

Spiritual Fellowship Journal

for Students & Believers in the Revelation of the Urantia Papers

Volume 12, Number 1

Spring & Summer, 2002

The Inner Life Challenge

Joan Batson Mullins

The Priceless Opportunity ... The Joy that Knows No Bounds

Tom Choquette

More Lessons from the Birds and Bees

*(and other Living Things ... Such as How Dee Hock's
"Revolutionary" Organizational Model was Inspired by Nature)*

Merlyn Cox

The Scientific Integrity of *The Urantia Book*

Denver Pearson

The Infinity of God

an Astronomical Approach

Bud Bromley

The Real Gospel

Norm Du Val

The Turning Point - Part II

Arthur Nash

Creative Outreach · Great Urantians - Lest We Forget : *Peggy Johnson* · Interface

The Spiritual Fellowship . . .

“Can we really imagine a church where authority and power are shared by all the participants, where neither financial gain, nor power, nor prestige are of any real importance; where human resources are valued above all else; where, at times, anyone might be the leader, regardless of their title; where people are so bound by a clear purpose that they are held together despite all their obvious disparities and different needs, and march, as it were, in the same direction, toward the same goal, even though everyone knows it cannot possibly be achieved in our lifetime?”

MERLYN COX

The provocative question proposed above by Merlyn Cox in his article, *More Lessons from the Birds and Bees* in this edition of *The Fellowship Journal*. Merlyn's vision is one of a religious organization such as the world has never seen. Meredith Sprunger in his "Creative Outreach" column likewise suggests a religious organization that has never been seen before ... one based upon the teachings of the Urantia Papers. Each of these Urantians has a unique vision of what this religious organization will look like, what it will do, and how it will serve. The melding of ideas such as these will form the shared vision that will unite Urantians, because creeds divide, and goals unite.

To this end, the directors of The Spiritual Fellowship, and the Urantians who have taken early roles in this great enterprise, ask for your prayers. We also need your ideas and your energy. The challenges of forming a religious organization such as the world has never seen are formidable. And those who attempt this momentous task with us "*will doubtless live and die without realizing [they] are participating in the birth of a new age of religion on this world.*" Even so, if you feel the call to join us, please do so. You may be one of the new Urantian leaders who have something to say that this day and this generation needs to hear.

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Spiritual Fellowship Journal

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Editorials

4

**The Greatest Thing Richard Feynman Ever Wrote
Ordination at Boulder ... a Day to Remember**

Interface

The Mix of Joy and Discouragement Merlyn Cox

6

"So it is this mix of joy and discouragement that seems to be the lot of those blessed with finding *The Urantia Book* and bound by honesty and good will, if not a clear sense of calling, to seek to share it with others."

Articles

The Inner Life Challenge Joan Batson Mullins

9

"The great battle is more often won or lost, day by day and minute by minute in the arena of the human mind. And it is here, in the *present moments* of our daily living, where we are most challenged in our inner lives."

The Priceless Opportunity ... The Joy that Knows No Bounds

Tom Choquette

16

"Service or ministry is the essence or fragrance of the Spirit. She is a wonderful lady and the spark of all that is life. She is represented on this planet by our local Universe Mother Spirit, and Her energy and nurturing are everywhere. To me She represents the way of Joy. It is through Her, and Her needs that I have been blessed with unlimited opportunities to serve. . ."

More Lessons from the Birds and Bees

(and other Living Things ... Such as How Dee Hock's "Revolutionary"

Organizational Model was Inspired by Nature) Merlyn Cox

20

"In nature Dee Hock found there are countless examples where organisms adapt quickly to their surroundings, work with others, even those they compete with, in a kind of symbiotic relationship, not necessarily knowing what everything else in the system is doing and not needing to know—a kind of blending of self-interest and other interest at the same time."

The Scientific Integrity of *The Urantia Book* Denver Pearson

24

"It doesn't stand to reason that the revelatory mandates encouraged the placing of inaccurate science and cosmology in a revelation that was designed to 'reduce confusion by authoritative elimination of error'"

The Infinity of God - an Astronomical Approach Bud Bromley

28

"Incredibly huge as this known universe is, God created it, God sustains it, God fills it, inhabits all of it; and yet, God is probably incomprehensibly greater than even this immense chunk of which we know. "

The Real Gospel Norm Du Val

30

"The gospel that Jesus taught was that information which would satisfy our deepest spiritual hopes, needs and desires..."

The Turning Point - Part II Arthur Nash

33

"If nations, communities, individuals, were only living by the great principle which, glibly enough, has come to be called the Golden Rule, what a different world this earth would be!"

Features

Great Urantians - Lest We Forget: Peggy Johnson

5

Creative Outreach - Dr. Meredith Sprunger

6

Living the Teachings Groups

8

Editorials

The Greatest Thing Richard Feynman Ever Wrote

Unless you are a science buff, the name Richard Feynman (1918 - 1988) may not ring a bell. He was one of the great physicists of all time. Feynman's passion for physics was legendary; his taped lectures are sold today in popular bookstore chains. Feynman was one of the key scientists involved with the Manhattan Atomic Project, and his theory of quantum electrodynamics (QED) is generally considered the most successful and accurate scientific theory ever developed.

Feynman wrote several books that remain in print. His best for the lay person is usually regarded as: *Six Easy Pieces, a primer on quantum physics*. Yet, his greatest written pronouncement, in my judgment, has rarely been noted. Passionate Urantians should pay it heed.

John Gribbon tells the story in his brilliant book, *Schrödinger's Kittens and the Search for Reality*. (See "Books of Significance" in this issue). A colleague of Gribbon, Marcus Chown, was a student of Feynman at CalTech. He asked Feynman to explain to his (Chown's) mother why physics is important. Feynman wrote her a letter to put things into perspective. Feynman told Chown's mother not to worry about the significance of her son's work. "Physics is not important," Feynman wrote, "love is."

In our own passion for advocating the Urantia Papers, this statement should be our guiding principle. When we can say: "the Urantia Papers are not important—love is," we will have reached the operative level of understanding the gospel of Jesus. Obviously the issues surrounding the Urantia Papers are not important (in relative terms) either, love is. For love is the greatest thing in the universe.

"To finite man truth, beauty, and goodness embrace the full revelation of divinity reality. As this love-comprehension of Deity finds spiritual expression in the lives of God-knowing mortals, there are yielded the fruits of divinity: intellectual peace, social progress, moral satisfaction, spiritual joy, and cosmic wisdom. The advanced mortals on a world in the seventh stage of light and life have learned that love is the greatest thing in the

universe—and they know that God is love." [648]

I find this idea a reminding factor to help me keep things in proportion. Of all the spiritual values, Goodness is the only one that cannot be practiced in a vacuum. One can live integrity and Truth apart from the world. One can practice excellence or beauty in isolation ... but not Goodness or Love. While it would be an oxymoron to say: "Jane (or Bill, or whomever) is not important—love is, it is completely correct to weigh any material object, or concept, or concern against Love and find it to be relatively unimportant.

Paul referred to this same principle in his eloquent comments in I Corinthians:

"Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not Love, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could move mountains, and have not Love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not Love, it profiteth me nothing."

Did someone say, "Ah, but my life is so mundane, my opportunities to bestow my love are so limited. If only I could go where great things are being done?"

I saw a movie several years ago which featured a great woman. She is gone now. She was an old lady even then. In one scene she stood among the elite of the planet to receive the Nobel Prize. Stooped and clothed in a faded blue sari and worn sandals, she looked fragile among the grandiose surroundings. What did this servant-leader say to us? Mother Teresa said on that day:

"We cannot do great things. We can only do ordinary things with great love."

Peace will surely come to the world when a critical mass of people strive to honor those words.

L.M.

Ordination at Boulder ... A Day to Remember

On a bright Colorado afternoon in June, The Spiritual Fellowship conducted its first worship service at the historic "Old Main" building on the campus of the University of Colorado. During the

service, The Spiritual Fellowship also conducted the ordination of Dr. Meredith Sprunger as its first minister. The essence of Dr. Sprunger's ordination address, in which he sketched out his vision for The Spiritual Fellowship, can be read in his column in this publication, *Creative Outreach*.

It was an emotional day in the red brick Old Main building. Those of us who have known Dr. Sprunger are aware of his long held dream for a spiritual fellowship of Urantians driven by the religious principles of the Urantia Papers. I suspect his mainstream career as a minister in the United Church of Christ would have been much smoother had he avoided any leadership roles in the Urantia movement.

However, it was the vision of Dr. Sprunger to interface the teachings of *The Urantia Book* with the Christian church. To this end, he has long sought to develop a religious organization based upon the Urantia Revelation. With the institution of The Spiritual Fellowship, a bold step has been made in that direction. Perhaps, one day the prophetic hope expressed by the Urantia Papers will come true:

"The time is ripe to witness the figurative resurrection of the human Jesus from his burial tomb amidst the theological traditions and the religious dogmas of nineteen centuries. Jesus of Nazareth must not be longer sacrificed to even the splendid concept of the glorified Christ. What a transcendent service if, through this revelation, the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions! Surely the Christian fellowship of believers will not hesitate to make such adjustments of faith and of practices of living as will enable it to 'follow after' the Master in the demonstration of his real life of religious devotion to the doing of his Father's will and of consecration to the unselfish service of man. Do professed Christians fear the exposure of a self-sufficient and unconsecrated fellowship of social respectability and selfish economic maladjustment? Does institutional Christianity fear the possible jeopardy, or even the overthrow, of traditional ecclesiastical authority if the Jesus of Galilee is reinstated in the minds and souls of mortal men as the ideal of personal religious living? Indeed, the social

readjustments, the economic transformations, the moral rejuvenations, and the religious revisions of Christian civilization would be drastic and revolutionary if the living religion of Jesus should suddenly supplant the theologic religion about Jesus." [2090 - par. 3]

L.M.

Great Urantians

Lest We Forget

PEGGY JOHNSON

It is rather difficult to think of Peggy Johnson without also thinking of her husband of 51 years, Dick. They were always together, or so it seemed, at Urantia conferences and activities. Peggy embarked upon the great universe adventure on February 23, 2002. Her graduation from Urantia was celebrated on St. Patrick's Day, March 17, at the Johnson's home in Phoenix, Arizona. There was a potluck, songs, and ceremony to bid her farewell.

It is also difficult to think of Peggy without thinking of the Arizona community, and the dedicated work for the Father she and Dick have undertaken over the years.

Their spiritual journey together was centered upon, but not confined to, their study of the Urantia Papers. Peggy and Dick hosted the second oldest study group in Phoenix. They both have been very active in AA, and they helped start the nation's oldest continuous shelter for abused families, *Villa de Fidelis* (House of Faith). Perhaps more important than a list of activities, Peggy did not simply read *The Urantia Book*, she *lived the teachings*.

The Spring issue of *The Servant*, the Grand Canyon Society's Newsletter, was devoted to touching tributes to Peggy. Those folks who knew her best wrote:

"Peggy will be sorely missed in the lives of many. Words can't begin to express what a wonderful, giving person she was. She was an inspiration to friends and family alike. The years will pass slowly now for those who mourn her loss. We look forward to seeing her on our Father's Mansion Worlds."

L.M.

Interface

by Merlyn Cox

The Mix of Joy and Discouragement

Recently one of the members of a local study group introduced his new pastor to *The Urantia Book*, a practice he has exercised for many years. The pastor seemed to show genuine interest, unlike most of his predecessors. He is a fellow pastor that I recently met and lives not far away, and I rejoiced at the thought that he might discover this amazing resource—in truth, a revelation.

Of course I've learned over the years not to let my expectations soar too high. Only a few of those, including close friends that I felt were ready and open and with whom I shared the book, took more than a passing interest. Their reaction often turned to puzzlement and dismay, and occasionally even put a strain upon what I thought were enduring and unshakable bonds. Most of us have experienced this many times, and it may have slowed down our once unbounded enthusiasm and left us more than a little cautious.

Nevertheless, occasionally the book at least gets passed around and real interest emerges in new and surprising ways. Just the thought of someone discovering what we've discovered is enough to cause our hearts to leap for joy.

So it is this mix of joy and discouragement that seems to be the lot of those blessed with finding *The Urantia Book* and bound by honesty and good will, if not a clear sense of calling, to seek to share it with others.

I think it is something we need to be both wise and naive about—wise as serpents, and innocent as doves, as it were. We must be wise about the obstacles to belief and even open inquiry, and yet able to present it to people without investing ourselves too much in the outcome.

It's not always easy to do, just as it isn't easy to keep plugging away at goals and dreams that are so desirable, but whose realization may lie far in the future—such as TSF. We try to do well what is in our power to do, and wait patiently for the unfolding of things in God's own way.

There is one clear and immediate and

unshakable source of joy that is always there, however, and that, of course, is the book itself. There is no end to the continuing growth, the serendipitous joy, the refreshment of our souls that emerges when we engage its witness.

The second is like unto it: the joy and satisfaction of not just talking about the book and seeking to share it with others, but seeking to live out the truth and Good News we find there—to love others and bestow our lives in self-forgetful service, and rejoice that we are a part of God's family here on earth as well as in the eternal realms.

This, of course, is the point of the revelation to begin with, and it is a source of endless encouragement and joy in what often seems a barren and lonely vigil.

There is one more thing: keeping in touch with others who know the special joy, and seeking to encourage each other as fellow sojourners in our common effort.

May God strengthen us and give us the grace to do all of these.

Merlyn Cox

Merlyn Cox is a pastor serving in the North Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. He has been a Urantia Book reader for 18 years, and worked with Meredith Sprunger in initiating the Spiritual Fellowship Journal in 1991, and served for ten years as associate editor. He is currently chairman of the Education Team for The Spiritual Fellowship.

Creative Outreach

Toward Spiritual Fellowship

Meredith J. Sprunger

The most distinctive contemporary development of religion in our world is the advent of the ecumenical movement and the unprecedented search for meaningful spiritual experience. This expanding quest for spiritual guidance and direction has taken many forms. The theologian, Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923), observed that all religions are relative—that is limited, partial, and incomplete. The historian, Arnold

Toynbee (1889-1975), examined all of the religions of the world and pointed out that there is a common core and goal behind all religions. The psychiatrist, Carl G. Jung (1875-1961), in an in-depth study of religions found that there is a common psychic origin and function among religions. These and other scholarly studies of religion set the stage for the contemporary ecumenical movement.

Paul F. Knitter's book, *No Other Name? ... A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes Toward the World Religions*, is one of the most insightful present day discussions of the ecumenical basis of religion. Dr. Knitter reminds us that Jesus established a theocentric (religion of Jesus) foundation of religion rather than a Christocentric (religion about Jesus) basis of religion. He points out that all religions could profit from the insights and experiences of other religions. The last chapter of Professor Knitter's book entitled, "The Challenge of Interreligious Dialogue," makes an eloquent argument for the development of a Global Theology.

Stemming from this new pluralism in theology over the past quarter century or more, Lonnie D. Kliever's book *The Shattered Spectrum, A Survey of Contemporary Theology*, observes that the kaleidoscope of new theologies that have appeared in recent times defy classification under the old categories. Professor Kliever believes that radical changes will take place in the form and content of religion in the future: "In such crisis circumstances, the search for and conversion to a new worldview can and does occur. Such a breakthrough depends upon finding some new organizing metaphor or shared paradigm through which to re-view and re-shape the world." (p. 197)

The authors of the Urantia Papers have given us such a new spiritual paradigm that will bring a renaissance of religion on our world. Evidence of the changing nature of religion and the searching attitude of people is seen in the Congregational Life Survey funded by the Lilly Endowment and the Louisville Institute. In April of 2001, nearly 300,000 worshippers filled out questionnaires answering questions about their church attendance and religious convictions. Nearly one quarter of

them switched congregations in the past five years. But only 7 percent of newcomers had no earlier involvement with a faith community which suggests that only a small number of the unchurched are looking for traditional religious affiliation. A great number of people are searching for a more meaningful spiritual experience. In the February, 2002 issue of the *Atlantic Monthly*, an article, "Oh Gods!" by Toby Lester says that the new century will probably see religion explode—in both intensity and variety. New religions are springing up everywhere and old ones are transforming themselves dramatically.

The Fullness of Time

The stage is set for the advent of a new spiritual vision that will transform our society. Our world has been prepared by:

- The birth of the ecumenical movement.
- A recognition that a global understanding of religion must be theocentric.
- A proliferation of new theological approaches to

spiritual experience.

- An unprecedented searching for a more meaningful view and experience of spiritual Reality.
- A realization that our world needs a "new organizing metaphor or shared paradigm that will reshape the world."

The Fifth Epochal Revelation, in my opinion, is the only resource that has the spiritual vision and power to fulfill these longings and aspirations of our human condition. The history of religion shows that spiritual value systems are always established by some kind of religious organization. The Spiritual Fellowship is the first religious organization designed to carry the Fifth Epochal Revelation to the indigenous communities of the world. While we must always keep in mind that God is the end and all other things are means, there is a danger in forgetting that it is the means that are instrumental in getting to the end. When using terms like "church" or "fellowship," there is a danger of getting bogged down in semantics—a religious organization is also a brother/sisterhood.

New religions are springing up everywhere and old ones are transforming themselves dramatically...

The stage is set for the advent of a new spiritual vision that will transform our society.

The social dynamics of a religious organization are basic in carrying the religion of Jesus to the grass roots of the world.

The worldwide mission of The Spiritual Fellowship is to teach, motivate, empower, and support all people in their growing relationship with God and to encourage their loving service to humankind. We believe that every religion of our world can identify with this mission. As we establish Fellowships in the grass roots of every nation and culture, gradually the spiritual vision of the Fifth Epochal Revelation will become known and this vision will eventually transform human society.

This outreach ministry will not be easy. It is not for timid souls. It is difficult for balanced, solid citizens to risk being viewed by their neighbors and friends as “different” or belonging to some strange cult or movement. Pioneers always face difficulty and hardship. New and enlarged presentations of truth have always been, and will always be, attacked by religious traditionalists and fundamentalists. The history of spiritual growth shows that not until an enlarged vision of truth is attacked and its pioneers persecuted does it come to the attention and make its appeal to the significant number of creative seekers for spiritual truth in society—“Happy are they who are persecuted for righteousness’ sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” [1571]

Let us be numbered among those pilgrims who “have learned to feast upon uncertainty, to fatten upon disappointment, to enthuse over apparent defeat, to invigorate in the presence of difficulties, to exhibit indomitable courage in the face of immensity, and to exercise unconquerable faith when confronted with the challenge of the inexplicable. In liaison with God, nothing—absolutely nothing—is impossible.” [291]

Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger is the founder of The Spiritual Fellowship, the first religious organization based upon the Fifth Epochal Revelation. He is the founder and Editor Emeritus of the Spiritual Fellowship Journal. On June 30, 2002, in Boulder Colorado, Dr. Sprunger was ordained as the first minister of The Spiritual Fellowship.

Living the Teachings Groups

A significant amount of interest in starting a home Living the Teachings Group has been generated among Urantia Book readers recently. Below is an excerpt from one of our “Living the Teachings” booklets.

Some of us began to believe sometime ago that ordinary study groups do not cultivate the inner life. Reading groups seem to be developed around “head knowledge.” We began to wonder if this was enough and had the feeling of dissatisfaction with our regular study groups. Something was missing.

We could talk about the teachings of the Master in study groups, and most of us knew the Urantia Papers fairly well. But study groups did not seem to change the lives of those who attended. We came to believe that very few of us were living the teachings of the Master on a significant level.

Intellectually, we thought we knew about the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. But even this knowledge—that which is “of the greatest value” to humankind—in and of itself was not enough. We knew about this religious life, but we did not, in a sense, “own” it.

We came to believe that we needed more than the knowledge and philosophy about the Master’s religious life. We decided we wanted to *experience* that religious life ourselves, and try to actually live it. We needed to live the religion of Jesus.

The group we now call Living the Teachings set about to learn and define the religious life of Jesus, and to discover how he lived it. We then sought to apply these ideas to our own lives.

We discovered this process to be a mutual adventure, yet one that is profoundly personal and ongoing. More and more we discovered ourselves gravitating toward a religious belief. But not a religious belief like any we had known before. It was more a personal religious belief that addressed the inner life of each individual. We began to discover what the Papers call “the religion of personal experience...”

L.M.

The Inner Life Challenge

by Joan Batson Mullins

Imagine you're about to embark on a much anticipated voyage. It's a glorious day and everything is in order. You unfurl the sails and are ready to get underway. But nothing happens. Your ship doesn't move forward. You wait, you drift around in circles, and you wait some more. There's something holding you in place: tethers submerged that must be hoisted up from the deep. This is one of the profound challenges of the inner life.

As more and more of us are looking to the inner life in order to "increasingly grow in the ability to *feel the presence of God*" [1733], we find that great spiritual minds have engaged in this quest long before the Urantia Papers. One of these was Francis Fenelon of the seventeenth century, who wrote a book entitled *The Inner Life*.

"If you really look into the state of things between God and your soul, you will find that there are certain limits beyond which you refuse to go in offering yourself to Him... We move continually in a vicious circle round self, only thinking of God in connection with ourselves, and making no progress in self-renunciation, lowering of pride or attaining simplicity. Why is it that the vessel does not make way? Is the wind wanting? No; The Spirit of Grace breathes on it, but the vessel is bound by invisible anchors in the depths of the sea. The fault is not God's, it is wholly ours. If we will search thoroughly, we shall soon see the hidden bonds which detain us. That point in which we least mistrust ourselves is precisely that which needs most distrust." *Spiritual Letters of Archbishop Fenelon*.

I find that this excerpt adds fresh insight into the following two passages in the Urantia Papers: "Mind is your ship, the Adjuster is your pilot, the human will is captain. The master of the mortal vessel should have the wisdom to trust the divine pilot to guide the ascending soul into the morontia harbors of eternal survival. Only by selfishness, slothfulness, and sinfulness can the will of man reject the guidance of such a loving pilot ..." [1217] "Almost every human being has some one thing

which is held on to as a pet evil, and which the entrance into the kingdom of heaven requires as a part of the price of admission." [1802]

Perhaps we are anchored and we don't even know it. Could we be circling around a self-seeking desire? The rich man standing before the Master was confronted with his pet evil, a decision he wanted to avoid. Is this what happens when we try to free our ship and push forward to the great goal of human existence—to achieve communion with God within us? In order to free ourselves we must make decisions. "Man consciously grows from the material toward the spiritual by the strength, power, and persistency of his own decisions;..."[1282]

*Perhaps we are anchored
and we don't even know it.
Could we be circling around
a self-seeking desire?*

"The success of your Adjuster in the enterprise of piloting you through the mortal life and bringing about your survival depends not so much on the theories of your beliefs as upon your decisions, determinations, and steadfast *faith*." [1205]

**Is the Wind wanting?
Or is the fault wholly ours?**

Before we examine the next quote from the Urantia Papers, keep in mind its uncommon use of the word "differential." One definition is as a "gear permitting the rotation of two shafts at different speeds, used on the rear axle of a car to allow different rates of wheel rotation on curves." Think of our choice/decision/determination acting as the differential that modulates the speed and amount of our human capacity to receive the limitless amount of God's spiritual presence that is always available.

"The determiner of the differential of spiritual presence exists in your own hearts and minds and consists in the manner of your own choosing, in the decisions of your minds, and in the determination of your own wills. This differential is inherent in the freewill reactions of intelligent personal beings, beings whom the Universal Father has ordained shall exercise this liberty of choosing. And the Deities are ever true to the ebb and flow of their spirits in meeting and satisfying the conditions and demands of this differential of creature choice, now bestowing more of their presence in response to a sincere desire for the same and again withdrawing

themselves from the scene as their creatures decide adversely in the exercise of their divinely bestowed freedom of choice. And thus does the spirit of divinity become humbly obedient to the choosing of the creatures of the realms." [150]

In other words, the more we increase our rate of choosing God's will, the more God rushes in to fill that desire. And the same is true in reverse: our insincerity restricting the free flow of God's presence. Therefore, it is our "freewill reactions" minute by minute, thought by thought, decision by decision, that determines our spiritual progress, stagnation, or regression.

"The fluctuations of the Father's presence are not due to the changeableness of God. The Father does not retire in seclusion because he has been slighted; his affections are not alienated because of the creature's wrongdoing. Rather, having been endowed with the power of choice (concerning Himself), his children, in the exercise of that choice, directly determine the degree and limitations of the Father's divine influence in their own hearts and souls. The Father has freely bestowed himself upon us without limit and without favor." [46]

Releasing the Invisible Anchors

So the Wind is not wanting, and we have some choices, decisions and determinations to make in order to get underway. One of our decisions may be to do a thorough search for the invisible anchors of our pet evil. Besides the obvious pet evils, Fenelon has suggested that we look at what we most trust in ourselves. I trust my forgiving nature, but when I honestly search my heart I find a cargo-hold of resentments. The Urantia Papers point out that "Your inability or unwillingness to forgive your fellows is the measure of your immaturity, your failure to attain adult sympathy, understanding, and love. You hold grudges and nurse vengefulness in direct proportion to your ignorance of the inner nature and true longings of your children and your fellow beings. Love is the outworking of the divine and inner urge of life. It is founded on understanding, nurtured by unselfish service, and perfected in wisdom." [1898]

We may need to search our hearts that we are not holding on to any resentments—that we have forgiven everyone, and then "maintain a conscience void of offense." [1736] I have found that some resentments—and ones I thought I had already forgiven—are like barnacles, they must be periodically powered-off with God's love and guidance.

"Jesus taught that sin is not the child of a defective nature but rather the offspring of a knowing mind dominated by an unsubmitive will. Regarding sin, he taught that God *has* forgiven; that we make such forgiveness personally available by the act of forgiving our fellows. When you forgive your brother in the flesh, you thereby create the capacity in your own soul for the reception of the reality of God's forgiveness of your own misdeeds." [1861]

Adventuring on the High Seas of Soul Struggle

Once we are out of the harbor, we enter into the high seas of soul struggle. Here is where we must learn not to resist the leading of Spirit, not to try to go our way, but God's way. Here is where many of us are stuck, constantly going off course choosing our own will, not trusting God, deciding by our own human nature, giving in to temptation, indulging in selfishness, laziness, immaturity, and emotional reactions. Here is where we learn the difference between wholehearted desire to do the will of God and our halfhearted efforts.

"Never forget there is only one adventure which is more satisfying and thrilling than the attempt to discover the will of the living God, and that is the supreme experience of honestly trying to do that divine will." [1732]

At some time, we may find ourselves surrounded by a dark night—where we lose our footing and tumble into the sea. As we're sinking into the lower depths of our human nature, if we but implore with a Godward glance, the Universe Mother Spirit will reach down into the isolating blackness and help us get back onboard.

"The religion of the spirit means effort, struggle, conflict, faith, determination, love,

I have found that some resentments—and ones I thought I had already forgiven—are like barnacles, they must be periodically powered-off with God's love and guidance.

loyalty, and progress....Tradition is a safe refuge and an easy path for those fearful and halfhearted souls who instinctively shun the spirit struggles and mental uncertainties associated with those faith voyages of daring adventure out upon the high seas of unexplored truth in search for the farther shores of spiritual realities as they may be discovered by the progressive human mind and experienced by the evolving human soul.”[1729]

On the high seas of soul struggle, we may often feel we have lost our bearings. A mist clouds our contact with our Pilot and it seems that we are separated and drifting. At these times: “The Father is not in spiritual hiding, but so many of his creatures have hidden themselves away in the mists of their own willful decisions and for the time being have separated themselves from the communion of his spirit and the spirit of his Son by the choosing of their own perverse ways and by the indulgence of the self-assertiveness of their intolerant minds and unspiritual natures.” [64]

At first glance we may dismiss this quote as not pertaining to us because of the word “perverse.” But the word “perverse” is used several times in the Urantia Papers, let’s look at a definition: “1. Directed away from what is right or good and 2. Obstinate persisting in an error or a fault; wrongly self-willed or stubborn.” This sounds more like me. So now by the choosing of my own self-willed and stubborn ways, I separate myself from God in that moment since I am not choosing God’s will.

Jesus said: “The will of God is the way of God, partnership with the choice of God in the face of any potential alternative. To do the will of God, therefore, is the progressive experience of becoming more and more like God, and God is the source and destiny of all that is good and beautiful and true.” [1431]

How can I stay in partnership with my Pilot so that I can follow His directions to stay on course rather than making alternative choices based on my own self-seeking will? We sometimes drift a long time, praying that this is the way or that is the way, should we do this or that, wishing for some clear sign from our Pilot of what to do. The Urantia Papers offer these admonitions:

“How long will it take the world of believers to understand that prayer is not a process of getting your way but rather a program of taking God’s way, an experience of learning how to recognize and execute the Father’s will?” [1946] “You must not regard co-operation with your Adjuster as a particularly conscious process, for it is not; but your motives and your decisions, your faithful determinations and your supreme desires, do constitute real and effective co-operation.” [1206]

Inner Life Communion

The inner life challenge is the continuous process of making spiritual decisions that will open the gateway to God consciousness. Do not imagine the inner life challenge is confronted and overcome in some dramatic breakthrough. The great battle is

more often won or lost, day by day and minute by minute in the arena of the human mind. And it is here, in the *present moments* of our daily living, where we are most challenged in our inner lives.

We have spiritual weapons to fight the good fight: prayer, meditation, worship, loving service, and living faith. These are not precisely defined or

systematized in the Urantia Papers and so we are on our own to discover through our personal experience how to use these instruments to harmonize with Divinity.

Spiritually fragrant individuals have written about how they pray, meditate, serve, and worship. There are many methods and practices that are interesting to investigate. Some practices get you to a place of deep relaxation, some to a state of non-thinking oneness, some to a blissful feeling, and on and on. I have personally tried many such methods and occasionally use techniques for relaxing, quieting the mind, feeling positive, etc. However, keep in mind that these practices are but means to an end and not the end itself: personal communion with God.

Those of us who feel we do not have adequate knowledge of the best way to meditate, to serve, to worship, to discern God’s will, to use our faith, or to control our wandering minds and emotions - who believe there may be some technique we’re missing or something we haven’t learned yet: Know that

The great battle is more often won or lost, day by day and minute by minute in the arena of the human mind. And it is here, in the present moments of our daily living, where we are most challenged in our inner lives.

we have all we need packed into our *desire!*

And what is your desire in this moment? Are you desiring God supremely—more than anything else? Do you trust all else will be added? Even in regard to your own thoughts, if you desire to share your inner life with God—God will teach you how. If you are willing, God will add his partnership to your thinking process. Sharing the inner life with God, unbroken communion, living faith, constant renewing of our mind—these ideas are held out to us and they become our ideals once we grasp for them. These spiritual ideals will take us to Paradise if we don't stop trying. But, make no mistake, what's required for success is our wholehearted desire. We must want to be in communion with God more than anything else. "Every sincere attempt meets with certain success." And this wholehearted desire will propel us to do what it takes: control our thoughts, have a pure mind, love our enemies, do God's will. In addition, we get so much celestial help because God desires us. "The Father desires all his creatures to be in personal communion with him." [63]

"Man does not achieve union with God as a drop of water might find unity with the ocean. Man attains divine union by progressive reciprocal spiritual communion, by personality intercourse with the personal God, by increasingly attaining the divine nature through wholehearted and intelligent conformity to the divine will. Such a sublime relationship can exist only between personalities." [31]

"The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God—with the very God who has made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible." [1221]

These two quotes above are rich with truths to ponder, but let's just look at the aspect of God being a person we relate to, a teacher, parent, friend. The word reciprocal means an alternating back and forth, an interchange. Such a progressing personal relationship is a deepening, growing-more-closer communion; becoming more God-like by wisely,

wholly conforming our human will to his divine will. By sharing with God what's going on in our inner life from where we are now to where we are spiritually striving, we stretch to do it—think it—God's way: the way of truth, beauty, goodness, and love; the way of Jesus.

Jesus taught friendship with God, as a friendship shared with a loving parent. A faith-based relationship with a partner who lives within your superconscious mind, yet who can become more divinely real to you than anyone you know, "the very Source of reality." "God is literally and eternally present in his universe of universes. He inhabits the present moment with all his absolute majesty and eternal greatness." [35] *God lives in the present, and is contactable in the present.* So if your mind is stuck regretting the past or worrying about the future, you won't be available for communion with God. Even if you are off whimsically reminiscing the past and gaily fantasizing about the future, unless it has spiritual value that you are meaningfully sharing with God, you're on your own in that moment.

Perhaps that's one reason why the revelators say work is our greatest blessing; it's present time thinking when we are working, and something we can do in partnership with God. When we are on a nature walk it is easier to be in the present moment—sharing with God the beauty we are experiencing. We need to try to keep our thoughts in the *present*, connected to God. "It is forever true: The past is unchangeable; only the future can be changed by the ministry of the present creativity of the inner self." [1221]

Jesus said: "Did you ever sincerely endeavor to talk with the spirit of your own soul? Such a thing is indeed difficult and seldom yields consciousness of success; but every honest attempt of the material mind to communicate with its indwelling spirit meets with certain success, notwithstanding that the majority of all such magnificent human experiences must long remain as superconscious registrations in the souls of such God-knowing mortals." [1475]

Even though we know that our contact with

Even though we know that our contact with God within us is on the superconscious level, how often do we look for results or a pleasurable feeling of some kind. And when we don't feel changed, do we get discouraged and halfhearted—letting ourselves regress into material mindedness?

God within us is on the superconscious level, how often do we look for results or a pleasurable feeling of some kind. And when we don't feel changed, do we get discouraged and halfhearted—letting ourselves regress into material mindedness? Remember our spiritual growth is unconscious; have faith that it is effective.

“The divine spirit makes contact with mortal man, not by feelings or emotions, but in the realm of the highest and most spiritualized thinking. It is your *thoughts*, not your feelings, that lead you Godward. The divine nature may be perceived only with the eyes of the mind. But the mind that really discerns God, hears the indwelling Adjuster, is the pure mind. ‘Without holiness no man may see the Lord.’ All such inner and spiritual communion is termed spiritual insight. Such religious experiences result from the impress made upon the mind of man by the combined operations of the Adjuster and the Spirit of Truth as they function amid and upon the ideas, ideals, insights, and spirit strivings of the evolving sons of God.” [1104]

There are those of us who feel we are overextended with the demands of life without a moment to spare. Again, our *desire* is all we need to make the time throughout the day for prayer and worship.

“One of the great troubles with modern life is that man thinks he is too busy to find time for spiritual meditation and religious devotion.” [2077] “Believers must increasingly learn how to step aside from the rush of life—escape the harassments of material existence—while they refresh the soul, inspire the mind, and renew the spirit by worshipful communion.” [1739]

What if you were to sit down right now and formulate an “idea-decision” to rework your daily schedule to find time for several short spiritual retreats throughout your day? These are the little bridges built into the day to help you return to God's way, in case you were getting caught up with the material side of life. “All nonreligious human activities seek to bend the universe to the distorting service of self;...” [67] Our commitment to keeping our appointed times for prayer and worship will be in proportion to the extent that we

are convinced of their necessity and value in our quest for self-mastery. “Man can never wisely decide temporal issues or transcend the selfishness of personal interests unless he meditates in the presence of the sovereignty of God and reckons with the realities of divine meanings and spiritual values.” [1093]

Prayer is desire for God. Try sprinkling the day with desire moments for God; raising our thoughts to God as often as possible. Desire for God's will. Desire for Jesus to live through us. Desire for spiritual insights. Desire to love God wholeheartedly. “... that man yearns for God that results in universe ascension.” [1217]

Here are a few gem-passages on communion:

“What if you were to sit down right now and formulate an “idea-decision” to rework your daily schedule to find time for several short spiritual retreats throughout your day? These are the little bridges built into the day to help you return to God's way ...”

“The ideal prayer is a form of spiritual communion which leads to intelligent worship. True praying is the sincere attitude of reaching heavenward for the attainment of your ideals.” [1618]

“Prayer...does so often dig out larger and deeper channels wherein the divine bestowals may flow to the hearts and souls of those who thus remember to maintain unbroken communion with their Maker through sincere

prayer and true worship.” [2066] Of Jesus: “The secret of his unparalleled religious life was this consciousness of the presence of God; and he attained it by intelligent prayer and sincere worship—unbroken communion with God—and not by leadings, voices, visions, or extraordinary religious practices.” [2089] “Prayer led Jesus up to the supercommunion of his soul with the Supreme Rulers of the universe of universes. Prayer will lead the mortals of earth up to the communion of true worship.” [1621]

The Loving Service Response

Unselfishly thinking of others' needs and serving them is a more effective path to communion with God than is meditation. “The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster, while often favored by devoted meditation, is more frequently facilitated by wholehearted and loving service in unselfish ministry to one's fellow creatures.” [1000] Now we can better understand how Mother Teresa became a saint. Not that we

need to go to Calcutta, or even our nearest inner city (although we may be led to bring spiritual light to those in darkness there). Mother Teresa tells us that her spirituality grew from trying to love and serve each person as if they were Jesus in disguise. “Jesus often took his apostles away by themselves for short periods to engage in meditation and prayer, but for the most part he kept them in service-contact with the multitudes. The soul of man requires spiritual exercise as well as spiritual nourishment.” [1000]

Some may be thinking that it would be easier to love and serve a sick person in obvious need than to love that narcissistic backstabbing coworker who engages in one-upmanship at every meeting. But what an opportunity to practice the loving service response! And what a spiritual exercise and an inner life challenge to respond to personal injury with love. It’s a spiritual victory to be able to choose the Father’s way of unconditional love as your attitude toward that coworker; returning indignities with a kind word and a sincere prayer for the errant child of God. Jesus inspired a watching universe with his loving and merciful intercession for the soldiers who were nailing his hands. When we swallow our pride and return evil with goodness, we follow Jesus in the loving service response that will change the world.

“Jesus portrayed conquest by sacrifice, the sacrifice of pride and selfishness. By showing mercy, he meant to portray spiritual deliverance from all grudges, grievances, anger, and the lust for selfish power and revenge. And when he said, ‘Resist not evil,’ he later explained that he did not mean to condone sin or to counsel fraternity with iniquity. He intended the more to teach forgiveness, to ‘resist not evil treatment of one’s personality, evil injury to one’s feelings of personal dignity.’” [1590]

Even in the ordinary interactions of our daily lives, loving service is an ideal state of mind. From this mainspring we can attentively respond with effective devotion. The loving service response is other-directed, without seeking any reward, and that includes the reward of praise and the good opinion of others. It is subtle, but we’ve been issued that danger warning about pride, and we must keep our vigilance.

Loving service involves our duty to God the Supreme, which is one of action—unselfish love in action. “Love is the desire to do good to others.” [648] Our duty to the Supreme is actually doing the love-work, carrying it out to completion and going that second mile, with no thought of recognition or even self-congratulations, but with a universe mindedness toward doing our part in furthering the realization of the Supreme—whose nature depends on our sistering/brothering of humankind.

Faith Connects us to the Power of God’s Love

“Faith is the open door for entering into the present, perfect, and eternal love of God.” [1545]

Faith plays an important role in our high seas drama of the challenge of the inner life. Faith is our sail; it is a gift from God. Faith makes it possible to connect to the power of God’s love, and progress toward our spiritual destiny—to find God within and be like Him.

How is it possible to approach self-mastery, to love and serve unselfishly, to have a pure mind, to enjoy the peace of Jesus, to be led by the Spirit, to

experience unbroken communion with God? ... Faith makes it possible. However, our faith potency too often lies dormant because we hardly use it. “Few persons live up to the faith which they really have.”[556] Of the woman who simply touched Jesus’s garment in order to be healed: “Her faith was of the sort that laid direct hold upon the creative power resident in the Master’s person.” [1698] Her faith connected her to the power of the love of God. And the Urantia Papers tell us that “Never before Jesus was on earth, nor since, has it been possible so directly and graphically to secure the results attendant upon the strong and living faith of mortal men and women... Likewise, today, while his absence prevents such material manifestations, you should refrain from placing any sort of limitation on the possible exhibition of his *spiritual power*.” [1700] Said Jesus: “How long ere you learn that the works of faith come not forth at the bidding of doubting unbelief?”... “Question not my Father’s power of love, only the sincerity and reach of your faith. All things are possible to him who really believes.” [1757]

Even in the ordinary interactions of our daily lives, loving service is an ideal state of mind. From this mainspring we can attentively respond with effective devotion.

The reality and power of the love of God is there, we just need to unfurl our faith-sail to reach out for it. And when we do, we are promised that anything is possible. But we must hoist up our faith-sail high and full to make real headway in spiritual progress...“man’s thoughts, wisdom, ethics, and ideals will never rise higher than his faith, his sublime hope. And all such true faith is predicated on profound reflection, sincere self-criticism, and uncompromising moral consciousness. Faith is the inspiration of the spiritized creative imagination.” [1459]

Let’s take a brief look at the teachings of Jesus in regards to faith and our inner life challenge of doing the will of God: “The kingdom of heaven consists in these three essentials: first, recognition of the fact of the sovereignty of God; second, belief in the truth of sonship with God; and third, faith in the effectiveness of the supreme human desire to do the will of God—to be like God. And this is the good news of the gospel: that by faith every mortal may have all these essentials of salvation.” [1585] To me that third essential means: *Desire to do the will of God—more than you desire anything else — and have faith that it works!*

Jesus states that the gospel is both our desire to do God’s will and the joy of realizing, on ever deepening levels of faith, what it means to be cherished by the Father: “... this gospel of the kingdom—the supreme desire to do the Father’s will coupled with the supreme joy of the faith realization of sonship with God...” [1931] As we get better at trusting God and pausing to choose his will, we more closely follow Jesus’ way of “...ever deferring his slightest wish to the will of the Father in heaven and his daily life of implicit trust...”[1555], and we can more fully enjoy the benefits:

“The peace of Jesus’ mind was founded on an absolute human faith in the actuality of the divine Father’s wise and sympathetic overcare.”[1954] “The peace of Jesus is, then, the peace and assurance of a son who fully believes that his career for time and eternity is safely and wholly in the care and keeping of an all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful spirit Father. And this is, indeed, a peace which passes the understanding of mortal mind, but which can be enjoyed to the full by the believing human heart.”[1955] “When my children once

become self-conscious of the assurance of the divine presence, such a faith will expand the mind, ennoble the soul, reinforce the personality, augment the happiness, deepen the spirit perception, and enhance the power to love and be loved.” [1766]

Joy is the back door to faith. Joy is inherent in existence. [312] Therefore, joy is within our nature if we just look for it. While we are still learning how to tap into our wellspring of faith, we do know how to prime the pump by thinking joyful thoughts: Think of one thing that you are grateful for; thanking God leads to worshipful assurance. Think of what it really means to have God’s wise and loving overcare; to have God as our coach, our counselor, mentor, friend. Thus, the joy of gratitude is one way to activate our faith realization; the faith that connects us to the power of God’s love. And the love of the Father is made real to us as we give our love to others. [1289]

Jesus Onboard

“Though the Master is absent as a material being, he is present as a spiritual influence in the hearts of men. By going away from the world, Jesus made it possible for his spirit to live alongside that of his Father which indwells the minds of all mankind.” [1700] “The coming of the Spirit of Truth purifies the human heart and leads the recipient to formulate a life purpose single to the will of God and the welfare of men.” [2065]

We are assured of a successful journey because of our whole-souled desire to do God’s will, to surrender every aspect of our lives in trust to God, to daily renew a pure mind and heart, to love and serve others with “a new... startling affection,” and to glide joyfully across the water as if already a member of the faith corps of universe service with sights set on the destiny shores of an ever-expanding spiritual reality. Our supreme desire is bringing about “the change of mind by faith—the new birth ...” [1545], and our ship is being transformed with light radiating from Jesus, who is now with us at the helm —leading the way.

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The Priceless Opportunity ... The Joy that Knows No Bounds

by Tom Choquette

Urantia Book readers are aware of the fact that we have been blessed with being born in a Superuniverse that represents equally all attributes of the Trinity. We live in the Superuniverse of Orvonton which represents equally the Father, the Son, and the Spirit. Of course, we all know that coming from such a Superuniverse, one never has to worry about being sent back to the worlds of time and space to acquire more knowledge or experience.

What we may not take the time to recognize from this reality is the incredible opportunity that presents itself to each of us to grow in the experience and understanding of each personal aspect of the Trinity, *Love, Mercy, and Ministry*, as well as the association between all three! We have all of the spiritual helpers and tools that we need to advance experientially and collectively towards an understanding of the Trinity on a level of the finite that is so far removed from the “normal evolution” of a world. The uniqueness of our environment and its prospects should be absolutely exhilarating to those of us who have been blessed to live on such a world at such a time.

How do we learn to reflect the Trinity in our lives? How do we reflect the Father, the Son, and the Spirit in a way that allows us to grow in grace, and to radiate those realities to our brothers and sisters of this planet? I believe we learn to reflect the Trinity by embracing the quality of each aspect of the Trinity: love, mercy and ministry, in our daily lives. It isn't enough that we love, we must demonstrate mercy to be allowed to love; it isn't enough that we manifest mercy, we must serve to be allowed to manifest such forgiveness. And service/ministry is perhaps the cornerstone to all spiritual growth. What I would like to touch upon in this article is service or ministry, whichever term you find more helpful in your reaching out to serve your community.

Service or ministry is the essence or fragrance of the Spirit. She is a wonderful lady and the spark of all that is life. She is represented on this planet by our local Universe Mother Spirit, and Her energy and nurturing are everywhere. To me She represents the way of Joy. It is through Her, and Her needs that I have been blessed with unlimited opportunities to serve. She is a powerful advocate and will unerringly steer you towards the Father in your heart. Spend time with Her through the action of service, and know you are loved beyond measure and that you are a child of God.

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As students of the Urantia Papers there are at least four major areas of service in which an individual may choose to become involved.

1.) Direct service to the revelation. Some of the ways in which we support the revelation include a complete reading and understanding of *The Urantia Book* itself, the formation of study groups, the formation of Fellowship

Societies, IUA charters, and The Spiritual Fellowship groups, helping with the publication and distribution of *The Urantia Book* and its translations worldwide, the publication and distribution of secondary works, publications, newsletters, web sites, and other methods of mass communication which make the revelation accessible to a larger audience. Marketing *The Urantia Book* in our private lives and in the community in which we live are also methods which work directly towards introducing *The Urantia Book* as a revelation to the rest of our brothers and sisters on this wonderful planet we call home.

There are several excellent reasons for endeavoring to fulfill one or more of these goals, for the exposure the revelation receives, and the personal growth one gains through participating in outreach that in time is destined to transform the world we live on. There would appear to be a low level of personal risk associated with this type of service. If one who is offered this “alternative belief system” chooses to reject it, we very seldom blame ourselves. They are doubtlessly “not ready” or “don't need” this advanced revelation in their lives.

2.) Service as we “pass by.” Most of the really important things which Jesus said or did seemed to happen casually, “as he passed by.” We are told there was so little of the professional, the well-planned, or the premeditated in the Master’s earthly ministry. He dispensed health and scattered happiness naturally and gracefully as he journeyed through life. It was literally true, “He went about doing good.” [P. 1875-par. 4]

Jesus was an enlightened Son of God. He was empowered by an unquestionable union with His Father within. Jesus’ service was so powerful and selfless that when called a “good teacher” he responded by saying, “Why do you call me good? None is good but God.” [P. 2092- par.0] It may be more correct in today’s terminology to say that Jesus *ministered* as he passed by.

Jesus didn’t just fix a copier or carry some groceries or sweep the steps or put gas in the car or give a person a book or any of the other thoughtful services we do on a daily basis for our loved ones and neighbors. Because of Jesus’ spiritual connection He could perceive their real inner needs as he ministered to their outer needs. Jesus had the insight and gift to empower people as he passed by. Jesus was extraordinary at this because he was so in tune with the Father’s will in all things. Jesus was and is the master of “serving as He passed by.” If we devote our lives to such a service example, great things can and do happen.

Initially, because of our humanness and lack of spiritual attainment, “serving as we pass by” may not be enough. “As we pass by” may become a numbness, a justification for not stepping out of our comfort zone to serve in ways that not only require more effort and sacrifice, but attune us more closely with the will of the Father. We may need to immerse ourselves in social service.

There are those that would suggest that the saying of “doing good as you pass by” may be an opiate for the readers and believers of the Urantia Revelation. An opiate because it may cause us to miss the grand opportunity of social service and consequent growth available to us on this rare and unique world of the cross. An opiate because in the

pleasantries of convenient and rewarding service to others we can lose track of the spiritual growth made real from reaching out and serving in an environment that we are not familiar with, an environment that forces us to rid ourselves of judgment and rely on faith and guidance from above to reach out and be effective.

The personal risk in the Jesusonian type of “service as you pass by” is self-evident in that you give up all so that you may be born again of the spirit and with power. The world is in desperate need of this service. This type of service is also included in the fourth category of services. The *self-retaining* type of service “as you pass by” appears to have a low personal risk factor in that it requires little change or growth in us. It makes us feel good and in most cases is welcome and accepted by those we serve.

The personal risk in the Jesusonian type of “service as you pass by” is self-evident in that you give up all so that you may be born again of the spirit and with power. The world is in desperate need of this service.

3.) Service for society, ministry to those less fortunate.

“Service—more service, increased service, difficult service, adventurous service, and at last divine and perfect service—is the goal of time and the destination of space.” [P. 316 - par. 4] The Jesusonian gospel is “the Fatherhood of God and the sonship and consequent brotherhood of all men, which is personally realized in loving ministry and social service.” [P. 1032- par. 2] “The contact of the mortal mind with its indwelling Adjuster, while often favored by devoted meditation, is more frequently facilitated by wholehearted and loving service in unselfish ministry to one’s fellow creatures.” [P.1000-par 2] There are three fruits of the spirit associated with service: *loving service, unfailing goodness, and merciful ministry.* As a matter of fact, there are those that would say that the majority of the fruits of the spirit cannot be realized without the benefit of transforming social service.

To differentiate between “serving as you pass by” and social service let’s define social service as the act of going out to specifically serve a population that the obstacles or challenges of life have left damaged and deserted by the brotherhood of humankind. Of the many categories that would fit this description let me name a few. Seniors without income or close family, homeless families, homeless youth, HIV aids patients, the mentally disabled, the unemployed, the uneducated, the

hungry, the abused, the list goes on and on. From a spiritual perspective, maybe more accurately described as the hurt, the despairing, the lost, the beaten, the abused (did I mention that before?), the forgotten, this list goes on and on too. Can you hear them calling you? Have you heard them in the past through the tumult of your mind, conveniently shut out by our everyday distractions?

When we move out to serve in this environment, we start the process of becoming other than what we are. We must step outside of our comfort zone and rely on our spiritual guides to lead us into effective ministry. There is no substitution. I will repeat this one more time because of the value inherent in understanding that you can not get from here to there without moving.....there is NO substitution! To grow spiritually we must change. To change we MUST serve. It's scary. It's hard. It requires that you sacrifice a part of yourself for His-self. It requires an extra dose of all of the fruits of the spirit.

You don't feel adequate, you feel unprepared, you're nervous about doing more damage, as well as other valid reasons why your mandate to service does not apply just now. Why should those wallowing in desperation and despair have to wait for another? Why do you continue to live as though others could do the job better? They can't! You are being called to service even now as you read these words. None can replace you in partnership with Jesus. You are more than adequate. You are the beginning of hope for all those you will courageously go out and serve. By example you shall lead them. By example you shall lead those of us around you that need to serve by your side. By example, step by step you will be transformed from obedience to your human will to that of the Divine.

We are blessed with a veritable smorgasbord of service opportunities. Perhaps no other world at any other time has had an environment where the children of God are needed so desperately to help in the healing of their cosmic family in partnership with God. This type of service is definitely high risk. You risk all that you have for all that you can become. Where there is great risk, there is great

reward! "The Gods have decreed, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive,' and said your Master Son, 'He who would be greatest among you let him be server of all.'" [P. 316- par.5]

4.) Ministry. Living the Gospel. Becoming Christ like. Trading your mind in for the mind of Jesus. "... but what is now most needed is Jesus. The world needs to see Jesus living again on earth in the experience of spirit-born mortals who effectively reveal the Master to all men. Modern culture must become spiritually baptized with a new revelation of Jesus' life and illuminated with a

new understanding of his gospel of eternal salvation. And when Jesus becomes thus lifted up, he will draw all men to himself." [P. 2084- par.1]

Jesus taught a living religion that impelled its believers to engage in the doing of loving service. We must create and

nourish a ministry of second milers who are dedicated to living and loving as He taught His disciples to live and love and serve. "I lived my life in the flesh to show how you can, through loving service, become God-revealing to your fellow men even as, by loving you and serving you, I have become God-revealing to you." [P. 2053- par.1] The great challenge to readers of the Urantia Papers is how to facilitate this type of growth. We can agree with it, debate it, demean it, intellectualize it, ignore it, but for it to become a reality we must live it. It is probably the highest risk of all of the modes of service available to us. Spiritual growth is something that one must do alone. The "we" must be taken out of this type of service and the "I" must go forth to find and realize its ultimate destiny in service to our Father in heaven and in our hearts. At this point service is no longer an applicable definition of what one is doing. A better definition may be Privilege. We first serve because we are compelled to serve, we then serve because we have the opportunity to, and finally we serve because it is a Divine Privilege.

As I read back over this article I find emptiness within its boundaries that I feel compelled to address. In my own life experience with service and ministry, I was figuratively dragged screaming and kicking from the womb of indecision, guilt, and the knowledge that I should be doing something

I was figuratively dragged screaming and kicking from the womb of indecision, guilt, and the knowledge that I should be doing something more meaningful with my life.

more meaningful with my life. I was fortunate that I had friends who helped and encouraged me to move outside of myself, and trust in the spirit to guide and sustain me on my journey towards the fulfilling and irreplaceable experiences of service.

My journey began with the “street kids” of Seattle, Washington. They, of course, were not worthy. I was a harsh judge of all that they represented in life. I would like to thank a close friend of mine, Tom Pirie, for holding on tightly as I tried to bolt, and helping guide me into the birth of true service. You see, they are worthy.

I’ve had a call to ministry for several years. In my mind, of course, I was not worthy. I was a harsh judge of myself and all of my shortcomings. Who was I to represent my Father to the people of this planet? I would like to thank another close friend of mine, Meredith Sprunger, for allowing me my humanness and calling me to ministry in the face of all my failings. You see, I am worthy. And you are, too!

The world is in desperate need of those who can accept the fact that they are worthy. The only pre-requisite that I know of is to be a son or daughter of our Father, and to aspire to be just like Him. Now comes the hard work. Now comes the priceless opportunity. Now comes the beginning of the Joy that knows no boundaries. Now is the time to grow in grace. Now is the time for you to start representing your God on this planet. There is more help for you on your journey than you can ever imagine. However, you must move. Please, this planet needs you! Our Father needs you.

Tom Choquette was born in Helena, Montana and raised in Alaska. He was introduced to the Urantia Papers in 1970. He is one of the founding members and directors of TSF ... The Spiritual Fellowship. For many years, Tom’s warm—and sometimes flaming—passion for the Revelation has enriched Urantia gatherings all over the world. In the mid-eighties Tom was a charter founder of the Seattle Society for the then Urantia Brotherhood. Several years ago Tom elected a course of active ministry and uncompromising devotion to living the teachings. His robust spirit has brought light to the dark streets of large cities, changing the lives of many people—street people, families in crisis, the lost youth of the inner city—any who are about to be discarded by the world—these are the souls Tom recognizes as precious. To those Urantians who know and love him, he walks his talk with touching devotion. Tom can be reached at:

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***“My children languish for want of bread.
Feed them.***

***They wander in search of truth.
Guide them.***

***They weaken in their struggles.
Strengthen them.***

***Their loneliness is crushing.
Love them.***

***They need to know the truth.
Tell them.***

***Tell them of my love, tell them of my power, tell
them of my promise.”***

*“Call of the Spirit” by Merritt Horn
Page 60 - par. 2.*

Submitted by Tom Choquette

Esperanza Urantia

There will come a time, I know, when Urantians will go forth into the world to establish a religion that belongs not to a race, a nation, nor to a special group of teachers or preachers.

These Urantian Leaders of the New Spiritual Renaissance will teach a gospel of the kingdom that belongs to both Jew and gentile, to rich and poor, to free and bond, to male and female, even to the little children. And Urantians will proclaim this gospel of love and truth by the lives which they live, for Jesus shall live again through them.

By observing these new Urantians, those who have not heard, shall hear, and those who have not seen, shall see the Master, and they will learn of his life-giving teachings.

There will come a time, I know, when Urantians shall love one another with a new and startling affection, even as Jesus loved all of us when he walked among us. And these new Urantians will serve humankind with a new and amazing devotion, even as Jesus served men and women when he lived in the flesh.

And when this hour comes, the new and everlasting religion of Jesus will at last blaze across the earth in the lives of the men and women who believe it.

L.M.

More Lessons from the Birds and Bees

(and other Living Things ...

*Such as How Dee Hock's "Revolutionary"
Organizational Model was Inspired by Nature)*

by Merlyn Cox

"O Lord, how manifold are all your works!" says the Psalmist, "In wisdom you have made them all. The earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide; creeping things beyond counting are there, living things both great and small."

Manifold and amazing they are—the only reason we seem not to appreciate them more, is that they are so abundant, and in their rush to live, they sometimes get in the road of our well ordered lives.

After the last two weeks of rain, I noticed tiny creatures emerging everywhere, across the carpet, between the pages of books, in the cupboards, across my windshield at night. I don't find the millipedes crawling out of the bathtub nearly as interesting as those under the close up lens of a television camera. Lady bugs are cute when seen in isolation, but a nuisance when they swarm the house, and they give off a rather unpleasant odor when roasted by the halogen lamp in my office.

"Be fruitful and multiply" is the marching order of all creation, and its creatures obey with nary a pause to consider our feelings about the matter. That such creatures are manifold is hard to deny; that they reflect God's wisdom, we often forget, or don't notice.

Nevertheless, there is an overall serenity and order and harmony to nature that has always inspired those who go there in search of it.

Yesterday morning early I went out to check on the rhubarb, and play with my brother's dog, and the whole world seemed bathed in glorious color and illuminated by the gentle and warm rays of the sun, as if being highlighted by the artist who brought it all into being, causing my spirit to soar and dance. It was another one of those "most beautiful the days has ever seen, or ever will"—until the next one, which hopefully will be tomorrow.

It is no small thing, I think, that Jesus sought to commune with the Creator-Father in nature's setting. With regularity he withdrew to the wilderness, to the highlands and mountains of Mt. Tabor and Mt. Hermon, to the Mount of Olives, to the garden of Gethsemane.

He went to nature early on to clarify in his own mind and soul his purpose and commission to mankind. During his public ministry he often withdrew from the crowds and went there to refresh his soul. He went there in the final hours before his betrayal to draw strength for the trials that were to come. Jesus went to nature to commune with the Heavenly Father, and apparently found there a temple of God's wisdom and goodness. And so he taught us to look to nature and see the lessons that can be

learned there, lessons that apply to our human situation, as well as to all those other creatures, large and small.

"Which one of you by being anxious," Jesus asked, "can add even one inch to his stature, or an extra hour to your life?" "Consider the lilies of the field, they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you that even Solomon in all his glory was not adorned like one of these. And if God so clothes the grass and flowers that

are here today and gone tomorrow, will he not also take care of us?" "Not even a sparrow," Jesus said, "can fall from the sky without the Heavenly Father's knowledge. Of how much more worth are you than many sparrows."

So, why should we be anxious, when God knows our needs before we ask. He even knows the very number of the hairs on our head, including those we lose as the years pass by, and as worries and trials come and go.

Some may say, "That's all well and good, but in the rough and tumble of the real world, it won't help much, at most it may help me to survive another day. The world is a highly competitive and often hostile place. We need to be realistic. You can't always escape to a romantic setting in the country. What do stories of birds and bees and sparrows and lilies have to do with that world?"

Maybe more than we think.

Jesus went to nature to commune with the Heavenly Father, and apparently found there a temple of God's wisdom and goodness. And so he taught us to look to nature and see the lessons that can be learned there, lessons that apply to our human situation, as well as to all those other creatures, large and small.

I recently came across the work of a man by the name of Dee Hock. Few people will probably recognize the name, although he is the founder of the largest financial enterprise the world has ever seen, Visa International.

He was raised in rural Utah, went to college, and in 1951 he took a job at a small, floundering branch office of a consumer finance company. After a few months, when the manager left, the job fell to him. He decided, along with three other young men, to trash the company manual, ignore the established commandments, and do things as common sense, conditions, and ingenuity suggested. Within two years, business had tripled and it was leading the rest of the company in profitability. At that point, they came to the attention of the power structure, which said, in effect, "you can't do things this way!"

He exited and went to another company, where the same thing happened. He then moved on to still others with the same results each time, great success followed by the wrath of the bureaucracy for trying to change things—and his departure. All those then thriving companies, he likes to point out, are now no longer in existence.

Some years later he was working with the Bank of America when the credit card movement was getting underway, and it was soon out of control. Losses were in the hundreds of millions, and no one knew why or what to do.

By then, Hock had more experience than most in this new area and was known for his ability, despite his unorthodox ways, and was given the job of trying to make sense of it all. He did a great deal of research and came to the conclusion that what was needed was an organization that could guarantee and settle transactions anywhere in the world within twenty four hours.

The problem was, no bank could do that, no stock corporation could do it, no nation could do it; in fact, no existing form of organization they knew of, or could think of, could do that. It called for a new kind of institution and organization, very different from any that we've known, one that

allowed all the parts to work together as a whole, without the whole necessarily knowing what all of the parts were doing, let alone being able to control them. It would be far too complex for that.

Where did he look for a model of such an organization? He looked in nature.

In nature Dee Hock found there are countless examples where organisms adapt quickly to their surroundings, work with others, even those they compete with, in a kind of symbiotic relationship, not necessarily knowing what everything else in the system is doing and not needing to know—a kind of blending of self-interest and other interest at the same time.

A simple example: Flowers and plants attract bees, and gladly produce and share their nectar; and

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the bees, in turn, pollinate the flowers and plants, and they all thereby survive and thrive. If the bees of the world should decide, "Let's get organized, so we can control this thing, it's much too random and chaotic and no one seems to be in control," what do you suppose would happen? (The former Soviet Union might be a good example of what would happen.)

In nature there always seems to be a fine balance between chaos and order, and the world we live in is becoming more and more complex and chaotic. New ideas and technologies such as the smelting of iron, for example, often took generations to cross a single continent. Now information can be distributed and accessed virtually all over the world instantaneously. I can access most of the web sites in the world in a second or two.

Not long ago you had to wait a week for a check to clear. That was called "float time." During that time the banks had your check or money, not you, nor the party you sent it to. Hock says we must now understand bank transactions as the transfer of monetary value between parties which is done at nearly the speed of light. There is no "float." Everything is virtually instantaneous.

We get annoyed if it takes more than five seconds for our charge card to be OK'd at a filling

station or restaurant. At least I do, and then I begin to wonder, did I send in the last check on time? And you can't ask to wait and see if there is enough gold at Fort Knox to back it all up. There isn't. Most of these monetary value transfers now have nothing to back them up except a promise. You have to trust the institution to screen and guarantee the transfer value.

You don't even transfer a piece of paper. Dee Hock points out the transaction is merely a stream of electrons and photons, traveling and changing and at a speed no one can comprehend. At the end of it, you get a slip of paper saying what has happened, although no one saw it happen. You don't have a transfer of money, per se, only information. Banks, he says, are no more than institutions for the custody, loan, and exchange of guaranteed alphanumeric information. If you don't have a system that accepts and guarantees these electronic phantoms, the system collapses.

So, Dee Hock asked, what would a flexible, but stable, institution look like that could do this? He says it would have to be an organization that was owned by all its participants, no one of which has an inherently greater or lesser position, or able to buy or sell their position. Participation is always voluntary and nontransferable.

Birds and bees and trees and flowers, as it were, all have equal value in this kind of institution. Each participant has to trust that they will not be inferior to any others. Authority and control would be distributed equally among the participating entities.

The institution would have to be totally flexible, able to change quickly, yet remain durable. Above all, in order to do this, it would have to be built upon a statement of purpose, simple and clear, that everyone could agree to. If you don't have that statement, you don't have an organization—period!

Institutions, Hock insists, exist only in the mind. They are nothing more than manifestations of the old idea of community. According to Black's dictionary of law, "a corporation is an

artificial person or legal entity ... regarded in law as having a personality and existence distinct from that of its several members ..."¹ In other words, a corporation is a mental abstraction.

You can't point to or touch a building and say this is the government, or this building is General Motors, or for that matter, this building is the church of Jesus Christ. It may be a reflection and a result of that reality, but it is not the thing itself

It was a long and arduous process: laying the foundation, getting organizations from all over the world to agree, and to trust each other as equal partners, with no one of them in control. But it happened, and the results, as they say, are history. VISA represents over 22,000 owner/members, with a billion people doing 14 billion transactions, producing an annual volume over a one and quarter trillion dollars, making it the largest single block of consumer purchasing power in the global economy.

The actual setting up of the biggest financial institution in history took about 90 days and \$30,000 dollars. It was created mainly by volunteers at the bank who were given permission to use their time on the project. It involved bank presidents,

cashiers, accountants, managers, and custodians, all pitching in, and rank was never mentioned in the process.

During the pressure to get the cards sent out, the bank president knocked over a table of address plates, to his great embarrassment. A lady custodian bent over to help and said reassuringly, "That's OK, it can happen to anyone." Everyone pitched in to get things back together and the work on track again.

In the process, he said, leaders spontaneously emerged and re-emerged, none in control, but all in order. People astonished themselves by what they could accomplish and the talents that emerged. Position became meaningless; power over others became meaningless; time became meaningless.

Is this really any way to run a business?

Dee Hock thinks so. He believes that the 400 year old model of the institution as a machine with cogs and wheels will have to go and be replaced by

He believes that the 400 year old model of the institution as a machine with cogs and wheels will have to go and be replaced by one that reflects the way nature works, and the way human beings work best, one that can bring order out of chaos, and above all, utilize the most wasted resource of all—human ingenuity.

one that reflects the way nature works, and the way human beings work best, one that can bring order out of chaos, and above all, utilize the most wasted resource of all—human ingenuity.

Right now people are still largely treated like cogs in a machine to be controlled from above and the cost in human spirit and waste is beyond calculating. (We call them human resources.) Institutions, Hock believes, will have to change or they will continue to fail—and may, quite possibly, destroy the world.

Of course, he didn't go over to the Pentagon and tell the folks there that they should organize like the birds and bees, that they should learn from the flowers in the field, that they needed to learn to "surf the chaos," as some have called it.

Actually, the generals called Dee Hock first. You see, the military has a vested interest in creating an organization that is not only efficient, but that weds together different skills into a whole, whose parts need not check with command central every time a decision needs to be made.

There is little "float time" even on the battle field now-a-days. Tank battles are often over in a few minutes, fighter plane engagements often in seconds, and if you don't have personnel trained to take initiative and adapt to the situation rather than wait for instructions from higher up, you're lost.

In the Gulf War the first thing the military went after, you may recall, was command and control. (You may also remember General Schwartzkof's gesture of cutting off the head.)

Interestingly, the one institution that best represents this new kind of structure in our world, the Internet, was created by the National Security Agency. The idea was that if there were ever nuclear war, there would almost always be communications open from any one place to another because of this web of networks that no one group could control, or completely destroy, and therefore, no one could

completely shut down.

But is this any way to run a business?

I'm reminded of a book by Robert Greenleaf, entitled "Servant Leadership."² Greenleaf was not a pastor or theologian. For thirty-five years, he headed up management research for the world's largest corporation, A.T.&T. In fact, he started the management research and training movement.

Greenleaf's thesis, drawn from years of experience, was that servant leadership was not simply a vague and lofty ideal, it was a pragmatic necessity, and increasingly it is becoming the only kind of leadership people will accept.

Increasingly, he believes, "people will not casually accept the authority of existing institutions.

Rather, they will freely respond only to individuals who are chosen as leaders because they are proven and trusted as servants. To the extent this principle prevails, the only viable institutions will be those that are predominantly servant led."³ The meek, Greenleaf suggests, those living humbly before God and in keeping with his will—namely that of service—will indeed inherit the earth.

Greenleaf quotes a well known college president who said: "The problems that so sorely trouble the world today [are] the problems of management and labor, problems of race, of social levels and special privilege, of nationalism and international relations. If these and others problems will be solved eventually in accordance with the essential teachings of Jesus, for the simple reason that the universe (is) built that way."

The wisdom of all Creation is folded up in Jesus of Nazareth, and if the world is not yet operating according to his teachings, it's not because it won't work, but because we have not yet tried it. We may soon have to in order to survive.

And what, then, of the church? How well does it reflect the wisdom and purposes of God reflected in his creation?

Can we really imagine a church where authority and power are shared by all the participants, where neither financial gain, nor power, nor prestige are of any real importance; where human resources are valued above all else; where, at times, any one might be the leader, regardless of their title; where people are so bound by a clear purpose that they are held together despite all their obvious disparities and different needs, and march, as it were, in the same direction, toward the same goal, even though everyone knows it cannot possibly be achieved in our lifetime?

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Hmmm ... seems like someone may have already suggested such a thing.

“You are the body of Christ,” he said, and “each part of the body, whether it be the hand or foot, or ear or eye, is equally important to the whole, and it cannot be whole without them.”

Jesus said, “I am the vine and you are the branches, without me you can do nothing. Abide in me, as I abide in you.”

Nature has much to teach us, and perhaps most simply and importantly, the world works best when it works in the way God created it to work. By the way, Dee Hock says that everything one needs to know about leadership, he learned one rainy day from a one horned cow—but that’s another story.

“Countless are the things you have made, O God; by your wisdom you have made them all...”

“The heavens tell out the glory of God, heaven’s vault makes known his handiwork.

“One day speaks to another, night to night imparts knowledge, and this without speech or language or sound of any voice.”

Are we listening?

¹Birth of the Chaordic Age, Dee Hock, Berrett-Hoehler Publishers, San Francisco, 1999, p. 167.

²Servant Leadership, Robert K. Greenleaf, Paulist Press, New York, 1977.

³Ibid., p.10

Merlyn Cox is a pastor serving in the North Indiana Conference of the United Methodist Church. He has been a reader of the Urantia Papers for 18 years, and worked with Meredith Sprunger in initiating the Spiritual Fellowship Journal in 1991, and served for ten years as associate editor. He is currently chairman of the Education Team for TSF.

The Scientific Integrity of *The Urantia Book*

by Denver Pearson

As scientifically-minded readers first peruse *The Urantia Book*, it soon occurs to them that many of its statements on the natural sciences conflict with currently held data and theories. In the minds of many this gives rise to doubts about the truthfulness of those statements. Wisdom would lead us to realize that nothing short of perfection is perfect, and anything touched by human hands has fingerprints. This should be our guiding thoughts as we contemplate the accuracy of the scientific content of the Urantia Papers.

Several years ago, at the first Scientific Symposium, it was implied by one of the speakers that the revelation contains errors. This implication is alarming. At the second symposium held in Oklahoma in 1991, an interesting publication named “The Science Content in The Urantia Book,” was made available (this document is obtainable from the Brotherhood of Man Library). In this publication is an article entitled “Time Bombs,” in which the author suggests that the Revelators planted certain inaccurate scientific statements in the book in order to prevent it from becoming a fetish. He states, “...the Revelators incorporated safeguards in the papers that would form The Urantia Book to diminish the tendency to regard it as an object of worship. What safeguards did they use? Suppose they decided to make sure that mortals reading it understood that some cosmological statements in the book would be found to be inaccurate.”

After many years of detailed study of *The Urantia Book*, I can’t honestly recall anytime when any of its concepts contradicted themselves, nor did I feel that I was being told something that was untrue. It’s one thing to foolishly claim absolute perfection for the book, but it’s quite another to lead other readers to believe that by divine mandate the revelators were forced to use erroneous data, or even worse yet, to intentionally plant inaccurate information for any reason, so called “time bombs.”

In my own experience and that of others, I’d say that the problem with the scientific inaccuracies we think we find in the book might really be our own preconceived notion that modern science is

infallible; or our hang-ups about literature claiming to have divine origins; or even something as simple as not reading the text carefully.

We all know there have been a few typographical errors and minor word changes or corrections (fingerprints), and we are also informed in several places that the Revelator's concepts are subject to distortion by the limitations of human language and by the comprehension level of the mortal mind.

The typos and word changes don't affect the soundness of the revelation and are almost expected with such a voluminous literary work. The distortions referred to are to be found in sections of the book regarding very high spiritual concepts and in areas discussing aspects of the spiritual realm about which humans know nothing, such as the activities of the celestial artisans. Although unfortunately distorted, these concepts are very helpful in enabling us to catch a glimpse of the magnitude of our Father's eternal realities.

But we are not talking now about typos and distortions. These are not the problem. The source of the controversy is in the discussion of the natural sciences, in areas where the Urantia Papers and modern scientific theories diverge.

In becoming aware of the differences between current science and the revelation, we are forced to come to the conclusion that both can't be right, and somehow we must make a decision between them. At once we grapple with the idea of facing the possibility that something is fishy somewhere. How can we test the two sources? What test would be adequate to resolve this horribly annoying problem? How about using our common sense and the track records of the Urantia Papers and of science.

As gullible children growing up in the new scientific age of discovery, we naturally accepted the no-nonsense authority of what we were told. Who were we to question these great minds who were probing all the nooks and crannies of known reality? It has always been easier to accept their information as gospel rather than go looking for it ourselves. I generally still do, but with a grain of salt. We are told in *The Urantia Book* "Faith does not shackle the creative imagination, neither does it maintain an unreasoning prejudice toward the discoveries of scientific investigation." [1115 par.

1] So let us be reasonable.

Only recently have I become aware that this thing called science is an extremely imperfect process conducted by extremely imperfect individuals. The word "process" is the key word here. Universal reality is a constant, and science is that hit-or-miss process whereby we attempt to understand that reality. How do we know if we have a hit or miss? Only time will tell, and the art of scientific discovery is still very young.

Our contention with some scientists should be that their theories are spun and cast in gold before all the data is in or regardless of contrary data. Yes, there is usually contrary data opposing any theory, but it is usually ignored during publication, which makes the theory appear, to the casual reader, to be unanimously accepted by the world of science. Two current examples of this are the Big Bang theory, which is now losing support, and a rather new theory that claims that the dinosaurs became extinct due to a meteor hitting the earth. I predict that this idea itself will become extinct in a few years. Neither of these theories jibe with *The Urantia Book*. Which do you believe?

How could someone come to the conclusion, when the Urantia Papers and science don't agree, that the book is the one in error? This is particularly interesting due to the fact that the history of science is plagued with contradictory theories, incompleteness and even deception. Part of the answer may be this: We've been conditioned in this century to judge so-called sacred writings of the past by their physical absurdities and lack of factual accuracies in light of current information. This is because much of their science content is metaphysically based. Metaphysics is that method of explaining reality by means of our mental observations as opposed to the more accurate method of discovery and testing. It is very interesting that modern science does both, many times conjecturing (conjuring up) elaborate theories based on one small shred of flimsy evidence. In my astronomy book the author even admits that the measuring of distant galaxies is based on the assumption of the uniformity of nature. He also admits that present errors in measuring distances may be fifty percent or larger. Amazing, isn't it?

We should have a healthy respect for science but not be afraid to scrutinize its findings, either.

We are all aware of the great contributions the scientific community has made to our world. For one thing, it has reduced superstition to a point where religionists have had to re-evaluate their beliefs and purge themselves of false teachings. This is still in process. Without modern science and its repercussions, we wouldn't have *The Urantia Book* in our midst today. In fact, it was the book that really made me aware of our silly superstitious nature. We can have a genuine love for science but still be concerned with its inaccuracies when used as a ruler to measure the revelation.

Now, if people insist that current scientific opinion is right, and *The Urantia Book* is in error, then they must justify in their minds why this is the case. Here is where the trouble starts. They begin searching for an explanation in the book itself. They search a supposedly inaccurate book for a statement to prove its own inaccuracies. Once they find an explanation, they can relax, having found a mental loophole to slip through when confronted with controversial information.

Time and again it is stated that the revelators were mandated to use the science of the times, to give preference to the highest existing human concepts. And now that new discoveries have been made, the revelation appears to be in error. The acknowledgment in the beginning of the book seems to be one of the sources for this idea. It says that in coordinating essential knowledge the authors must give preference to the highest concepts pertaining to the subjects to be presented (p. 16). No matter how I read that line, I never get the impression that in coordinating essential knowledge there was the need to purposefully include inaccuracies. (In carefully reading the acknowledgment it seems that it is talking mainly about things of spiritual value.)

We've already determined that with high spiritual concepts there is some distortion, but when concerned with the mechanical simplicity of the physical sciences this hardly seems sensible. There are too many instances in the book where the science of the time was not used, or in fact was corrected. Continental drift is one example (p. 668), and the calculations for the sun's mass is another (p. 459).

On page 1109, the so called "disclaimer," the

authors also claim that their statements regarding the physical sciences will stand in need of revision because of new discoveries and developments, and that they were forbidden to include these undiscovered facts in these records. Once again, there is no implication that they had to use untrue statements. Limited, yes, but not untrue. Because men and angels alike must search and discover the physical nature of the universe (it's not inspired), it would be unfair for angels to reveal information to us that we have yet to discover.

The thing that will catch the attention of future students of this revelation will be the noticeable omissions of scientific data. These errors of omission will make certain statements outdated and stand in need of revision as the scientific process rolls on. Does this mean we are actually going to receive a revision at some future date? Not necessarily. During the expansion of the United States, maps contained only those states

that belonged to the Union. The first maps had only thirteen, and as additional states joined the Federation, the maps were revised to include these new states. Now that we have maps with fifty states, does it make those early maps untrue? No. They are "in need of revision" and are erroneous only in comparison to current data due to omissions, but they are accurate in context.

As previously noted, it has been suggested that the Revelators purposefully planted erroneous information in the book, the so-called "time bombs." The idea is that these errors would one day "explode" on the page, flawing the content of the book, thus making it tainted and unattractive to those readers who might otherwise make it a fetish. In all my years of study, I've never come across anyone with a *Urantia Book* fetish. In fact, just the contrary. We mark it up, spill things on it, and leave it lying around on the floor. This is like saying Adam and Eve purposely stumbled and fell constantly so they wouldn't be worshiped as Gods. This is an insult to the intelligence of those individuals who are at a level capable of accepting high truth. We do have a healthy reverence for the book, though, because it is a beautiful work of literary art. Even opponents of the book recognize its commanding use of the

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English language.

One such "time bomb" has been supposedly discovered in a complicated paragraph on page 657. It states:

"The planets nearest the sun were the first to have their revolutions slowed down by tidal friction. Such gravitational influences also contribute to the stabilization of planetary orbits while acting as a brake on the rate of planetary-axial revolution, causing a planet to revolve ever slower until axial revolution ceases, leaving one hemisphere of the planet always turned toward the sun or larger body, as is illustrated by the planet Mercury and by the moon, which always turns the same face toward Urantia." At the time of the revelation the scientific community believed that Mercury showed the same side toward the sun. In 1965 it was proved to the contrary. A casual reading makes it seem as if the writers were expressing the science of the time. It has been suggested that because the Revelators knew this, they must have used erroneous material to create flaws in an otherwise near perfect book to prevent fetishism.

However, the real problem seems to be a misreading of this complicated paragraph. It expresses two ideas in two interrelated sentences. The first sentence introduces the main topic which is planets slowing down by tidal friction. The second is a compound-complex one of parallel construction with several dependent clauses explaining what eventually happens to a planet affected by tidal friction. In it we have two ideas and two examples of those ideas; planets revolving ever slower (Mercury) until axial revolution ceases (the moon). It is easy to see how confusion comes from a sentence so structured with multiple dependent clauses.

I'd like to address one other suggested "time bomb" that has been addressed in the past without resolution. The Urantia Papers state that those mortals achieving the third psychic circle acquire their own personal pair of guardian angels who, upon the death of their ward, proceed to the mansion worlds there to await the resurrection. For these individuals this resurrection takes place "on the

third day" or less frequently stated "on the third period." What is a "period," by the way?

Because some readers insist on interpreting "on the third day/period" as only meaning a three-day time period, such as occurred with the resurrection of Jesus, they are confronted with the problem of how seraphim, who can proceed at no more than three times the speed of light, are able to arrive on the mansion worlds several light years away within a three-day time period. This is a very perplexing problem, but must we resort to distorting time and bending space to make it work out? In my opinion the revelation makes it seem clear that transportation

through space is a fairly simple go-from-this place-to-that-place procedure, except for certain personalities like the Gravity Messengers who seem to be unconditioned by time and space. There are some readers who feel that there might be a manner of transportation yet unrevealed to us for some reason that would account for this problem of seraphic travel over great distances in a relatively

It doesn't stand to reason that the revelatory mandates encouraged the placing of inaccurate science and cosmology in a revelation that was designed to "reduce confusion by authoritative elimination of error."

short period of time.

The best explanation I have heard for this problem is that "on the third day/period" refers to an indefinite time period that is of a short duration rather than a long one. Something similar to the common Jewish expression of Jesus' time, "on the third day," which signified "presently" or "soon thereafter" (p. 1872). This is similar to the way we use "a hop, skip, and a jump" to signify a short distance as opposed to a long one.

It doesn't stand to reason that the revelatory mandates encouraged the placing of inaccurate science and cosmology in a revelation that was designed to "reduce confusion by authoritative elimination of error" (p. 1109). The idea of divine deception is repugnant, and I hardly think the Ancients of Days would authorize such mandates.

The mandates concerning the physical sciences could have been something as simple as this: (1) If any human mind has conceived anything remotely related to the fact, then the authors could restate it with more clarity. It didn't have to be a common or published idea. This could give rise to many apparently predictive statements; (2) If a certain line

of scientific investigation is proceeding toward a definite discovery in the very near future, then the authors could reveal that discovery before its time, knowing that scientists wouldn't be reading the revelation, thus not revealing undiscovered facts. This too would produce predictive statements; (3) If current data is incorrect in any known theory, then it can be corrected complying with the first two mandates. This is just a suggestion as to what some of the mandates may have been.

If there are verifiable flaws to be found in the revelation, then, in my opinion, they must be due to recording errors, printing errors or some aspect involving the production of the book itself.

But how do we really determine what is in error, if anything? Whose ruler do we use? This is my great concern. I'm only confident that we are not being deceived, pampered, or "time bombed." The only thing we can know for certain is that the truth will prevail. We are currently laying the foundation for the future students of the Fifth Epochal Revelation. But if our foundation becomes attached to the authority of a fallible modern science, then this movement will be just as crippled as Christianity is today, which is dragging around Western civilization like a ball and chain.

In order to proceed safely into the truth of this revelation and of today's science, we now need the aid of Spirit-led investigators with no other motive than to just discover the truth, beauty, and goodness of our fascinating cosmic home, a home filled with so many wonders yet to be uncovered.

Denver Pearson has long been active in the Urantia Movement. He tells us: "The Urantia Book found me in 1970." Denver became a member at large of the Urantia Brotherhood in 1977. He has organized and participated in study groups wherever he has lived. While living in Denver, Colorado, he became a member of the Rocky Mountain Spiritual Fellowship. Denver has served as an officer in that Society. Denver has a Bachelors degree in fine arts from the University of New Mexico. Many Urantians know Denver as an accomplished musician, and he published a musical tape of original songs inspired by the UB. He is currently working on a novel based on the Urantia Papers.

The Infinity of God an Astronomical Approach

by Bud Bromley

How big is God? One approach is to ask, "How big is the universe which He pervades? Or, at least, how big is what we presently know of it?"

Let's start with a map on which the whole Earth is but a circle 1/4 inch in diameter, a garden pea. Then the moon is a tiny glass Indian bead 1/16 of an inch in diameter, located 7.53 inches from the Earth. The sun is a beach ball 27.25 inches in diameter, located 81.4 yards from the Earth, slightly more than 8/10 of the way down a football field. Our outermost planet, Pluto, is a sand grain 1/25 of an inch, or about a millimeter, in diameter, and is 1.8 miles from the sun. Consider that again. The whole Earth which is really about 8,000 miles in diameter, is but 1/4 inch across on our map, yet Pluto, on that same map, is 1.8 miles away from the sun. We are already talking about a map that extends 1.8 miles, and we have just barely begun!

Astronomers often use a unit of measure called a light year. It is the distance which light, going at 186,281 miles per second, goes in one year. It goes about 5,878,680,189,000 miles. To get some idea of this huge distance, think of a meter stick, which is 39.37 inches long. The meter stick is marked in centimeters, and millimeters. The millimeter is about 1/25 of an inch, and there are 1,000 of them to one meter. Let this meter stick represent one light year. Now suppose that someone could get in a car and drive at 65 miles per hour, day and night, with no stops, no holidays. If he drove, non-stop, for 10,317 years, he would have driven just one single millimeter of the way along the meter stick; that is, he would still have 999 more millimeters yet to go to complete just one light year.

To return to our map, which is scaled down just slightly over 2 billion times, one light year is 2926.5 miles long. That is, if we put the sun on a strip of paper starting a few miles east of Los Angeles, our strip of paper would have to stretch nearly to New York City to include just one light year. Remember that our Earth is a 1/4 inch pea.

How many peas would it take in a line to go from Los Angeles to New York City?

Sirius, often called the Dog Star, the brightest star in our sky, is about 8.7 light years away, or

25,460 miles on our map. That's about once around the Earth in miles. Our paper strip, starting with the sun just east of Los Angeles, would have to go clear around the whole Earth and back to Los Angeles in order to include Sirius, which is one of our very near neighbor stars.

If we can find the Big Dipper, and, starting at the bowl, follow the curve of the handle on beyond the handle, we come to a bright reddish star, Arcturus. Arcturus is 36 light-years away, which is 105,354 miles away on our map, or over four times around the Earth. If we continue on around the curve from the Dipper's handle, we can come to a moderately bright star, Spica, in the constellation Virgo; it is 257 light years away, or 752,114 miles on our map. Our moon is about 240,000 miles away, so our map is already over three times as far out as is the moon! In the bright winter constellation of Orion, the brightest star, Betelgeuse, is 587 light years away; this is 1,717,864 miles away on our map. Orion's second brightest star, Rigel, is 880 light years away, or 2,575,332 miles away on our map. Deneb, one of the three bright stars forming the winter triangle (Deneb, Vega, and Altair) is the star at the head of the Northern Cross, a part of the constellation of Cygnus. It is 1630 light years away, or 4,770,218 miles on our map. Over four million miles of a map is hard (impossible?) to comprehend, but we are still with stars we can easily see, stars in our near neighborhood! And don't forget--the real universe is slightly more than 2,000,000,000 times bigger than is our map.

The nearest galaxy to us is the Andromeda Galaxy, thought to be about 2,000,000 light years away. How shall we comprehend a million? Put 1,000 meter sticks together in a line down a road; that will be 1,000,000 millimeters. You are walking down that road. As you walk, visualize the millimeters (twenty fifths of an inch) you are whizzing past at every step. Slightly beyond six tenths of a mile (.6214 miles), you will have passed one million of them. If you were hired to put a pencil dot on each one of the millimeter marks, and you could average three dots per second for eight hours a day, it would take you eleven days, four hours, and 44 minutes to dot all one million marks.

Can you imagine going "dot-dot-dot" every second for even just eight hours?

Now put together your understanding of how long one light year is, with your understanding of how many a million is, then double it, and you will appreciate the distance to the Andromeda Galaxy, our nearest galaxy. Astronomers can photograph objects several billion light years away; this is several thousand times as far away as is the Andromeda Galaxy. We can talk about these numbers, but our real comprehension of these distances was overwhelmed long before this.

Incredibly huge as this known universe is, God created it, God sustains it, God fills it, inhabits all of it; and yet, God is probably incomprehensibly greater than even this immense chunk of which we know. The size of God, to fill all this, and more, is but one dimension of His infinity. The intelligence of God, to have devised all this is another dimension of His infinity. And the power of God to sustain all this,

all at the same time, is still another dimension of His infinity.

And the greatest miracle is that this inconceivably infinite God lovingly invites each one of us to call Him "Father!"

Bud Bromley is a retired mathematics and English teacher. He is the son of an American Baptist minister, yet Bud tells us he was a much more intelligently logical scholar than the unfortunate stereotype of a hard nosed conservative clergyman. Bud was a flying radio operator in the CBI theater in WW II. He first encountered The Urantia Book in 1957, and was carefully skeptical. However, he reports that when he got to Paper 4, section 5, paragraph 4, (a refutation of the atonement doctrine) he was compelled to exclaim: "Yes! This has got to be right!" And, ever since, he has been an earnest student of the Urantia Papers. He tells us he has been puzzled often, but never turned off. Bud can be reached at:

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The Real Gospel

by Norm Du Val

What is the gospel?

The word “gospel” means “good news,” but that’s just a definition. You want to know, “What is the good news, and where does it come from?”

Some will say that the gospel is the story about Jesus, as written by the New Testament writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. After all, these stories are often called the “Four Gospels.” Others will tell you the good news is that God sent His son to earth as a sacrifice, to die, and to rise again, in order to atone for the sins of mankind. Still others say that Jesus’ death on the cross was a ransom paid by God to redeem mankind from the Devil, and so on.

The New Testament says that Jesus and the apostles went from city to city, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God to the multitude.

“And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” [Matthew 9:35]

“And it came to pass...that Jesus went throughout every city and village, preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him...” [Luke 8:1] (Also see Matthew 4:23, Mark 1:14, and Luke 4:43.)

From these verses we can tell that the gospel was something that Jesus actually preached and taught. Thus, the question of where the gospel comes from is answered. It comes from Jesus.

The word gospel means “good news” and “glad tidings,” but what exactly was Jesus telling the people? What was his message? And has the essence of it, the actual gospel, the teachings of Jesus, been partly lost to us today and replaced by another message, the teachings about Jesus?

On these preaching tours, Jesus gave the people very important information (the good news!), and it was a positive, powerful message, focused on a few specific ideas. The gospel that Jesus taught was that information which would

satisfy our deepest spiritual hopes, needs and desires: to better know our Father in heaven and our relationship with humankind, to be of the Spirit and to show the fruits of the Spirit, and to have eternal life with God.

We can tell from his teachings that the gospel of Jesus, even what we may call the “religion of Jesus,” was and still is, this:

God is our loving spiritual Father and we are all His children, sons and daughters in His family. If we love God and love one another, we will have eternal life in heaven.

Have you heard the expression, “I got it straight from the horse’s mouth?” When people say this, they mean they got some information right from the source, and therefore it is true. It is like a

gold miner who finds the mother lode. The actual teachings of Jesus are from the true source, the mother lode, from God Himself, as personified by his son.

Here, then, are the high spiritual teachings of Jesus, the information that he was giving to the crowds, — the real gospel. It’s all you need to

know.

The Father’s Will

Jesus teaches us about doing the Father’s will and entering the kingdom of heaven.

“Not every one who says to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.” [Matthew 7:21]

Doing the Father’s will is the key to entering the kingdom of heaven. And what is the Father’s will? It is simply loving God, and loving and serving our brothers and sisters on earth, our brothers and sisters in God’s family.

Eternal Life

Jesus tells us how we can have eternal life.

“And, behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tested him, saying, ‘Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ Jesus said to him, ‘What is written in the law? how do you read it?’ And he answered saying, ‘Thou shall love God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy

strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself.' And Jesus said to him, 'Thou has answered right: this do, and thou shall live.'" (Luke 10:25-28)

Do this and you will have eternal life! Love God, and love your neighbor. Could it be any clearer or simpler? Jesus knows that loving all of our fellow humans may not be easy for us, but he expects trend and effort.

The Mission of Jesus

Jesus tells us why he came to earth.

"And he said unto them, I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore was I sent." [Luke 4:43]

Many have differing views as to the purpose of Jesus' incarnation on earth. Here, Jesus himself tells us that he came to earth to preach the gospel, the good news of the kingdom of God.

The Kingdom of God

Jesus teaches a new and very personal idea about the kingdom of God.

"And when he was asked by the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God would come, he answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God will come not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.'" [Luke 17:21]

Imagine! The kingdom of God is within you. This is a stunning but misunderstood teaching of Jesus. There are several aspects of the kingdom of God. One is spiritual, —the kingdom is not a material realm. Another is the outward kingdom, — the Father and His angels off in heaven somewhere. And then there is the kingdom within. Jesus is talking about this inner kingdom when he says that the kingdom of God is within you, actually a part of the Father himself, sharing your life, going through your ups and downs with you, and if you desire it, guiding you like a compass back to Him. This is not a nebulous spirituality wafting through you, as might be imagined for a spirit being, and as might be the case in some situations, but rather a definite focalization of the Father in you.

Separation from God

If we have become separated from God, Jesus tells us what the Father requires in order for us to come home to Him, to rejoin His family, our spiritual family. *The Parable of the Prodigal Son.* [Luke 15:11-32]

Many people do not give much thought to the parables that Jesus taught. They are often quoted but seldom explained. Parables are simple stories with a single, clear message. You don't have to be a theologian or a rocket scientist to understand them. In this parable, Jesus says that our spiritual Father will welcome us home just as soon as we sincerely want to return to Him. Even though the repentant son was still a long way off, the moment his father saw him coming down the road he ran to him to greet him in love and welcome him back into the family. This is how our Father in heaven responds to us, His children, always with an attitude of love and forgiveness. No matter how far down the road away from the Father you think

you are, if you want to return home, the door is open.

Forgiveness of Our Sins

Jesus tells us how we can have our sins forgiven.

"For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." [Matthew 6:14]

Forgiving others is a difficult thing for us to do. In reality, the Father's forgiveness is always available to us. By forgiving others, we tap into that forgiveness, we open the door to it.

Being Born Again

In a conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus teaches us about being "born again."

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water [physical birth], and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." [John 3:5]

God is spirit. When we love God and desire to do His will, we are born again, born of the Spirit. It's that simple.

Imagine! The kingdom of God is within you. This is a stunning but misunderstood teaching of Jesus. There are several aspects of the kingdom of God. One is spiritual, —the kingdom is not a material realm. Another is the outward kingdom, — the Father and His angels off in heaven somewhere. And then there is the kingdom within.

Jesus tells us to be perfect.

“Be you therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.” [Matthew 5:48]

Nobody’s perfect, as the saying goes. Perfection is not our condition, but it is our goal. The Father knows that we have been created with a “human nature,” after all, He created us. It will take effort on our part to become more perfect, more spiritual, more like God. There’s no time like the present to start. In the words of Lao-tzu, “A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step.”

Jesus tells us about God’s family.

Jesus says, “Our Father...” [Matthew 6:9, Luke 11:2]

When Jesus uses the term Father, he is talking about his Father and our Father. Above all else God is a loving Father and we are his children. If we know that we are sons and daughters of God, we will naturally want to act like one.

Jesus tells us that God knows.

“...for your Father knows what things you have need of, before you ask him.” [Matthew 6:8]

God knows our real needs. His kingdom is a spiritual one and our real needs are mostly spiritual in nature. When we pray, we should not pray overmuch for material things, but should pray for spiritual insight, pray for others, and pray for help to know and do the Father’s will. When Jesus says, “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you...” [Matthew 7:7, Luke 11:9], he is talking about spiritual gifts, spiritual truths, and spiritual doors.

The Fruits of the Spirit

Jesus teaches us about tolerance, one of the fruits of the Spirit, and beyond mere tolerance, even love for other people and groups which may be different from our own.

“For if you only love those who love you, what reward have you? do not even the publicans do the same? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you do more than others? do not even the publicans do so?” [Matthew 5:46-47, Luke 6:32-33]

Sharing the Good News

Jesus talks about sharing the good news, —his teachings.

“...freely you have received, freely give.” [Matthew 10:8]

The good news is not something to be hidden under a rock. It should be shared with everyone in God’s family.

Many religions are complex, but the real gospel of Jesus is simple: Love God your Father, and love your fellow man. If you do this you will be doing the Father’s will, and you will have an eternal life of love and service with God. This real gospel of Jesus will also be acceptable to all of God’s children on earth who love Him, whether they be Christian, Moslem, Jew, Buddhist, or Hindu.

And finally, as would be expected from the Son of a loving God, comforting words from Jesus to all of us.

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

[Luke 12:32]

***“Fear not, little flock;
for it is your Father’s good
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the kingdom.”***

[Luke 12:32]

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Norm Du Val has been a highly active Urantian for many years. Norm was born and raised in Minneapolis. He spent three years in the US Army, with a year of that in Korea in 1962. Few people know that Norm was related to Emma Louise Christensen (“Christy”), one of the contact commissioners. His first Urantia Book, an original 1955 First Printing, was given to him in 1959 by his grandmother, Olga Christensen, who was Emma’s sister ... and who also had the nickname “Christy.” Norm now keeps his 1955 printing in a safe deposit box. He moved to Missoula, Montana in 1969. Norm retired from the US Post Office in Missoula in 1992. He now lives in a rural area of the USA. Norm maintains a website at <http://www.freeurantia.org> ... he can be reached by email at: nduval@pop.ctctel.com

The Turning Point - Part II

Arthur Nash

Excerpted from the book, "The Golden Rule in Business," copyright 1923, this material has significance for Urantian scholars for three reasons. Part I of this excerpt chronicles Nash's devotion to his church, and the misguided fundamentalism of the organization that resulted in his expulsion. In Part II he chronicles his spiritual rebirth. In one of the most remarkable testimonies to the practical values of the Golden Rule, Nash describes how he applied it to a failing business and watched it prosper and grow. It is inspiring to read the birth of personal religion in Nash by means of loving service—the great gospel of Jesus of Nazareth. Nash's work may well have been a secondary human source for a key concept of the Urantia Papers, as we shall see.
L.M.

In the year 1909, I took up my residence in Columbus, Ohio, and started to manufacture men's clothing, to sell to the public direct. My business flourished right from the start. Pretty soon I had a dozen salesmen out on the road, and I began to make money. By the year 1913, my concern was standing pretty solidly on its feet. Then came the disastrous flood and I, together with many another man, found myself practically wiped out.

After this setback, I resolved to settle in Cincinnati. I was pretty close to the wall in those days—so close, indeed, that I had to obtain permission from my merchandise creditors to move my stock, and to find security for a note of seven hundred dollars I owed my bank. However, I got started, continued to make steady progress for three years, and in June, 1916, The A. Nash Company was organized, with a capital of \$60,000. We had an office, cutting rooms, and a stock of goods. We cut the garments and farmed them out to be made up.

Meanwhile the World War continued its frightful work of devastation, and, as any reasoning human being could see, this country was surely, if slowly,

drifting into it, we made no effort to develop the plant, electing to wait until the great struggle should be ended.

At this time The A. Nash Company was one of the smallest concerns in Cincinnati. As I have just intimated, we had no factory of our own. We had our place of business in the Power Building, and furnished floor space to a man who had joined up with us, and who made our garments under contract. A short while after the Armistice was concluded, this man came to me and said, "Mr. Nash, I have heard nothing of my mother and sisters since the outbreak of the war. I want to go back to Europe. Will you buy my shop?"

"Yes," I replied, "under those conditions I will be glad to."

Another fact should be borne in mind, namely, that the shop we bought was literally a sweat-shop, and that sweat-shops are always made up of inefficient workers who cannot get a job in a high-grade shop.

So we bought out this man, took over his business and the people he employed, and for the first time his pay-roll came into my hands. Concerning this same payroll I want certain facts borne in mind. During the time America was engaged in the World War, business conditions in the clothing line in the city of Cincinnati were decidedly poor.

Very few large government contracts were obtained by any of the firms located there, and no civilian clothes in any quantity were being bought, simply because all our young fellows were expecting almost daily, to be called upon to don the uniform of Uncle Sam. So workers were on the old, low wage scale, when I took over this business.

Another fact should be borne in mind, namely, that the shop we bought was literally a sweat-shop, and that sweat-shops are always made up of inefficient workers who cannot get a job in a high-grade shop. Wages in what are known as "inside shops," run by the factories themselves, always start where the sweat-shop wages leave off; thus the wages that were being paid in this shop at the time we took it over, must not be confused with the wages paid in the inside shops of the large clothing manufacturers of Cincinnati.

In this shop were two workers that particularly attracted my attention. One was a tall, dignified old lady, close on to eighty years of age, who pulled out bastings and sewed on buttons. The other was a

little hunchback who ran a machine. Both were on this payroll at \$4.00 a week. Workers possessing a little more ability than they were supposed to possess, were receiving \$5.00 and \$6.00. The highest-paid woman in the shop was drawing \$7.00. The pressers and "skilled" men were getting \$18.00 a week. Such was the character of the wage-scale handed to me when The A. Nash Company became owners of their own factory.

I looked at that pay-roll and saw instantly that something stood between it and myself. It was the Golden Rule that recently I had been doing a good deal of talking about. I called my eldest son into conference and said to him, "Look at that pay-roll." Now it must be remembered that the boy was just back from a soul-racking experience on the battle-fields of Europe; that, as a result, he was in wretched health, and had not, as yet, begun to look at these matters as I had myself.

"Well, what of it?" he asked, as he scanned the paper.

"Just this," I answered. "You have been with me in some of the meetings where I have talked recently, in behalf of Liberty Loans, and you know something of the firm conviction that has sprung up in my heart concerning what this world can become if we really live out the Golden Rule. Do you think that holding such a conviction that I can go into that shop next Saturday, and hand these people pay-envelopes with any such wages in them as that sheet indicates?"

"What else can you do?" my son retorted. "If you don't, you knock yourself clean out. Yours is the same scale of wages that is being paid in all similar shops, and if you want to keep your end up, there is nothing you can do but stick to it." Nor was there—at least it looked that way just then.

I went home and discussed the situation with my wife. My boy's argument, taken at its face value, was sound enough. We were closing our fiscal year showing a loss of \$4,000. Our original investment of \$60,000 was shown by a recently taken inventory to have depreciated to \$56,000. No; there appeared to be but one alternative: I had to carry on this clothing business and continue to mete out what I knew to be rank injustice—or get out of it. I decided to do the latter, and as there were only a few stock-holders

besides myself, in the concern, I called them together the next morning and put the proposition up to them. They agreed to liquidate the company after I had promised to make good their loss, and return their investment. The most that I hoped to be able to do was to manage to get out with enough money to make a small first payment on a farm. As I said at the time: "There's the only place where a man can really be a Christian. He certainly can't be one in the clothing business."

After this meeting with my fellow stock-holders I went into the factory, called my little group of workers together, and said something of this kind to them:

"Friends, you have heard no doubt that we have bought this shop, and I have come in to get acquainted with you. No doubt, too, you have heard a great deal about the talks that I have been giving during the War about Brotherhood and the Golden Rule, while pleading the cause of Christianity and its affiliation to my conception of true Democracy. Now I am going to do a bit of talking to you. First, I want you to know that

"First, I want you to know that Brotherhood is a reality with me. You are all my brothers and my sisters, children of the same great Father that I am, and entitled to all the justice and fair treatment that I want for myself."

Brotherhood is a reality with me. You are all my brothers and my sisters, children of the same great Father that I am, and entitled to all the justice and fair treatment that I want for myself. And so long as we run this shop, [which to me meant three or four months longer] God being my helper, I am going to treat you as my brothers and sisters, and the Golden Rule is going to be our only governing law. Which means that whatever I would like to have you do to me, were I in your place, I am going to do to you. Now," I went on, "not knowing any of you personally, I would like you to raise your hands as I call your names."

I read the first name. Under it was written: *Sewing on buttons—\$4.00 per week.* I looked straight before me at the little group, but saw no hand. Then I looked to my right, and there saw the old lady I have referred to, holding up her trembling hand. At first I could not speak, because, almost instantly, the face of my own mother came between that old lady and myself. I thought of my mother being in such a situation, and of what, in the

circumstances, I would want someone to do for *her*. I hardly knew what to say, because I was aware that when I went into the shop, that after agreeing to stand all of the loss entailed by the liquidation of the company, I could not go too far in raising wages. It seemed to be my obvious duty to salvage something for the boys who were coming home from military service, and for the daughter just entering the university. But as I looked at that old lady, and saw only my mother, I finally blurted out: "I don't know what it's worth to sew on buttons; I never sewed a button on. But your wages, to begin with, will be \$12.00 per week." That was a 300% raise. The next name on list was that of the little hunchback, whose wages were the same as those of the aged worker. But I had established a precedent and so had to give her a 300% increase also. And so I went on, through my entire wage-sheet, right up to the \$18.00-a-week pressers, whose salaries I increased to \$27.00.

Let it be borne in mind that I was not acting under the spell of some wondrous, compelling vision. I realized with perfect clearness that the granting of these increases meant, that every Saturday night, I would be taking just so many dollars as the increased pay-roll demanded, off the value of the farm I was proposing to buy. But I had reached a point in my thinking where I felt, that unless I was prepared to sacrifice every bit of laudable idealism I had in my soul, the thing had got to be gone through with. Having so far settled matters with my conscience and sense of equity, I began to look around for my farm. Beyond exercising some sort of general oversight, I ceased to pay much attention to the clothing business. Yet I became aware that, unmistakably, sales were picking up. This was because our soldier-boys were being demobilized, and a demand for civilian clothing accompanied the process.

Just at this time, I received news that a very dear friend of mine was in serious financial difficulties. He was a man on whom I set the highest value. He had a noble wife and two lovely daughters about the age of my own girl, and he was facing bankruptcy. So the Golden Rule began to get in its work again. "What can be done to help my friend," I asked myself. To aid me in answering my own question, I

went to see my bookkeeper—to find out how much ready money I could command. What the bookkeeper told me held me in absolute astonishment. I was simply astounded to find out how much money we had on hand. "What's going on here?" I asked. "Are you selling goods by the yards?"

"No," she answered, "but don't you know we are doing almost three times the amount of business were doing at this time last year?"

"No, I do not—never dreamed such a thing. How is it being done? Where are you getting the garments made?"

"I think they are making them in the shop," my bookkeeper answered. "I've had no bills sent to me for outside work."

To aid me in answering my own question, I went to see my bookkeeper—to find out how much ready money I could command. What the bookkeeper told me held me in absolute astonishment.

"That shop was running to full capacity when we bought it," I said. "Have you bought a lot of extra machines?"

No; she had seen no bills for machines either. "But we are doing the business just the same," she returned, "and the money is coming here, and we are depositing it in the bank."

After the help had gone, I went down into the factory and talked to the forelady.

"What's going on here?" I asked.

"Why—nothing," she answered, "except that we're making a lot of clothes."

"The bookkeeper tells me you are making three times as many clothes as when we took the shop over. Is that a fact?"

"It is. I don't know the figures," she went on, "but I do know we are actually producing merchandise at less cost than before you increased the wages of the help. Take for instance, that old lady whose weekly salary you increased 300%. You should come in sometime and take a peep at her. Somehow, her poor, old, crippled fingers have got limbered up, a look of youth has come into her eyes, and she is doing twice the amount of work she ever did before.

"But the biggest thing of all in this shop," she continued, "is the case of the skilled help, who at one time, were simply loafing on the job. They've

got busy lately and are showing us all how to get work done. The garments are coming through in one constant stream.”

I felt completely at sea. “Do you mind telling me just what has brought all this about?” I asked the forelady.

“I hardly think I can,” she replied.

“Why?”

“Well, for one thing, the story would have to include some talk that possibly you wouldn’t care to hear.”

“Don’t mind me. Please go right on and tell me. I have heard some rather peculiar talk at one time and another. Just relate what has happened.”

“Well, it was something like this: After you left the shop on the day you announced your intention of raising wages, we all stood around for a few moments looking rather helplessly at each other. Presently the little Italian presser—you know him—blurted out: ‘Well I’ll be damned!’

“We all looked at him, and after a minute’s silence he went on: “Whatever this Golden Rule thing is I don’t know, but what Mr. Nash told us was that all he wanted us to do was work just as we would want him to work if we were up in the office paying wages, and he was back here doing the work. Now I know, if I was the boss and would come in and talk to the workers as he did, and raise wages like he has, I’d want every one to work like hell!”

“There!” said the forelady. “That’s about all there is to it. Our people just caught the drift of Tony’s idea and went ahead in the spirit of it. That’s why we’ve trebled our output. If I talked for a week, I couldn’t tell you any more.”

Nor can I. That is how it all began. In a very short time we found ourselves unable to handle the volume of business which began to pour in. I soon lost all interest in the purchase of that farm and begun to have a vision of the possibility of becoming a genuinely Christian man in the world of commerce and industry. I desire to be implicitly believed when I state, that were it not for this vision, this possibility, I could never have brought

myself to remain in the business world. But the foregleams of coming day had shone in upon me, and I determined to utilize every means compatible with an adoption and operation of the Golden Rule to demonstrate the fact that, in the twentieth century of the Christian era, the principles laid down by Jesus of Nazareth in the first, could be made to work—work successfully and not merely as a sacrificial ideal—for the mutual well-being of mankind, and to the glory of God.

“What’s wrong with Christianity that renders it powerless in this awful hour of world-wide need?”

THE GREAT DISCOVERY

At this point in my story, I want to turn aside from the main narrative, which relates to the development of The A. Nash Company under the principles of the Golden Rule, to deal with a poignant personal experience. I turn to it because nothing this book contains, exceeds it in importance so far as my own personal attitude

toward life is concerned. It is the story of a great discovery—of the embracing of a great truth, which by God’s grace I mean never to relinquish while life shall last.

During the first three years of the World War—the years, that is, before the United States lined up to take her share in it—I found myself in a bitter, ironical frame of mind. Whenever I could get hold of a minister willing to listen to me, I would begin to rail at him regarding the frightful carnage going on in Europe.

“Look at that scene across the ocean,” I would say, “and tell me, if you think *that* is Christianity! Those nations who are at each other’s throats are, with one or two exceptions, all, nominally, Christian nations. Cannot the religion they profess, and which you preach and teach, do anything to put an end to this tragedy—the most awful thing the world has ever known—while almost the entire heathen world plays the parts of spectator? What’s wrong with Christianity that renders it powerless in this awful hour of world-wide need?”

Needless to say, none of them ever gave me an answer that amounted to anything. The men I put my question to were worried, perplexed, and *simply didn’t know* what reply to offer. And what is more—although I, in my arrogance, assumed the role of questioner, I had no answer myself. Yet, as the facts

already set down in this narrative indicate, I *ought* to have known just as well as anybody else. For had I not been a student of the Bible, and of the writings of its antagonists, virtually all my days?

Yet there I was, pestering anxious men with insistent queries for which I, myself, had no solution—a pretty contemptible form of diversion, as I see it now. But there was one minister in Cincinnati who appeared to be quite willing to face the situation, grave and bewildering as it was. Evening after evening, he would come and sit with me on my porch, and discuss the terrible war.

One day he surprised me by saying: “Mr. Nash, I have a boy about to be graduated from the university, and I have been asked to take some part in the exercises. Which means I shall be compelled to be away from my pulpit on a Sunday about two months hence. Will you take my place?”

“What on earth are you talking about?” I replied.

“I mean just exactly what I am saying,” he rejoined. “I want you to occupy my pulpit, and I will select your subject for you. Go over and tell my people what, in your opinion, is the matter with religion—with Christianity.”

“Well, if I do,” I answered sarcastically, “you can depend on one thing—you’ll have no congregation to meet you on your return.”

“I’ll risk that,” my friend returned. “Will you consent to do it?”

Possibly, because I did not care to run out of a challenge, more than for any other reason, I agreed to do what I had been asked.

Just as I began to prepare what in my pride of spirit I imagined would be a tremendous assault on the citadel of the Christian faith, I received word that my eldest boy, who had gone over to Europe with the Canadians, had been seriously wounded at Vimy Ridge, and was lying unconscious in a hospital in England. In addition, my youngest lad, caught up by the spirit of the time, had joined the United States Marines. The reading of that cablegram acted as a sort of solar plexus blow on

my pride and self-sufficiency. I had accepted this challenge—well, to say the least of it—in no spirit of humility. And yet, here was I, heart-broken at the fate which had overtaken my boy, and thinking of hundreds of thousands of other gallant fellows who were pouring out their life-blood in France and Flanders. “This is no fitting time to get up in a church pulpit and shoot off a lot of nonsense,” I said to myself. “What *is* wrong with Christianity, anyhow? You had better find out for yourself, first, before you attempt to tell other people.”

...That what all the writers, who were so eagerly rushing into print were attacking and finding fault with was not Christianity at all, but the lack of it! “Christianity had not failed, simply because Christianity had not yet been tried.”¹

So I started to find out. I went down to the library—any amount of articles were current at that time purporting to show that Christianity was an ardent failure—and began to read up. And my reading soon brought me to see one great, stark, outstanding fact: That what all the writers, who were so eagerly rushing into print were attacking and finding fault with was not Christianity at all, but

the lack of it! *“Christianity had not failed, simply because Christianity had not yet been tried.”¹*

Quite a number of smart phrase-makers sought to annex credit for the invention of that phrase during the World War, each of whom had stolen it. Yet there was a tremendous proportion and element of truth in it, just as there had been away back in the early years of the eighteenth century, when the scoffing atheists of those worthless, godless days, flung it in the teeth of the professed followers of Jesus. In the individual life of many a saint of God it *had* been tried, and never once, when earnestly and sincerely tried, been found to fail.

But of adoption in any national, or, so far as the Christian Church was concerned, universal sense, there had been none. *Which statement is as unchallengeably true at the very hour in which I am penning these lines*, as in the days when the epigram was regarded as being quite the proper thing to lisp and snicker, by the “wits” and the witless of the London coffee-houses and Paris salons, as they snapped their snuff-boxes, and strutted their way down to a well-deserved and unlifting oblivion. To be sure, the voice of the Prophet of Nazareth is heard, today, above the

babble and clamor of men and markets, with more distinctness than in any previous era of the Christian centuries. Yet, substantially, the shameful indictment still stands, and to it the Church, together with the world, must enter a plea of "Guilty!"

But to get back to my own case: As a man reared an Adventist, I imagined I knew something about the Scriptures; so I went back to the old Book and began to acquaint myself afresh with the teachings of the Galilean. Very soon I realized that I was reading in a fashion I had never read before. In other days I read to prove a theory, searching for proof-texts to bolster up a creed. This time I was striving earnestly to find out, from the authentic records extant, what it really was that Jesus sought to establish, what to teach, what, if anything to condemn.

There were quite a few surprises in store for me. Among other things, I discovered my hitherto preconceived notion that Jesus uttered words of sharp censure and bold condemnation concerning the religion of His race, to be utterly unfounded. What He did condemn, what did call forth His scathing denunciation, was the atmosphere of formality which permeated the nation's worship of Jehovah, and the note of insincerity which made discord of what should have been a note of praise. Time and again, I saw how He was continually pointing out the claims of the law and the precepts of the prophets, and how appallingly those about Him were violating the one, and turning a deaf ear to the other. "I have not come to destroy your religion," He said in effect, "but to teach you how to fulfill its requirements, and to conform to its demands." That was the substance of Christ's message to the people of His own day.

And then, just as naturally as the action of sunlight, I began to ponder the question as to what was to become of all those brave lads who were daily laying down their lives on the reddened battlefields of Europe? I turned to see what Jesus had to say about a question like that, and found that He had very little to say. I found that His chief concern was the establishment of the principles of the Kingdom of God on earth. Yet I came upon this one great solacing word—a word He gave to those who were striving to follow Him when Calvary was already flinging its

crimson shadows about Him, when He Who had done no wrong was about to endure the poignant agonies of the Cross: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." That was Jesus' message, and the more I read of His teaching, the longer I searched His sayings, the more surely I became convinced that it represented, practically, all the revelation He ever gave concerning the life that stretches away beyond the one that is bounded by earth and Time.

I saw, as I had never done before, that the Son of God came into this world, not merely that He might transport a few of us to another and more felicitous place, but that men might find salvation here and now.

As these things became clearer to me, I began to see how little there really is that Jesus said which applies only to the "life which is to come." But I discovered how much He had to say about "the life that now is." To be sure, many of His sayings are capable of a two-fold application, but most of them relate to life as it should be lived right here. I saw, as

I had never done before, that the Son of God came into this world, not merely that He might transport a few of us to another and more felicitous place, but that men might find salvation here and now. In its ultimate summation, the philosophy of Jesus found expression in His unceasing effort for the establishment of a social and spiritual order here in this world, which He called the Kingdom of God; that if men are ever to become part of it, and live in harmony with it, that *now* is the accepted time; and now the day of salvation; that men are to seek after God *now*, amid all the tumult and turmoil of everyday life.

And so I read on and on: "After this manner, therefore, pray ye . . . Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things [temporal blessings of every sort] shall be added unto you." "The kingdom of God cometh not by observation: Neither shall they say, "Lo, here! or lo, there, for behold the kingdom of God is within [among] you." And as a climax to His teaching in which He pictured the great kingdom, He enjoined men to pray for it, to work for its

establishment in the earth, and “therefore—because it is what I stand for; because of the beatitudes I proclaim; because it is imperative for the welfare of mankind—*therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.*”

As I read that twelfth verse of the seventh chapter of Matthew, the light of its true meaning broke in upon my soul for the first time in my life. I laid down my Bible and said, “The only thing that is wrong with Christianity is that we are not giving it a trial. We are using it as something to talk about, Sunday after Sunday, as something to sing and to pray about, to listen to ministers preach about, and all the time neglecting to go forth and *live it* in our daily lives. If nations, communities, individuals, were only living by the great principle which, glibly enough, has come to be called the Golden Rule, what a different world this earth would be! Then, indeed, would the glorious consummation be realized—Heaven would veritably come to earth, and the Father’s will be done among men, even as it is done in Heaven.”

Well, that is what I discovered during the hardest weeks of study I ever put in in my life. I went and occupied my friend’s pulpit, as I had promised to do. But the address I made, bore no resemblance to the one it was in my mind and intention to deliver when I consented to do so. It was a very different kind of thing—of that everybody may rest assured. It contained but one plea—a plea for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in the hearts of men. With that accomplished, the work of their hands would take care of itself, resolving itself, simply and naturally, into an outward expression of the indwelling spirit of the blameless Christ, Whose work and mission was to uplift and save mankind.

¹ “*There was much talk [in the synagogue] about Jesus’ preaching doctrines which were upsetting for the common people; his enemies maintained that his teachings were impractical, that everything would go to pieces if everybody made an honest effort to live in*

accordance with his ideas. And the men of many subsequent generations have said the same things. Many intelligent and well-meaning men, even in the more enlightened age of these revelations, maintain that modern civilization could not have been built upon the teachings of Jesus—and they are partially right. But all such doubters forget that a much better civilization could have been built upon his teachings, and sometime will be. This world has never seriously tried to carry out the teachings of Jesus on a large scale, notwithstanding that halfhearted attempts have often been made to follow the doctrines of so-called Christianity.” [1720]

“This world has never seriously or sincerely or honestly tried out these dynamic ideas and divine ideals of Jesus’ doctrine of the kingdom of heaven.” [1863]

It contained but one plea—a plea for the establishment of the kingdom of God in the hearts of men. With that accomplished, the work of their hands would take care of itself, resolving itself, simply and naturally, into an outward expression of the indwelling spirit of the blameless Christ, Whose work and mission was to uplift and save mankind.

“Present-day profit-motivated economics is doomed unless profit motives can be augmented by service motives. Ruthless competition based on narrow-minded self-interest is ultimately destructive of even those things which it seeks to maintain. Exclusive and self-serving profit motivation is incompatible with Christian ideals—much more

incompatible with the teachings of Jesus.

“In economics, profit motivation is to service motivation what fear is to love in religion. But the profit motive must not be suddenly destroyed or removed; it keeps many otherwise slothful mortals hard at work. It is not necessary, however, that this social energy arouser be forever selfish in its objectives.

“The profit motive of economic activities is altogether base and wholly unworthy of an advanced order of society; nevertheless, it is an indispensable factor throughout the earlier phases of civilization. Profit motivation must not be taken away from men until they have firmly possessed themselves of superior types of nonprofit motives for economic striving and social serving—the transcendent urges of superlative wisdom, intriguing brotherhood, and excellency of spiritual attainment.” [805]

SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP JOURNAL
for Students & Believers in the Revelation of the Urantia Papers



“When the wind blows, you hear the rustle of the leaves, but you do not see the wind--whence it comes or whither it goes--and so it is with everyone born of the spirit. With the eyes of the flesh you can behold the manifestations of the spirit, but you cannot actually discern the spirit.”

The Urantia Papers, 1602

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