple is not a body, but a relationship." "When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter." (Page 32).

**15. Comment:** "Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?" (1 Corinthians 6:19).

**16. Excerpt:** ". . . there are many stories of people in fits throwing their [Course] books away, flushing them down toilets, throwing them in rivers, etc. Yet these very acts highlight one of the most interesting phenomena surrounding The Course, the tremendous power it has over people, its dynamic appeal. For who would be that angry with The Course unless they were taking it very seriously?" (Page 39).

**16. Comment:** When I finished reading the book, **An Introduction To A Course In Miracles**, I destroyed it. Not because I was in a *fit*, not because of its supposed *dynamic appeal* or because of its *power* over me, but because I consider the book to be in the category of that which is expressly forbidden by God's word. (See Deuteronomy 18:9 - 12). What I believe to be books of a similar nature were burned by new converts when the Apostle Paul was preaching at Ephesus. "And many who had believed [in Christ] came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver." (Acts 19:18, 19, brackets added).

**17. Excerpt:** "This book is clearly intended as

a kind of large-scale correction for the errors in mankind's spiritual systems, especially in the religion founded by Jesus himself." (Page 42).

**17. Comment:** This one statement should be enough to sound a warning to every born again Christian. The idea that an agnostic and a militant atheist believe that they can correct so called "errors" made by Jesus in establishing the Church is the most blatant lie from the enemy I have ever seen in print. From this writer's point of view, this is a good example of two people who were greatly misled and who have satisfied themselves with the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16, 17). I have no doubt that Helen Schucman heard a voice, but I believe the voice she heard was a *channeled message* (messages) from the same source as the witch (or medium) at En Dor to whom King Saul went in an act of disobedient desperation. (See 1 Samuel 28).

I could write pages of responses from the Bible, and from what the Lord has taught me personally, concerning the above seventeen excerpts. Here are a few other observations, with only a few bible references. The Kingdom of heaven is not an intellectual kingdom, it is spiritual and one gains entry by being born again, which is a Supernatural event, not a mental or intellectual process as The Course claims. When one is born again (John 3:5), it is then that the renewal of the mind begins (Romans 12:2). The mind is the battleground through which Satan gains entry to our body and is where battles are fought against him with spiritual weapons, not intellectual ones.

When Peter's mother-in-law was sick in bed with a fever Jesus didn't rebuke her mind, He rebuked the fever, in other words *He spoke to the fever* (Luke 4:39). Interestingly enough, the word "rebuke" is the same Greek word (*epitimaō*) Jesus used when He *rebuked* (calmed) the wind. I could give many other examples. Sin is not a dream, an illusion or a laughable mistake in ourselves or in others, that never happened, as The Course claims. Jesus didn't die for a dream or for an illusion or for something that never happened. Read the 5th chapter of Romans. There appears to be no mention in The Course of Satan, or of hell, which is just as real as Heaven, but not the one Helen and Bill write about. The fact that The Course apparently does not mention the necessity of the virgin birth, the cross, the resurrection and the efficacy of the blood of Jesus are major warning signs.

I can assure you that when there is "extreme fear

and resentment concerning Jesus” (see #10 above), *the origin of that fear and resentment is Satan!* The Holy Spirit I know manifests the Lord Jesus to one inwardly, as Jesus said, “For indeed the kingdom of God is within you.” Along with this manifestation of His presence, God’s love is poured into our heart through the Holy Spirit in such a real way that it is both humbling and exalting. (See Romans 5:5).

It is obvious that neither the agnostic, nor the atheist who wrote The Course, know the Lord Jesus personally. I do not doubt that either or both of these two experienced *psychic phenomena* and heard an *inner voice*, but it is my opinion that these occurrences were channeled messages from *familial* or *evil spirits*, not of the Holy Spirit. The scriptures and the occult world attest to such, “For false Christs and false prophets will arise and show great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.” This quotation of Jesus from Matthew and Mark concerns the “great tribulation” but I believe it to be applicable here as well.

I realize that in excerpting an Introduction of The Course, I run the risk of misunderstanding and misrepresenting the information by taking something out of context. However, it seems unreasonable that I would misunderstand or misrepresent everything listed in the above seventeen excerpts from the book.

The Course reminds me of what little I know of and what I have read about New Age, The Church of Religious Science and Unity, and it concerns me that there are Christians who accept this teaching as truth. There are gross misrepresentations in The Course about Christianity by two people whose information did not come from the Lord Jesus as they claim, but, in my opinion, came subtly from the enemy, whose work Jesus came to destroy. (1 John 3:8).

Jesus is our Lord and Savior, the One Who spoke this universe into existence, the Word Who became flesh and dwelt among men, Who died on the cross that we might have His Life, Whose blood atones for our sins, Who sits at the right hand of God with all power and all authority. The Lord Jesus I know will love you into submission, gloriously save you, and is the only One through Whom an abundant life is experienced. And He certainly *is not* the Jesus Helen and Bill write about.

The Bible is the inspired and infallible and authoritative written Word of God. God speaks to us today through His written Word, through the Holy Spirit and through His servants as inspired by the Holy Spirit. For this purpose in the Church, He has also

appointed apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. When God’s servants prophecy, what they say will not conflict with the written Word and will glorify Jesus, not Hinduism or Buddhism.

It is not the purpose of this paper to judge or criticize the two people who wrote The Course or the people who accept it as truth. The intended purpose of this paper is three fold: First, to point out that there are those who believe what the authors have written is new truth to be accepted without question. Secondly, to emphasize the subtlety of the enemy in what I believe to be the latter part of these *last days*. And thirdly, to recommend that it is expedient to bless and pray for those involved. Herein lies a call to wisdom. “For though we live in the world we are not carrying on a worldly war, for the weapons of our warfare are not worldly but have divine power to destroy strongholds. We destroy arguments and every proud obstacle to the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3 - 5, RSV).

Here are six additional Bible responses to claims made by The Course:

(1) Though The Course explains that man’s ego created the world, the Bible disagrees. See Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3, Colossians 1:16

(2) Though The Course teaches that man is still in heaven with God, Jesus said He was going to prepare a place for man. Hence man is obviously not already in heaven. See John 14:1-3.

(3) While The Course denies the reality of death, the Bible teaches that every person will die. See Hebrews 9:27.

(4) The Course claims Jesus’ body was an illusion. The Bible record, however, stresses the physical reality of Jesus’ human body. See John 1:14, 1 John 4:1-3.

(5) Sin is an illusion, according to The Course, but the Bible warns of sin’s reality and consequences. See Romans 3:23, 1 John 1:7-10.

(6) According to The Course, Jesus is not the only Savior. The Bible presents Jesus as the unique and only Savior of the world. See John 14:6, Acts 4:10-12, Acts 16:29-31.

. . . . more later, the Lord willing.