

KINGDOM BIBLE STUDIES

"Teaching the things concerning the kingdom of God..."

FROM THE CANDLESTICK TO THE THRONE

Part 42

THE CHURCH IN PERGAMOS

“And by the angel of *the church in Pergamos* write...” (Rev. 2:12).

The third church was the church in Pergamos. Pergamos means “elevated,” such as a citadel, tower, or an earthly elevation. This is a description of the situation of the city of Pergamos, high upon a mountain. Spiritually it stands for pride, worldliness, love of worldly things, power, pomp, fashion, money, organization, and control. These are the things the overcomers in THE PERGAMOS CONDITION must overcome!

Pergamos was one of the most beautiful cities of the ancient world. It was famous for its almost perfect weather, and was called the city of eternal spring. All who came there loved the weather because it was so consistent all year-round. It seems that almost everywhere you go where there is the combination of scenic beauty and perfect weather you find a lot of cults situated there, just as today you find them in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sedona, and many other of the most picturesque cities of the world. That is exactly what you had in Pergamos! Pergamos was the seat of more different religions than any other city of the ancient world.

Mark Anthony came to visit Pergamos quite often because of its great natural beauty, and another frequent visitor was Cleopatra. Because of the perfect weather she would come there at certain times of the year and remain for a season. She was an avid lover of books, and with access to the vast library of Pergamos she devoted much of her time to reading. She remarked to Mark Anthony once how much she loved the library that was there in the city of Pergamos, so he sent a troop of soldiers and shut the whole place down, took the entire library of more than 200,000 volumes, loaded it onto a ship, and shipped it to Alexandria, Egypt as a gift for her. Alexandria already had one of the most famous libraries of the ancient world, and now it was a double library! What a man will do for the love of a woman — I suppose we will never understand!

The city was noted for its pagan religions and many heathen temples. Famous shrines of the gods dominated the skyline of this great religious center. The great altar dedicated to the chief Greek saviour-god, Zeus, was located in front of the temple of Athena which stood one thousand

feet up on the conical hill where Pergamos was situated. The altar was 123 feet long, 113 feet wide, forty feet high, and covered with elaborate carvings. It stood on a projecting ledge of rock and looked exactly like a great throne on the side of the hill with a dominating view of the valley for at least twenty miles each way. Lorain and I visited Pergamos a number of years ago and walked over the ruins of that once great and beautiful altar of Zeus.

There was also an altar to Athena, patron goddess of Athens. Emperor worship was practiced in Pergamos, its first temple being erected in 29 B.C. Citizens were required to burn a pinch of incense at the foot of Caesar's statue, honoring him as a god. Those who refused to do so were immediately arrested and imprisoned. They also worshipped Dionysus, the god of vegetation, and Aesculapius, the god of healing. Should my reader wonder why I am sharing all this history with you, it will become clear later on in this study of the church at Pergamos.

THE TWO-EDGED SWORD

“And by the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith He which hath the *sharp sword with two edges*” (Rev. 2:12).

We must turn our faces to the Lord of all the called out elect and see Him standing in the midst with the *sharp sword with two edges* — not to destroy us, but to circumcise our hearts and minds. Too often the sword we attempt to use has only one edge, and it is so dull that it does not penetrate the heart and soul, for it is the sword of the *letter of the word*. I have heard many preachers talk about “getting out their swords” and they used them from the pulpit to cut people to pieces. But our Lord is arising in His chosen ones in this hour as the *living word*, and *that* sword is living and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Heb. 4:12).

The sword of the Lord is not a blade of steel, dripping with the blood of His hapless victims, but the two-edged sword of His living word of truth which proceedeth out of His mouth. Therefore, the new and greater ministry of the sons of God in the kingdom of our Father is a totally spiritual ministry which functions on the level of the **creative word of God**. And to participate in that new and greater kingdom ministry, we will have to become more spiritual, we will have to be anointed of God to hear, be quickened by, and speak in the authority of, the anointed word of our Father for this new kingdom Day! The kingdom of God will subdue all things by a *living word* of power and authority!

The two-edged sword of the Spirit cuts in both directions. The word for sword here in the Greek speaks of the Roman sword of the day. It was a new and great invention! The Roman sword was short, it had two edges both of which were sharp, and it had a sharp point. It was light weight, anyone could carry it. When it first came out it was one of the biggest jokes of the ancient world. All of the pirates and all of the barbarians carried big swords, heavy swords, ornate swords, swords that often had to be carried over their shoulders. The handle was so large you could put both hands on it because you needed it to swash powerfully enough to take off five or six heads with one swing. Of course, by the time you swung around to cut off five or six heads any thinking

man could duck and you'd miss them all. You would then have to reposition your hands to grab it again and regain control of it in order to swing in the opposite direction.

The simple thought was: the bigger and heavier the sword, the more powerful it is. But the truth is, the most effective sword is one that you can handle! The lighter the weight, the shorter it is, the smaller it is, the easier it is to manage and the swifter you can move it. Someone was very brilliant who designed the Roman sword! The Roman sword was short; it was only about eighteen inches long. It had two sharp sides instead of one, and it had a sharp point at the end. There were other swords that had a sharp point, but they were thin for stabbing. Still others were heavier, but had only one sharp side, necessitating an adjustment after every swing in order to swing again in the opposite direction. But the Roman sword was so simple you could stab with it, cut in both directions, and its weight never threw you off balance.

THIS IS THE DEEP SIGNIFICANCE OF THE SHARP SWORD WITH TWO EDGES — this is the kind of sword the word of God is! The word of God doesn't have just one good point. Some people think it does — that's all they preach, just *one good point*! You will hear that one good point — the same message — every Sunday morning. Many churches preach a "salvation" message every Sunday. The saints are starving for bread and meat to grow on, but all they get, week after week, is milk. That's all they know. Some only preach against sin. Others only preach water baptism. Still others preach only the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Some preach healing and miracles. Others preach revival. Still others preach prophecy and end-time events. Some people think the sword of the Lord cuts in only one direction, so they only cut in one direction. There is no balance in their word! Either it's all love and no judgment, or it's all judgment and no love. But the sword of the Spirit cuts both ways! This is the sword of the One who walks between the candlesticks! This is now becoming the sword of every son of God!

The two-edged sword has a side of blessing, encouragement, life, and glory; but it also has the side of correction, judgment, purging, processing, and refining. It divides between soul and spirit, it brings the sharp discernment of the mind of Christ to separate between what is of the soul — our own mind, will, emotion, and desire — and what is of the mind and will of the spirit. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, is not the sword of the dead *letter of the word*, not a mere doctrine, but it is the *living revelation* of Christ within! God is delivering every son in this hour from the heavy, cumbersome sword of man-made creeds and doctrines, and is raising up within us the two-edged sword of His living word for this great day of the Lord! This is being accomplished by the living instruction of the Holy Spirit! Aren't you glad!

SATAN'S THRONE

"I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where *Satan's seat is...*" (Rev. 2:13).

The typical and symbolic church at Pergamos was dwelling where Satan's throne was located. The Greek word is clearly "throne," but the translators of the King James Bible softened it down to "seat." Let us not be afraid of the phrase. It is Satan's **throne**! A throne in the book of

Revelation occurs frequently as the symbol of dominion, as the center whence the authority of the king emanates throughout his entire kingdom.

It is my conviction that our thoughts and comments about Satan should always be tempered with the wonderful truth that he has absolutely *no power* over a saint of God who dwells in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus! Therefore, as we discuss Satan, we recognize this truth above any other regarding Satan. Further, although we use the pronouns “him” or “he” when referring to Satan, we know “he” is not a singular person, but is the evil *spirit* that works in and through the carnal minds of the children of disobedience. It is not our purpose to magnify Satan or to give him undue recognition. Yet, we who are in Christ should know that we are engaged in spiritual warfare! It is our Father’s purpose, through the mighty, conquering power of Christ in His body, to defeat every enemy, entity, and power in all realms of man, the earth, and all the unbounded heavens. Christ is bruising Satan under *our feet!* (Rom. 16:20). Satan is one of the enemies, along with sin and death, that is being defeated, first in the lives of God’s elect, and ultimately in all of creation. With this purpose in mind, we present the following thoughts.

The Holy Spirit declared that “Satan’s throne” was located in the place where the church in Pergamos dwelt. Let us understand this mystery! First, let me give you the location of Pergamos. The modern city of Izmir, which was ancient Smyrna, is the great city where tourists go because the airport and the hotels are there. You go about sixty-five miles south to reach Ephesus and about seventy miles north to reach Pergamos. These three were, in New Testament times, the *royal cities*, and they vied with one another. Smyrna (Izmir) was the great *commercial* center, Ephesus was the great *political* center, and Pergamos was the great *religious* center.

Satan’s throne was established in Pergamos, that is, the center of cultic worship. This religious system had been started in Babylon, but was captured by the Persians in 539 B.C., who put a stop to this religious system. Soon its priesthood moved out of Babylon, making their way to Pergamos, and the religion found a new home in Pergamos. Pergamos became the headquarters, as it were, for this pagan system. Through the worship of Caesar, Zeus, Dionysus, Aesculapius, and other pseudo gods, Satan had firmly established his *throne* in Pergamos! He set up his operation in the center of learning and the healing arts, along with idolatry, controlling peoples’ souls, bodies, and spirits. This was Satan’s throne in the *typical* city of Pergamos!

“Even where Satan’s throne is” reveals that *religion* was big business in Pergamos and that Satan’s headquarters were there! Not that Satan’s headquarters were actually in Pergamos, *per se*, but the ruling power of Satan *is in religion*. This ought to settle the question for those who think that Satan is in hell at the present time! He has never yet been in the hell men talk about. But he *does* have headquarters, and we may think his headquarters are in the drug world, in the sex and pornography industry, in the military establishment, in the harlot’s house, in terrorist organizations, in the bar-room, in Hollywood, in gangs, murderers, and child molesters. Not so! These all represent the *works of the flesh*, not the power of Satan! In John’s day the Holy Spirit used the symbol of Pergamos, the center of *religion*, to identify the location of Satan’s throne! The great fact is just this: wherever the centers of *religious systems* are, there you will find Satan’s throne!

Without doubt the most powerful god of Pergamos was Aesculapius, the Greek god of healing. Aesculapius was known as *the god* of Pergamos. His chief symbol was a serpent. This licentious and debased worship included a huge serpent in the temple and a serpent image on many of the coins of the city. Aesculapius was to Pergamos what Artemis was to Ephesus, or Apollo to Delphi. Aesculapius was the god of healing. There was a great temple-hospital which could be compared at that time to our modern hospitals of today. People flocked from all over the then known world to seek cures for their ailments and diseases. Pergamos has been called “the Lourdes of the ancient world.” Galen, the Greek physician, was born in Pergamos. He was second only to Hypocrites in the medical history of the ancient world. The most famous title of Aesculapius in the Greek tongue was “Aesculapius Soter” or “Aesculapius the Saviour.”

When we visited Pergamos we walked amid the ruins of the vast temple-hospital with its great columns lining the broad avenue. It was here that the well-known symbol of the medical profession — a serpent twined around a staff — was the dominant symbol of the god Aesculapius. It was the Mayo Clinic of that day. It was, first of all, a *temple* to Aesculapius. People were healed there by having a “sleeping encounter” with serpents! Terrence Kelshaw has chronicled for us the history of how the pagan cult worship worked and especially that at the temple-hospital of Aesculapius in Pergamos. He writes:

“A sacred road, common in Hellenistic times, connected the city of Pergamos with Aesculapian (the temple-hospital area), and this road has now been excavated. As you walk along it, the tall columns indicate where the shops used to be on either side of the road. This colonnade leads to a large square, which used to be the temple of Aesculapius. It was 120 feet high, and around the walls were paintings depicting the god of healing at work. Right in the center of the room, beneath a domed roof, stood one piece of furniture. It was a short, round, stone pillar standing four feet high and carved on the side with two intertwined snakes. The top of the stone was slightly concave and a small fire burned there continuously. This was the altar to the god Aesculapius.

“Visitors were met here by a priest and obliged to buy a measure of incense, which was to be deposited upon the flames as a votive offering of trust in Aesculapius. A slave then led the patient through huge brass doors into a large park skirted about with colonnaded walks on all sides. Across the far side of this villa was the sacred pool, with priests in attendance, and the patient was taken there and invited to step down into ankle deep water. The priest ascertained the nature of the illness and then began to determine the ‘votive offering’ for healing. This meant bartering with the patient to find out what price was willing to be paid to appease Aesculapius and secure the healing. If it was enough, then water would flood into the pool. If it was not, only a trickle would appear.

“Effective healing was possible (but not guaranteed) only if the water rose to waist level. The first sum discussed was never enough! Bargaining would continue until a price was reached that was satisfactory for the god to send enough water into the pool. Unknown to the patient, a priest, hiding on the other side of the pool and listening to the process, was lifting or dropping a subterranean slab of stone that allowed a spring to feed water into the pool. The higher the price, the sooner Aesculapius sent water!

“Treatment began with sessions of psychotherapy suggesting that healing was an already established fact. Once a positive-thinking attitude was established, the patient was given a sacred mud bath and then transferred to the herbal bath where a strong drug vapor was inhaled. When sufficiently sleepy from the drug effects, a long walk along the *whispering corridor* would lead to the temple of Telesphor, a round building with six large alcoves in which were already a number of sleeping patients. Some would have been there for days, heavily drugged, and the new patient would collapse into an alcove and join them, his head fuzzily aware of heavenly voices singing and pronouncing healing in the name of Aesculapius. He had been aware of those voices since he entered the underground corridor.

“But what was not known was that the voices came from priests who were whispering softly down long shafts at ground level. It was a semiconscious, not unpleasant, floating experience of well-being, in which the ‘heavenly voices’ were welcome partners. In this temple there were snakes. In the night the semi-conscious sufferer might be touched by one or more of these snakes as it glided over the ground on which he lay. The touch of the snake was held to be the touch of the god himself, and the touch was held to bring the healing. Once the drug wore off, the patients made their way back to the villa, where more positive-thinking psychotherapy took place, which might be followed by a further sacred mud treatment or convalescence at the villa. There were gardens in which to walk, a library, or one could simply relax on the covered terraces” — end quote.

It will dismay some for me to say it, but the ancient serpent religion of Aesculapius has reappeared in our day, not in the same form, but out of the same demonic realm of deception. Let me explain to you the mystery. In the summer of 1965 an atheist psychologist (remember the psychotherapy at Aesculapian?) in New York City by the name of Helen Schucman began to hear an “inner voice.” As the voice persisted Helen began to take a sort of cosmic dictation from “the voice” and this voice gave her distinct and clear direction on things she was to write. By this process of “channeling” over a period of seven years the well-known book, *A Course in Miracles*, was born. With more than 1,200 pages, a royal blue cover and gold-stamped lettering, the book looks like a Bible, even laid out in chapters and verses. This resemblance is intentional. After all, the Course claims as its author the central person of the Bible, none other than Jesus Christ Himself!

Before Helen Schucman began writing *A Course in Miracles* she began to have what she refers to as “higher visual imagery” or dream sequences. She began to experience this with considerable clarity. One of these sequences involved being in a boat. Helen herself relates the incident. “The boat was moving slowly, but easily, along a straight little canal. There was just enough breeze to help the boat along. I wonder if there is buried treasure here, I thought to myself dreamily; I shouldn’t be surprised if there were. Then I noticed a long pole with a large hook on the end lying on the bottom of the boat. Just the very thing, I thought, dropping the hook into the water and reaching the pole down as far as I could. The hook caught something heavy, and I raised it with difficulty. It was an ancient treasure chest, well worn from the water and the bottom covered with seaweed. There was nothing in the chest but a large black book like the spring binders used to hold manuscripts or papers together. On the spine one word was written in gold — **AESCULAPIUS**. The word was familiar but I couldn’t remember what it meant. I found that it was the name of the Greek god of healing. I saw the same book once more a few nights later, this

time there was a string of pearls around it.” The black book stood for the revelation given in *A Course in Miracles*!

Can we not see by this that *A Course in Miracles* is inspired by the same spirit of darkness that birthed the ancient healing cult of the pagan god Aesculapius! I have the book in my library. While it does contain many thoughts that *appear* to correspond closely to kingdom and sonship truths, it is actually a New Age book and it is my conviction that it is the “voice of a stranger.” I have also a video tape which is a promotional introduction to *A Course in Miracles*. At the time this video was made Dr. Kenneth Wapnick was the president of *The Foundation for A Course in Miracles*. In an interview on the video Dr. Wapnick gave an enlightening overview of the book. In this interview he explained about *A Course in Miracles*: “It is given in a Christian context, but it’s a Christianity that **has nothing to do with the Jesus of the Bible.**”

Note, precious friend of mine, he does not say that the Jesus who spoke in Helen Schucman and dictated *A Course in Miracles* is not the Jesus of *tradition*, or the Jesus of *religion*, or the Jesus of the *church systems*, or the Jesus of *Mystery Babylon*. Oh, no! He states plainly and unabashedly that the Jesus of *A Course in Miracles* is **NOT THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE!** The question follows — if this Jesus who dictated *A Course in Miracles* is not the Jesus of the Bible, then which Jesus is He? I do not doubt for one moment that he is the Jesus the apostle Paul spoke of when he said, “But I fear, lest by any means, as the *serpent* beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth *another Jesus, whom we have not preached*, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted...such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel: for *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works” (II Cor. 11:3-4, 13-15).

Another clue to the origin of this book is found in the fact that the Jesus of *A Course in Miracles* speaks through an unconverted atheist — not through holy apostles and prophets! Helen Schucman did not meet the Jesus Paul met on the Damascus road, she did not meet this Jesus in a saving, redeeming, regenerating experience by the Holy Ghost! She makes no confession of being washed from her sins in the precious blood of Jesus! She received no baptism in the Holy Spirit! She does not testify to *any* New Testament experience of salvation, justification, redemption, sanctification, or regeneration! She discovers only her own “inner voice” of the god already incarnate in her unregenerated spirit — revealed by a Jesus who is **NOT THE JESUS OF THE BIBLE!**

Now, her experience did not begin with the preaching of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. It began with *dreams* while she was still an atheist! In her first remarkable dream she retrieved from the canal a book, the name of which was AESCULAPIUS — the Greek god of healing! Not the book of Yahweh, not the testimony of Jesus Christ, not the word of God, but the book of the pagan deity of healing whose symbol was — guess what? **The serpent!** His healing powers are reflected in the meaning of the Greek form of his name, *Asklepios* — “the strength-restorer.” But consider the meaning of the Latin form of his name, *Aesculapius*. It means, literally, “the man-instructing serpent.” Now we see a significant tie-in! The serpent who seeks

to *teach mankind* is first found, of course, in the third chapter of Genesis, where he seduced our first parents! It is none other than the great adversary, the great *religious adversary*, even “that ancient serpent, called the devil and satan, who deceives the whole world” (Rev. 12:9). In mythology, Aesculapius was believed to be the child of the Sun, and thus the “enlightener” of mankind. He was often represented in art by a serpent or as an old man holding a staff around which a snake is entwined.

Can we not see by this that the book Helen Schucman retrieved from the canal stood for the revelation she was about to receive, which revelation, obviously, was inspired by the very same personage who taught mother Eve her wonderful revelation in the garden of Eden! Though the Course talks about Christ, the Holy Spirit, the atonement, and prayer, it comes to dramatically different conclusions than the Bible. In several places the book even offers commentary on biblical scriptures, or as the Course states, “the upside-down thinking of the New Testament.” Some of this “upside-down thinking” regards the crucifixion, and how, according to the Course, “the apostles often misunderstood it.” Again and again the Course disputes the gospel preached by the apostles, elevating its own revelation above the Bible. As one teacher of the Course put it, “Jesus did not suffer and die for our sins.” This idea flagrantly contradicts the word of God: “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God” (I Pet. 3:18). Thus, *A Course in Miracles* is a perversion of the central message of the gospel! For those who have never met Jesus in a saving experience this book is one thing. They do not know the gospel! But for those who treasure the beautiful hope of sonship to God to believe it, is another matter!

I am going to tell you plainly, accurately, and precisely what *A Course in Miracles* is all about. You see, beloved, all the gods of the pagans were *overcome* by the gospel of Jesus Christ! That is why the temple of Aesculapius is lying in ruins today, as are nearly all the pagan temples of the ancient world! I have seen them in Rome, in Greece, in Turkey, and in other nations of the world. The Lamb overcame them, for He is King of kings, and Lord of lords! They could not withstand the power and authority of the name of Jesus! Their myths, their lying signs and wonders, their deceiving oracles, their perverse and licentious rituals, their corrupt priesthoods were no match for the power and demonstration of the Holy Spirit that was poured out upon the world through the ministries of the apostles of Jesus the Christ. Oh yes, God poured out the Spirit from the very throne of the heavens and a power and authority smote the false, demonic gods of the heathen that swept their abominations from the earth!

And now, in this hour, the greatest hour since the early church, when the Lord is preparing the firstfruits of His redemption, the manchild birthed from the womb of the true church, the manifest sons of God to set creation free — that wily serpent of old, in order to *get back* at the holy seed, has manifested himself again as he did to Eve in the garden, appearing as an angel of *light*, the demon spirit of Aesculapius, impersonating the very person of Jesus the Christ, in his subtle effort to prevent the birth of the manchild, to deceive, if it were possible, the *very elect*! I have known many who received the call to sonship with joyful hope and expectation who have since been turned aside by this insidious delusion. That is why it arose in the earth at this specific time of *our* generation! It is part of the ancient serpent’s effort to destroy the promised seed! And now, my beloved, as Paul Harvey says, **YOU KNOW THE REST OF THE STORY!**

AESCULAPIUS was *the god* of Pergamos — Satan's throne! And Satan's throne, ever since the serpent started his religion with Eve when he hissed, "Hath God said? God doth know!" is still in all the false forms of carnal, man-made religion, even so-called Christian religion! Adam and Eve died because the religious realm to which they subscribed through the tree of the knowledge of good and evil *sounds like a deeper revelation* but in reality HAS NO LIFE!

In the *typical* and *symbolic* church of Pergamos, Satan's throne was situated in the city of Pergamos which means "strongly united, elevated, height, citadel." Spiritually, Satan's throne is in the **high places of the carnal mind** — even the **religious mind**! "I know where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." I know where you dwell, where you are comfortable in your religious system, where you are satisfied to settle down and comfortably remain. I know that you love the pageantry, the beauty, the forms, the sacraments, the rituals, the programs, and activities. But that place where **you dwell** is **Satan's throne**!

The firstborn Son of God understood this very clearly by the mind of the Father. He never condemned the prostitute, the fornicator, the tax-gatherer, the thieves or murderers. He never demonstrated holy anger against the Romans, the world, or the wicked. It was the *religious leaders* that He denounced! His anger was focused on the hypocrisy of the so-called carriers of God's word! He condemned those who appeared clean on the outside, but inside were full of greed and wickedness! Those who gave tithes and fasted and prayed and loved the best seats in the synagogue to be seen of men, He rebuked! Those who distorted the word of God, who turned the truth of God into a lie, who misrepresented the nature of His Father, and loaded people down with religious burdens and obligations, He called a generation of *vipers* — a brood of *snakes*!

Let us UNDERSTAND! We blame war, drunkenness, pornography, greed, crime, immorality, drugs, and a thousand other evils on Satan — yet the clear testimony of scripture is that these are all the "lusts of the flesh" and the "works of the flesh." They are *flesh*! On the other hand, Satan's activity is in a *religious realm*, in a *spiritual dimension*! What a cunning deception has been foisted upon mankind as Satan has concealed his true identity in the dark shroud of **religion**! Oh, yes, Satan is religious! The ultimate test for God's sons will be right there! There is a realm, a realm high in the spirit, a realm reserved for the sons of God — and before any of us step from our wilderness of testing to appear as a manifest son of God in the earth, we will meet Satan there *in that high realm of the spirit*. It is in the heavens of God's Spirit that the manchild encounters the great dragon! That is what the temptation of Jesus was all about in His wilderness experience. He wasn't being tempted to lie, cheat, steal, cuss, or commit adultery. Oh, no! "If thou be the Son of God" do thus and thus. To Eve he said, "Hath God said? Why, God doth know...your eyes will be opened, and you will be as God!" A *high revelation* in a *high realm of the spirit*. That is what Adam's fall was all about! Adam did not fall from grace, he fell from SONSHIP! And it was a *supposed* HIGH REVELATION IN A HIGH REALM OF THE SPIRIT that caused the fall. Eve was *deceived*! There is a very *fine line* between the highest truth and the darkest error, between divine sonship to God and our own self-godhood as taught by all the streams of what is today called "New Age."

We see this principle clearly in the story of Job. "Now there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them" (Job 1:6). May I reverently add that *every time* the *sons of God* present themselves before the Lord —

Satan comes *also among them!* Can you not see the mystery? It bespeaks of a condition within these sons — *our* mind vs. *His* mind, *our* will vs. *His* will, *our* ways vs. *His* ways. It is a heavenly place within the sons of God wherein we must be tested to show whether we be sons indeed. Until every son has been completely perfected and thoroughly tested in all realms of flesh *and* spirit, it is not possible for the sons of God to come and present themselves before the Lord without Satan coming *also* among them! Does he not walk in the carnal understanding of every man?

It is written, “And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence cometh thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro *in the earth*, and from walking up and down *in it*” (Job 1:7). Now the Lord’s questions are never for His own enlightenment. He knew well whence Satan came! Oh, yes, Satan had been “walking to and fro throughout the earth” — God knew this — for he walks in *our earth*, even that earth which *we are*, from the east to the west, from the north to the south, from sea to sea and from pole to pole he walks in the earthly places, in the fleshly motions of our bodies, in the high thoughts of our minds, in the secret places of our hearts; he travels up and down in us from the heights of our heavens to the depths of our hells, for the dust is his habitation. The firstborn Son of God met Satan, not the Satan wearing a red suit, with horns and a pitchfork, but the Satan that spoke out of His innermost thoughts and aspirations concerning His sonship, “If I am the Son of God why don’t I just command these stones to be turned to bread! I can do anything I want, any time I want! Why don’t I cast myself down from the pinnacle of the temple — that will show everyone who I really am!” Jesus overcame that wily devil *in that high realm of the spirit within Himself* and when He came to the cross He was able to say, “The prince of this world cometh, and *hath nothing in me.*” In that blessed day a Son of God was at last able to present Himself before the Lord, and Satan *did not* also come with Him!

All the way to glorification this inner antagonist is present. This is why every revival that God has sent through the ages ended in apostasy. Satan — not the devil with horns and a pitchfork — but that inward devil of fleshly wisdom, carnal understanding, sense-knowledge, soulish zeal, and spiritual pride has a subtle way of identifying himself with every move of the Spirit of God, so as to corrupt it from within. Many years ago F. J. Huegel wrote: “Students of the great Welsh revival (1900 — 1903) say that the wonderful stream of divine life little by little lost its saving efficacy, as another stream from a very different source, naturally very filthy, began to mingle with the river of the water of life proceeding from the throne and from the Lamb. ‘Again there was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan came also among them.’ Beware of false fire. Beware of counterfeit glow. When the *soulish* takes the place of the pure working of the Holy Spirit, you have a ‘revival’ whose fires, though they purport to be from heaven, are more likely to be from hell.”

From the mists of the long ago Eden we read, “Now the *serpent* was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” (Gen. 3:1). The word “serpent” in our language comes from the Latin *serpo* meaning “to creep,” but the Hebrew term has no relation to the form or motion of any external attribute of a serpent. The word used here for serpent is the Hebrew word *nachash* which is a primitive root meaning “to hiss or whisper.” It, furthermore, means “to search or scrutinize closely, to find out by experiment, to practice divination, augury, incantation, or enchantment.” According to Webster incantation means “the chanting of special words or a formula in magic spells or rites.” Incantation may speak in addition of hypnotism. The serpent,

then, is a HISSER, a WHISPERER, a DIVINER, an EXPERIMENTER, an ENCHANTER, a MAGICIAN, and a HYPNOTIST! And all this activity takes place from *within*! Now we understand how it was so easy for mother Eve to be *deceived*! The “inner voice,” as with Helen Schucman, *sounded* so plausible, so reasonable, so *spiritual*, so *divine* — it just *had* to be the word of the Lord! It *had* to be the *very highest truth*! She was enchanted, hypnotized, mesmerized — by this *high revelation*!

We do well to consider also the word translated “subtil” in this passage. “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field.” The Hebrew word for “naked” in Genesis 2:25 is *arom*. The English word that describes the serpent’s nature is “subtil,” and the Hebrew word for this *arum*. Both *arom* (naked) and *arum* (subtil) are derived from *aram* which means “to be *bare*, to be *cunning*.” Hebrew scholars say that originally these three words were the same word. Now, why should the expression “naked” and the term “cunning” be the same word? What is the connection? We can answer with only one word: SEDUCTIVE. By way of illustration, a *naked* woman may be a *seductive* woman! There is a close connection between the two. The ideas of *naked* and *cunning* come together in the word SEDUCTIVE or SEDUCE. Can we not see by this that the serpent was actually more *seductive* than anything in the bestial realm! Ah, when Satan transforms himself into an *angel of light*, he is the *most seductive* thing in the world!

There was a wonderful tree set in the midst of the fragrant garden in Eden called the Tree of Life. God had given man the right to eat of that tree and in eating of it, man would possess eternal life. The simple truth is, however, that man did *indeed* eat of that tree! When one reads carefully, it becomes evident that the Tree of Knowledge of which man ate was *also* in the midst of the garden! Two trees in the middle! Thus, the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge are ONE AND THE SELFSAME TREE! They are *two sides* of the same tree! They are *two dimensions* of the word of God! The Tree of Life is “the *spirit* that giveth *life*.” This is the word of God on the level Jesus spoke of when He said, “The *words* that I speak unto you, they are *spirit* and they are *life*.” Then we have also “the *letter* that killeth.” BOTH are the word of God! The Tree of Knowledge, the *letter* of the word, is God’s word — but it *kills*! “In the day that ye eat thereof, ye shall surely *die*!” The Tree of Life, the *spirit* of the word, is the word of God which *quickeneth* — *makes alive*! Oh, the mystery of it!

The Tree of Knowledge and the Tree of Life is just the difference between *law* and *grace*, between *ritual* and *reality*, between *facts* and *truth*, between *doctrine* and *revelation*, between *shadow* and *substance*! Every son of God walks in the garden of God and is called to confront this tree. It is there that we must understand the difference between the voice of the Lord God walking in the midst of the garden, and the enchanting, beguiling, hypnotizing, deceiving *hiss* of the serpent!

It is there, in the Tree of Knowledge that Satan has his throne! It is the kingdom of religion, it is the voice of the stranger. It is there that the sons of God are called to *overcome*! It is not just the flesh and sin that must be overcome, it is all the negative spiritual realm found in the seven churches that must be put under our feet! And, blessed be God! To God’s called and chosen elect He says, “I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan’s seat is: and thou holdest fast my *name* (*nature*), and hast not denied my faith.” What a testimony! I believe

that is the word of the Lord to many who read these lines. Press on, dear ones, the spiritual perfection that wins the prize incomparable at the end of the race lies just before us!