

LET'S START SCHOOL

by

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Today, we shall be hearing much about "the universe as one vast school." It is thus quite appropriate for us to pause for just a few minutes to consider why this should be, something of its scope, and to consider when, how, and where matriculation begins. Other speakers and teachers I am sure will cover the topics of courses, qualifications, and continuing studies.

As you all know, the opening statement of Paper 1 of The URANTIA Book says, "The Universal Father is the God of all creation, the First Source and Center of all things and beings." (*21:1) With the matchless brevity, yet fulness of description found throughout the papers, the statement continues with "God created the heavens and formed the earth; he established the universe and created this world not in vain; he formed it to be inhabited." (*21.2) Thus we are told immediately and unequivocally that our Father is a God of purpose.

Now, from this same Universal Father, our Father, whose dwelling place is eternity, has come forth this greatest summons to mortal beings and truly to all beings who inhabit the awesome vastness of space and live in time, "Be you perfect even as I am perfect." (*21.3)

And to near-animal creatures such as we are, to whom any concept of perfection is limited by the periphery of our conceptual horizon, such a mandate would, at first hearing, seem to place us in the position of forever reaching for the unattainable ideal; an ideal whose final reality is obviously far beyond our capacity to visualize, let alone understand.

But our Father, in his infinite love and wisdom, has placed within our minds a fragment of himself which in its dedication to insure our success in responding to this summons, quietly and constantly brings to our consciousness a fundamental fact which we must never forget: our Father will never ask of us anything for the achievement of which he has not already provided in abundance all the resources internal and external necessary to insure our success. Externally these are many and so varied. Listen to what Paper 34 has to say about one: The Spirit of Truth . . . "Having accepted the assignment, do not fear the dangers of human forgetfulness, and mortal inconstancy, do not be troubled with doubts of failure or by perplexing confusion, do not falter and question your status and standing, for in every dark hour, at every crossroad in the forward struggle, the Spirit of Truth will always speak, saying, 'This is the way.'" (*383:3) The author of that statement knows whereof he speaks for he has gone that full way even as you and I will, and he has achieved all that is possible for a being of mortal-origin during this present universe age. He is a Mighty Messenger.

Our very first challenge is to our own willingness to try to listen to that muted voice within us, and to grasp with the trusting faith of a child the reality of the meanings woven into that statement of the Son of Man: "In my Father's house are many mansions, if it were not so, I would have told you." And it comes to us that he taught with authority.

The papers tell us, "The progressive comprehension of reality is the equivalent of approaching God." (*2094:3) This statement forever for us destroys any divisions between science, philosophy, and religions as it presents them as parts of a greater and unified ultimate reality. At the same time this statement becomes another guidepost, saying in its own manner, "This is the broad way."

We all know that the comprehension of anything cannot be accomplished by a simple process of mental osmosis. To comprehend reality requires effort. Our language defines "comprehend" as "to understand." And understanding is the basis of wisdom. To truly comprehend reality we need to combine knowledge and experience into another reality - wisdom. The achievement of wisdom-insight means growth because wisdom once achieved has the peculiar property of becoming a part of us. We can forget knowledge, never wisdom.

Man at birth, excepting the actual physical presence of the infant itself, is at near zero reality and near total potentiality. The process of transforming this potential into a reality possession of each individual is accomplished by the progressive comprehension of reality-or growth. Growth means unification of the divergent aspects of reality as they "appear" to be separated out here where we live in time and space. During this process we are slowly and surely accomplishing personality unification within ourselves, that achievement which was so perfectly illustrated in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Yes, our Father has provided us with resources in abundance; the whole grand universe has been called one vast university with one of the major purposes of this universe being the ascension scheme of progressive mortal growth from the level of a near animal, to the achievement of such a state of being that this mortal will have not only found God, but actually possess the capacity to recognize him when in his presence. From planet to system to constellation to universe; to minor sector, to major, to super-universe, to Havona, to Paradise, and finally into the presence of our Father himself -- has provision been made for us, and every step of the way is an earned one, a real personal achievement. Here is a being who in partnership with God has come from a primeval level to be now known as a glorified mortal who is "in possession of experiential knowledge of every step of (not only) the actuality (but also) the philosophy of the fullest possible life of intelligent existence." while climbing step by step from

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"the lowest material worlds to the spiritual heights of Paradise." (*348:5) What an indescribably magnificent destiny to contemplate. It is one open to all of us. When and where does the journey start? When do I take the first step? When do I matriculate in this great school?

My friends, school has already started for all of us. It started back in babyhood. Only we can now look at babyhood with new enlightenment; an enlightenment greatly enhanced by our individual experience with The URANTIA Book teachings. We can now see a baby as not only a bundle of joy, but also as a potential finaliter. We can now look at a baby as zero potential and watch the transference of that potential to reality as the baby first functions, with the aid of the adjutant spirit of intuition, to gain control of its own body just as the Supreme Being on another level is striving for the coordination of the universes of time and space. And when some control is acquired by the infant it then, motivated by that curiosity-mother of adventure and discovery, the spirit of knowledge, can move toward the objects it wishes to explore by taste and touch. Yes, the progressive comprehension of reality begins at an early age, and already we see the resources provided by our Father in dynamic action. Our baby has already begun that ages-long journey to where our Father patiently and lovingly awaits its arrival. Curiosity is such an important part of childhood. Do you recall Paper 123 telling us, "From the time Jesus was five years old until he was ten, he was one continuous question mark." (*1358:1) He progressed toward the comprehension of reality as all mortals before and since have, and will do.

We can view our surroundings from the vantage point of exposure to the teachings of the URANTIA papers. We can understand the value of parenthood as it teaches us the true meaning of Jesus' new commandment. "That you love one another as I have loved you." (*1944:4) Through this we can finally understand how Jesus and our Father love us, yet remaining no respecters of persons.

Today we can walk down a busy urban street passing throngs of people knowing that behind each strange face abides a fratment of God, identical with the one that so faithfully is guiding us, and who knows what Adjuster communication is going on in this very room at this instant.

It is this knowledge that permits us to say in truth: I wish to live here as long as my material mechanism permits me to gain more experience and knowledge. Yet the day I die physically will be the most interesting one of my life.

Yes, there is much to be learned in the here and now. We can observe that despite man's unrelenting propensity to make an absolute out of everything, he discovers, nothing at our level of being is such. We can observe that we are in a process of growth from birth onward and it is unceasing. We

can observe that evolution is a fact, a part of everything in time and space, be it science, philosophy, or religion; and yet as we watch it here, we are aware of it as creativity in time; that there is at our level no universal enlightenment but only individual levels of achievement; all relative.

As we, from our vantage point of URANTIA paper-based knowledge, look out on the world, our faces should well show the pleasure achievement glow of the early grader who suddenly looks up and says - "golly - I can read;" for a new method of reading has been shown to us. School - real universe school has begun for us.

Let me close with those words of Jesus from Paper 181: "Life in the Father's eternal creation is not an endless rest of idleness and selfish ease but rather a ceaseless progression in grace, truth, and glory. Each of the many, many stations in my Father's house is a stopping place, a life designed to prepare for the next one ahead. And so will the children of light go from glory to glory until they attain the divine estate wherein they are spiritually perfected even as the Father is perfect in all things." (*1953:4)

And from Paper 149: "Man may be a worm of the dust by nature and origin, but when he becomes indwelt by my Father's spirit, that man becomes divine in his destiny. The bestowal spirit of my Father will surely return to the divine source and universe level of origin, and the human soul of mortal man which shall have become the reborn child of this indwelling spirit shall certainly ascend with the divine spirit to the very presence of the eternal Father." (*1676:4)

Happy School days!

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