

VENUS, the DRAGON and LUCIFER

19th Degree Essay

By

David E. Amstutz, KCCH

Valley of Richmond
Orient of Virginia

August 22, 2008

General Comment Concerning the 19th Degree Lecture

A comparison of Albert Pike's 19th Degree lecture as published in his *Magnum Opus* and *Morals and Dogma* reveals three interesting facts. First, statements concerning America, and heralding Washington and his lasting impression on the American people in the *Magnum Opus* (p. XIX í 9) were replaced with statements in *Morals and Dogma* (p.313) that reflect the American Civil War.

Second, the last complete paragraph in *Morals and Dogma* (p.320) marks the end of the 19th Degree lecture in the *Magnum Opus* (p. XIX í 12). Pike may have been distracted by the difficult times when he wrote the additional materials for *Morals and Dogma*. For example, he writes: "The Seven grand monuments called the Wonders of the World, were the magnificent Commentaries on the Seven lines that composed the Pyramids, and in the Seven mystic gates of Thebes." Aside from the horrible editing, are we to understand that seven lines compose a pyramid? There are eight lines, not seven; and at least three, and not more than five, can be seen from anywhere at ground level.

Third, the Lucifer statements found in *Morals and Dogma* were part of the new material added to that published in the *Magnum Opus*. On the surface of things it would seem to have been unnecessary and perhaps unfortunate that Pike added the Lucifer statements.

Introduction

The *Apocalypse (Book of Revelation)* identifies the dragon with evil, the serpent, the Devil and Satan (Rev. 20:2). The Latin word Lucifer is not found in the *Apocalypse*, which was written in Greek. Worse perhaps, in the *Apocalypse* the morning star is associated specifically with Jesus Christ (Rev. 22:16).

Lucifer had come into common usage well before Pike's time as a word for Devil and Satan; allowing Pike to appear to error twice. First, because Lucifer is not a name from the *Apocalypse*; and second, the word Lucifer as a name for evil had not yet earned the stature of being made light of, as Pike appears to be doing. Elsewhere in *Morals and Dogma* (p. 102) Pike has used Lucifer more correctly, as we will see below: "í , brother of the Ancient Serpent, and the Light-bearer or Phosphor, of which poets have made the false Lucifer of the legend." Hutchens (p.269) attributes these two statements by Pike (p.321 and p.102) concerning Lucifer to Levi's *History of Magic*. Obviously though, Pike seems to know that his use of Lucifer in the 19th Degree is incorrect. This entire matter may be clarified if we go back in time and examine word usage.

Background

The beginnings of the incorrect usage of Lucifer date back more than a thousand years before Pike. And even before then, the word lucifer and its association with light is

found in the Latin language of Rome. But the beginnings of this matter date to times well before the Romans and involve more than the occult Devil. The planet Venus is actually involved in all of this.

Sumerians

The Sumerian civilization marks the beginning of history, for to them is attributed the first written language. Among many, many other things, the Sumerians recorded names for the planets and stars. The Sumerian name for Venus was Inanna. This name, Inanna, was changed by the Assyrian civilization to Ishtar.

The Sumerians were excellent observers and record keepers. They knew the orbit of Inanna and its proximity to the sun. Thus they were well aware of the fact that Inanna was west of the sun when it was observed as the morning star, and east of the sun when it was the evening star. The planet spends about nine months in each of its morning and evening star locations, and is lost in the glare of the sun while transitioning between the two. The transitions are not of equal duration (one week versus seven weeks) due to the difference in its position with respect to earth and sun. There is a factor of six in the difference between the minimum and maximum distances between earth and Venus (Harding, p.115). The total length of the cycle of Venus is 584 days. Venus is never up all night (Krupp, p.12). The planet's name, Inanna, was of course the same regardless of its morning or evening star position. Inanna was the third brightest object in the heavens and was even displayed by the Sumerians, as an eight pointed star on their boundary stones.

Ancient Greeks

The ancient Greeks too, knew of the planet Venus. And the Greeks were beneficiaries of the Sumerian records which had been handed down and added to by the Assyrian civilization. The Greeks however were not content with using a single name for the planet; instead, they named Venus, Phosphoros when it was positioned a morning star, and Hesperos when it was in its evening star position.

Beginning of Current Era

John of Patmos wrote the *Apocalypse* near mid-first century (62 ó 69 A.D.). The only reference to a specific planet, by its name, is to Venus when it is positioned as the morning star, using the name: morning star. John of Patmos uses the name morning star in reporting what he was told: "I am the root of and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star." (Rev. 22:16)

The Devil, Satan and the serpent are words used by John of Patmos to name evil (Rev. 20:2). The word Lucifer is not found in the *Apocalypse*.

Rome

The Romans applied the one name, Venus, to the planet in recognition of their mythological goddess of love. In Latin, the language of Rome, the word for light bearing is *lucifer*. From Webster's (1984), (*lux*, light + *ferre*, to bring); the word *lucifer* took the additional meanings, much later, of friction-match, and when capitalized, the archangel expelled from heaven. In the *Apocalypse* evil was expelled from heaven by the archangel Michael (Rev. 12:7-8).

Fourth Century

St. Jerome, an early church Father, produced a Latin translation of the Bible named the *Vulgate*. Hutchens (p.234) states that St. Jerome used the earliest available Greek and Hebrew versions, along with earlier Latin versions. We don't know exactly how matters transpired but we know the consequences. The Latin word *Lucifer* was given to represent the Greek name, *Phosphoros*. E.B. (14, p.462) identifies a possible two part source of the error to be: (1) Isa. (14:12), which translates the Hebrew epithet -shining one applied to the king of Babylon, as: "O day-star, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, the Babylonian king had fallen from his high estate to Sheol; and, (2) The words ascribed to Jesus in Luke (10:18): "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven."

By coupling these two phrases from Isaiah and Luke, the church Fathers made *Lucifer* equate with Satan. Pike (1871, p.321) reminds us that these things happen: "traditions are full of Divine Revelations and Inspirations; Although the word *Lucifer* is not used in the Greek or Hebrew works, St. Jerome apparently thought differently and, as Hutchens (p. 269) reports, the association stuck. So from then on we have *Lucifer* and the morning star erroneously linked.

Seventeenth Century

John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, contained the word *Lucifer* and the connection between *Lucifer* and Satan. This work was well known to Albert Pike as evidenced by its influence shown in *Morals and Dogma* (Hutchens, p. 298).

Nineteenth Century

Albert Pike knew the word was not to be found in the *Apocalypse*. He also knew that the association between Venus as morning star and Satan was not correct or a misrepresentation that quickly had taken on what were to be epic proportions.

Summary

Albert Pike may be identifying (highlighting) a certain disregard for the work credited to the authors of the *Vulgate*. If so, he is also making light of the Divine Inspiration (his capitalization) which he implies had influenced St. Jerome and possibly other church Fathers. A more subtle piece of evidence that may support this interpretation of Pike's thinking is revealed by the four exclamation points he used in the short paragraph; one actually appearing within a sentence!

Summary Explanation of Pike's Passage

The passage (paragraph) in *Morals and Dogma* associating the *Apocalypse*, Lucifer and the morning star reveals three things:

First, Pike held the *Apocalypse* in the high regard that it has earned ó a masterpiece of literary work, so challenging for interpretation as not to be thoroughly understood even unto this day. One important subject of the *Apocalypse* deals with evil (the Devil or Satan), for which Pike uses the word Lucifer.

Second, Pike all but tells us how the first incorrect identification of Lucifer with Satan was made.

Third, Pike points us to the absurdity of the association between the morning star and Satan.

Those who were qualified to read *Morals and Dogma* in the late nineteenth century knew well the meanings of evil and morning star as they are used in the *Apocalypse*, as well as the statements quoted above from Isaiah and Luke. And these readers knew of John of Patmos' abhorrence for deceit. No doubt there was a great deal of misrepresentation and fraud displayed in the newspapers and books published then (during and shortly after the Civil War); as there are today! Pike included this paragraph in *Morals and Dogma* (adding it to what he had written in his *Magnum Opus*) to make this point, and to emphasize that even the clergy were not immune from error and even misrepresentation.

Albert Pike has shown us that with enough inspiration we can become vulnerable to our own creations.

References

Encyclopedia Britannica (1955)

Harding, Arthur M. (1935) *Astronomy*, Garden City Publishing Company, Inc., Mineola, N.Y., 386 pp.

Holy Bible (1901) [Revised 1881-1885, Newly Edited by the American Revision Committee, 1901] Thomas Nelson and Sons, New York, N.Y., 1064 pp.

Hutchens, Rex R. (1993) *A Glossary to Morals and Dogma*, Supreme Council, 33°, A.A.S.R., S.J., USA, 538 pp.

Krupp, E.C. (1983) *Echoes of the Ancient Skies*, Dover Publications, Inc., Mineola, N.Y., 386 pp.

Pike, Albert (1857) *Magnum Opus* [Pike's first version of the esoteric work and lectures of the Scottish rite], Kessinger Publishing [www.kessinger.net]

Pike, Albert (1871) *Morals and Dogma*, [New and revised edition of 1950, published in 1962] Supreme Council of the Thirty-Third Degree, Washington, DC, 861 pp.

Webster's II Dictionary (1984) {New Riverside University Edition} Riverside Publishing Company, Boston, MA, 1536 pp.