

A COURSE IN MIRACLES

by Edward R Hryczyk

The text of the book "A Course in Miracles" is the product of seven years of trance spirit channeling of a Mrs. Helen Schucman. The spirit that channeled a "new gospel" to Mrs. Schucman claimed to be Jesus Christ. The "spirit" made contact with her to correct errors in Sacred Scripture, and the teachings of the Church. The "spirit" that channeled through Mrs. Schucman wrote that Sacred Scripture was in error in teaching us that sin separates us from God, and that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross for our sins. The book "A Course in Miracles" contains a Text (the dictation's of Mrs. Schucman), a Student Workbook, and an Instructors Manual (1).

Mrs. Schucman, a Columbia University professor and psychologist, was an acquaintance of Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R. (seen on EWTN). Fr. Groeschel gave a eulogy at her funeral. Fr. Groeschel wrote (2), "This woman who had written so eloquently that suffering really did not exist spent the last two years of her life in the blackest psychotic depression I have ever witnessed." Fr. Groeschel is a holy, practical, wise, no nonsense priest, and psychologist. During an October 1994 lecture on "Discernment" given at Holy Cross Church, Rumson, N.J., Fr. Groeschel stated that he believed that Helen Schucman's experience with the channeled "spirit" was possibly a true diabolic manifestation. Fr. Groeschel's experience as a psychologist and priest included being called upon by his Bishop to investigate reported diabolic manifestations in his New York City diocese. In the lecture Fr. Groeschel described one experience - called as an exorcist - where he witnessed objects unexplainably being thrown about a room. At the end of a lengthy discussion he attributed that particular experience to paranormal manifestations - but not diabolic in nature (3).

Fr. Groeschel is not easily inclined to attribute any experience to the diabolic. The possible diabolic origin in the spirit channeling of Helen Schucman was one exception given by Fr. Groeschel. Fr. Groeschel's suspicions find support in Sacred Scripture. Helen Schucman's "channeled spirit" denies that our Lord Jesus Christ came to the earth in the flesh. An abstract of "the Course" can be written based solely on two lines of the "spirit" channeled writings. Chapter 8, Section VII, paragraph 7, page 152 states:

"The Bible says, "The Word (or thought) was made flesh." Strictly speaking this is impossible, since it seems to involve the translation of one order or reality into another."

Contrast the "spirits" channeled words to the inspired words of St. John (1 John 4:1-3):

" Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see

whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God. This is the spirit of anti- christ, of which you heard that it was coming, and now it is in the world already."

To further stress the assertion to a "student" of "the Course" that Jesus Christ was but an illusion the accompanying Manual For Teachers, page 87, Clarification of Terms, Section 5, "Jesus-Christ", paragraph 2 states: " The name of Jesus is the name of one who was a man but saw the face of Christ in all his brothers and remembered God. So he became identified with Christ, a man no longer, but one with God. The man was an illusion, for he seemed to be a separate being, walking by himself, within a body that appeared to hold his self from Self, as illusions do."

The "channeled spirit" was not from God.

On page 186 of the Text the "spirit" writes, "I do not bring God's message with deception, and you will learn that you always receive as much as you accept."

One does find truth in the writings of "the Course." The following quote would be humorous if it were not for the sad ending of Mrs. Schuc- man's life, and the influence "the Course" has had on thousands of individuals. Chapter 9, Section IV, paragraph 8, of the Text, page 170 states: "Anyone who elects a totally insane guide must be totally insane himself." Chapter 25, Section VII, paragraph 8, of the Text, page 533, again states: "It would be madness to entrust salvation to the insane."

The writing style of "the Course" is very confusing - but at the same time in some way intellectual and emotionally seductive. The writings may start with a beautiful, seemingly inspired truth and than will slowly drift to confusion - logically ending up with conclu- sions that are contrary to Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church.

The course is "Gnostic" in teaching and practice. The writings deny the reality of physical creation (4). The course acknowledges the need for a novice student to receive training in "the Course" by a teacher that has already received some enlightenment by studying "the Course." A separate teacher's guide forms part of "the Course." As with all "New Age" teachings, seminars are provided - for a fee - to help the individ- ual advance in spirituality.

Some of the beliefs, as written in "the Course" are:

a. REALITY: Reality is illusory.

(1.) From Manual, page 85, "The world you see is an illusion of a world. God did not create it, for what He creates must be eternal as Himself" (Manual, p85).

(2.) "And therefore all your sins have been forgiven because they carried no effects at all. And so they were but dreams" (Manual, p87).

(3.) "Forgiveness through the Holy Spirit lies in looking beyond error from the beginning, and thus keeping it unreal for you" (Text, p169).

b. CREATION/TRINITY: The writings teach that God and His creation are one.

(1.) "There is no separation of God and His creation." (Text, p147)

(2.) "If you are part of one you must be part of the other, because they are one. The Holy Trinity is holy because It is One. If you exclude yourself from this union, you are perceiving the Holy Trinity as separated" (Text, p146).

(3.) "Creation is your will because it is His" (Text, p196).

c. JESUS CHRIST'S ORIGIN: The writings state that Jesus Christ was created (made not begotten).

"God would not have us be alone because He does not will to be alone. That is why He created His Son, and gave him the power to create with Him" (Text, p150).

d. SALVATION: We do not need a savior. Salvation is nothing more than right mindedness. We are the source of our own salvation.

(1.) "Never forget that the Sonship is your salvation, for the Sonship is your Self. As God's creation It is yours, and belonging to you It is His. Your Self does not need salvation, but your mind needs to learn what salvation is." (Text, p200).

(2.) "My holiness is my salvation." (Workbook, Lesson 58, p97)

(3.) "My salvation comes from me. It cannot come from anywhere else."
..."My salvation cannot come from any of these things. My salvation comes from me and only me."....."My salvation comes from me. Nothing outside of me can hold me back. Within me is the world's salvation and my own." (Workbook, Lesson 70, p120)

(4.) "Whenever two Sons of God meet, they are given another chance at salvation." (Text, P142)

(5.) "We cannot be separated. Whom God has joined cannot be

separated, and God has joined all His Sons with Himself." (Text, p150)

(6.) "Yet all loss comes only from misunderstanding. Loss of any kind is impossible." (Text, p152)

(7.) "He will teach you how to see yourself without condemnation, by learning how to look on everything without it. Condemnation will then not be real to you, and all your errors will be forgiven." (Text, p168)

e. GOD: God is your identity, you will be like God.

(1.) "The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself. There is no separation of God and his creation." (Text, p147)

(2.) "God's Name is holy, but no holier than yours. To call upon his Name is but to call upon your own." (Workbook, p342)

(3.) "My decision cannot overcome yours, because yours is as powerful as mine. If it were not so the Sons of God would be unequal." (Text, p145)

(4.) "Our creations are as holy as we are, and we are the Sons of God Himself, as holy as He is." (Text, p150)

(5.) "God Himself is incomplete without me." (Text, p177)

(6.) "God is not jealous of the gods you make, but you are." (Text, p186)

f. SELF: We are sinless and are like God.

(1.) "My true Identity is so secure, so lofty, sinless, glorious, and great, wholly beneficent and free from guilt, that Heaven looks to It to give it light." (Workbook, Lesson 225, p403)

(2.) "You do not know yourself, because you do not know your Creator. You do not know your creations because you do not know your brothers, who created them with you.... He is the co-creator with God and you." (Text, p137)

(3.) "Glory to God in the highest, and to you because He has so willed it." (Text, p141)

(4.) "What God and His Sons create is eternal, and this only is their joy." (Text, p148)

(5.) "God does not contradict Himself, and His Sons, who are like Him, cannot contradict themselves or Him. Yet their thought is so powerful that they can even imprison the mind of God's Son." (Text,

p149)

(6.) "God gave you the function to create in eternity." (Text, p168)

g. LAST JUDGMENT: Have no fear of God's Judgment

"Do not fear the Last Judgment, but welcome it and do not wait, for the ego's time is "borrowed" from your eternity."..... "The Second Coming is the awareness of reality, not its return." (Text, p170)

In dealing with individuals who teach and follow "the Course" one must realize that they probably believe they are truly seeking God in their studies of "the Course." Those trying to follow the teachings would consciously reject all evil. Unfortunately, their beliefs are "Gnostic" and they probably consider a Catholic's devotion to the Faith, given to us by our Lord Jesus Christ, as unenlightened medieval superstition to be rejected by all in this enlightened "new age." The teaching's in "the Course" are particularly attractive to individuals who have fallen away from the faith and find themselves seeking some- thing to fill their spiritual void.

Reading Sacred Scripture is nourishment for the soul, since the words have been inspired by the Holy Spirit. Taking the words of "the Course" into one's heart will lead to a slow spiritual death. It is a book to be avoided at all costs. Unfortunately celebrities such as John Denver have been taken in by the book and have spread its influence.

NOTES:

(1) The quotations are taken from "The Course in Miracles", published by the Foundation for Inner Peace, P.O. Box 1104, Glen Ellen, CA 95442, second edition, second printing, August 1992.

(2) Page 79 of, "A Still, Small Voice, A Practical Guide On Reported Revelations", by Fr. Benedict J. Groeschel, C.F.R., Ignatius Press 1993

(3) For an good discussion of the para normal see Fr. Groesch- el's video series "Religious Experiences", distributed by the Daugh- ter's of Saint Paul.

(4) The Spiritual Counterfeits Project, SPC Journal, Vol 7, No 1, 1987 analyzes the teaching found in "the Course" in an article by Dean C. Halverson, "A Course in Miracles, Seeing Yourself as Sinless." The SPC claims to be a non-denominational evangelical Christian organization; the organization has demonstrated an anti-Catholic bias in its recent publications.