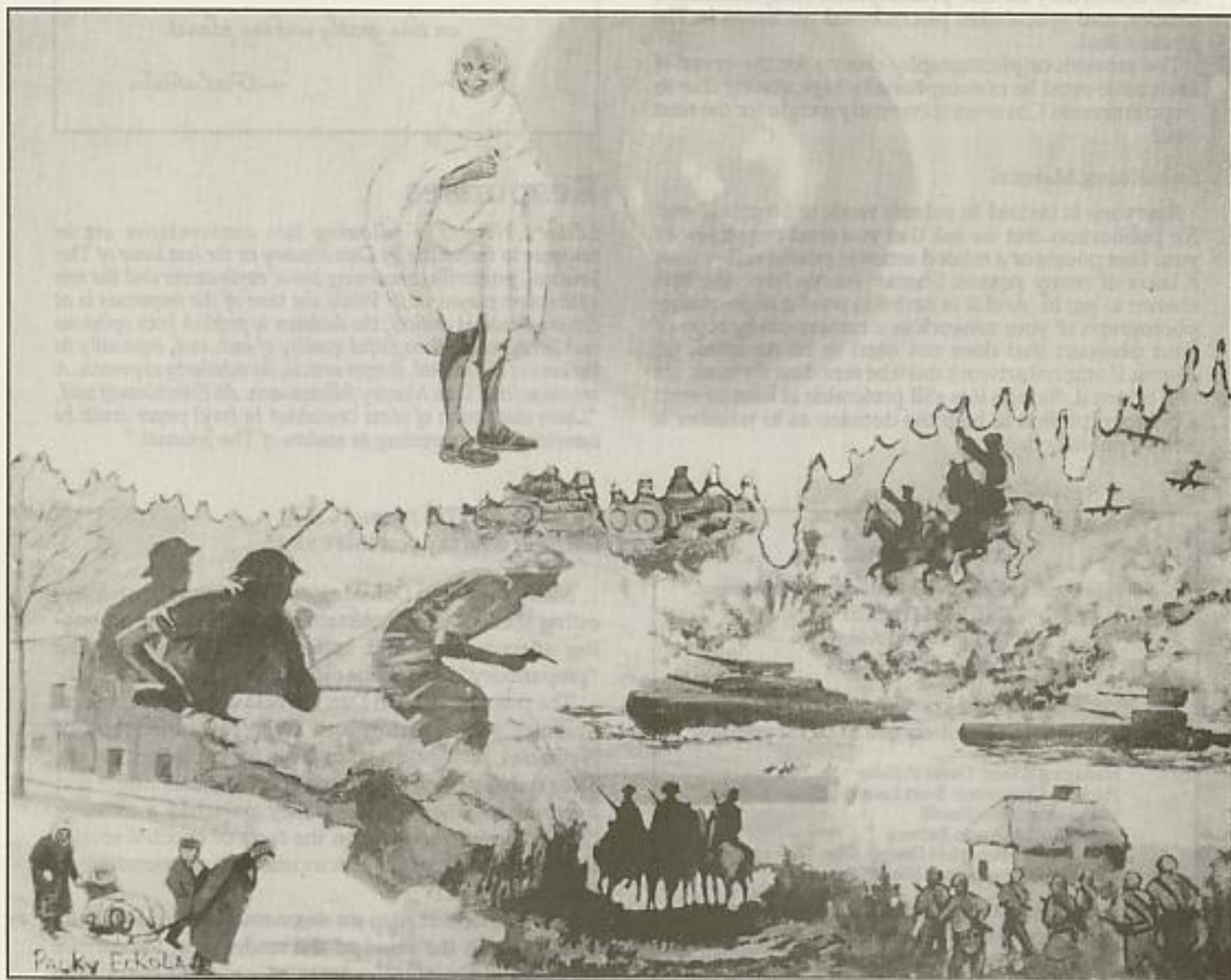


The Journal of the Fellowship

Spring, 1993
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Turning Swords into Plowshares

The Journal

The Journal is a literary and artistic as well as a philosophical and investigative publication for readers of *The Urantia Book*. It publishes works of excellence related to the teachings of *The Urantia Book* and chosen from submissions of readers throughout the world. Both content and quality are considered by editors in choosing what to publish in *The Journal*.

The publication includes poems, artwork, photography, essays, and other forms of prose, including fiction. Non-fiction may include philosophical essays, scientific articles, and speculative pieces based on issues in *The Urantia Book*.

The artwork or photography chosen for the cover of each issue must be of exceptionally high quality due to its prominence. Cover art is currently sought for the next issue.

Submitting Material

Everyone is invited to submit work to be considered for publication. But we ask that you send only a few of your best poems or a related series of poems rather than a book of many poems. Shorter essays have the best chance to get in. And it is better to send a high-quality photograph of your artwork or a camera-ready copy of your photoart that does not need to be returned. Of course, if original artwork must be sent directly to us, we will return it, though it is still preferable at least to send a photograph first to help the decision as to whether it will be published.

The Journal

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The cover photograph is by Packy Eckola.

spring after a long cold winter

circuits open like blossoms one by one

broadcasts of light to be heard again

on this gently waking planet.

—Paul Miller

Responses

Editor's Note: The following two commentaries are in response to the article by Dan Massey in the last issue of *The Journal*, primarily concerning Jesus' earth career and the role Mithraism played in it. While the tone of the responses is at times somewhat critical, the decision to publish both opinions was based on the thoughtful quality of each and, especially in the case of the second, longer article, its scholarly approach. A response from Dan Massey follows each. As Dan himself said, "Open discussion of ideas contained in [my] paper could be beneficial and interesting to readers of *The Journal*."

To the Editor, *The Journal*

Re: "But who say you that I am?"

Many thanks to Dan Massey for conveying an interesting theory, some entertaining and thought-provoking speculations, and some good insight into the "preparatory" work Jesus did on his trip to Rome. But....

The point ignored in Dan's article is that the apostles, at Peter's instigation and over the objections of Nathaniel, did not do what Jesus had told them to do. They didn't preach the simple gospel he had taught and lived among them; instead, they preached a message "about" Jesus, focusing on the facts of epochal revelation and the material circumstances surrounding it. (Sound familiar?)

Dan's article invites an erroneous and unfortunate conclusion in the mind of the reader: that the serious mistakes of the apostles were an expected part of the Salvington plan, and therefore of no consequence in ensuing events. It would seem to follow, then, that any similarly unwise actions on OUR part are probably expected by Salvington, and therefore not really our responsibility. How convenient!

It is true, and certainly interesting, that Jesus prepared the way among Mithraic (and other) groups for the

reception of something. But it seems clear to me that the "something" he had in mind was his saving message of the ever-present potential of a sonship relationship with a living and loving God. This is what Jesus told the apostles to preach, and what he had trained them to teach for years.

If the apostles had carried the gospel message instead of one of their own devising, the world would be a different and better place today.

I see no reason to believe that the apostles' substitution of facts about Jesus for his gospel message was any more a part of the Salvington plan than were the mistakes of Adam and Eve. These events were simply creature error, with real and lasting repercussions for the whole world—slowing down and confusing planetary progress.

It was certainly within the power of understanding of the apostles to go forth and preach the same thing Jesus had practiced them at preaching all those years!

Jesus' preparation for the reception of their message by Mithraism, and therefore by Rome, would have worked whichever message they had carried!

It remains true: If the apostles had carried the gospel message instead of one of their own devising, the world would be a different and better place today. They *could* have; they *should* have; and (I believe) Jesus *intended* them to—but they just *didn't*.

And so it is in our time: It is not a part of the Salvington plan that we should foster another religion about epochal revelation—by idolizing and glorifying the book, as if it were an end in itself.

That many "fans" of the book seem intent on fostering another such "religion about epochal revelation" does *not* mean that is what Salvington intended. From a practical point of view, we *could* be doing a better job—carrying the gospel in our message and in our lives. If we continue to fail in this regard, it *will* have a lasting, detrimental effect upon the world—slowing down the progress of Jesus' spiritual message.

—John M. Andrews

Author's Reply:

John Andrews seems to have missed the point of my paper. This point was, simply, that Jesus knew enough about human nature to anticipate the possibility of Apostolic deviation from his instructions and to prepare a backup plan. In the paper, I speculated that this contingency could have been foreseen during the planning of the bestowal. I provided evidence that this eventuality was anticipated by Jesus in his handling of the

Apostles after the Capernaum crisis. I think everyone agrees with Mr. Andrews that the direction the Apostles took, in fostering a religion about Jesus, was not the best choice; however, *The Urantia Book* makes clear that what they did do was also not the worst choice they could have made.

My paper was offered in the context of a careful, intellectual study of Part IV of *The Urantia Book*. At no time did I suggest that this line of thinking should be applied to our present-day choices about dissemination of epochal revelation. Because Mr. Andrews has opened this discussion, I feel entitled to offer my own thoughts on the subject.

It seems reasonable to me that the varying responses of mortal minds and human social institutions to the fifth epochal revelation, and the events surrounding it, have been anticipated by the revelators. In the total scheme of things, there are "best choices" available to each of us, as individuals, in knowing and executing the divine will with respect to the revelation. Our individual growth in supremacy is a result of our success in making these choices.

The aggregate of our individual choices determines the social trajectory of the revelation. Salvington must plan for and respond to all reasonable possibilities. No doubt some possibilities are vastly more desirable than

...the varying responses of mortal minds and human social institutions to the fifth epochal revelation ... have been anticipated by the revelators.

others. While *The Urantia Book* provides a great deal of advice about what to do with Jesus' revelation, it provides very little guidance about its own mission. Mr. Andrews believes he knows of one possible approach that is *absolutely wrong*—to foster a religion about the book. Many other readers would disagree with him. This argument becomes endless because it ignores the fact that individual moral choice determines group behavior. Groups do not and cannot make moral choices.

—Dan Massey

Truth Is Not Trickery

[This is a response to "But who say you that I am?" by Dan Massey in the Summer/Autumn 1992 *Journal*. References to the article will be given by page and column number.]

To those of us who believe that Jesus really was the fulfillment of the highest spiritual hopes of the two Isaiahs, Dan Massey has an acidic reply: the Hebrew Bible is mainly the product of "generations of pseudo-

religious social parasites." "There was virtually nothing in the pseudo-sacred texts of the Hebrews that Michael could expect to use effectively." (6,2) And "the Mithraic version was closer to the truth than the Hebrew concept of the Messiah." (10,1)

Massey's skimpy research on Mithraism and his bitter words about Judaism tend to discredit everything in the article. There is much that can be said about the disciples' "obsession with the Messianic myth" (11,1), but Massey characterizes Judaism as "ethnocentric silliness" (6,2) and says that Jesus really set out to fulfill "the mythic adventure of Mithras." (13,1)

Apparently the choice of the Jews as bestowal race was a big smoke-screen; Jesus was really investing his hopes in a mystery cult. "The belief system of the human race was tricked by God." (15,1)

Let us start with facts and proceed to values.

1. The Mithras Myth

The UB discusses the crucial facts about Mithraism: its role as the leading mystery cult at a time when personal salvation and ascension had emerged as major intuitions of religion (1337); and its influence upon Paul's teachings (in particular, the sacraments: 2070; 2074:1).

To flesh out the story of Mithraism, one needs to read the available literature, but Massey seems to have read only one book: David Ulansey's eccentric work. Ulansey's thesis is narrow and "pat," like the quick ending of pot-boiler. He excludes large areas of evidence. He is alone in denying that the cult is traceable to Persia at all (contradicting UB 1082). He ignores the evidence of Mithraism throughout Asia Minor in the Hellenistic period. No, it all started in 128 BC: thought up by Stoic astrologer/astronomers in Tarsus—a religion manufactured by intellectuals! People so much smarter than "a generation of totem worshipers" (14,2) who can be tricked into accepting a religion made for them.

The Stoics may really have incorporated a recent astronomic discovery into Mithraic symbols, but this is just one of many local developments of a widespread cult. In other locales Mithraism assimilated other myths: in Commagene Mithras was identified with Olympian gods; in Rome, he took on some of the mythology of Attis; astrological accretions began 600 years earlier, when the Persians conquered Babylon. I know of no scholar who supports Ulansey's theory that the secret of Mithraism was its symbolization of the precession of the equinoxes, and that we need look no further than Tarsus, or earlier than 128 BC.

When this notion is added to Massey's anti-Biblical feelings, we get the ridiculous idea that 128 years of manufactured cult yielded more truth than 19 centuries of ethical monotheism. This misrepresents Mithraism as well as Judaism. Most of all, it cheapens the significance

of religious development, of the hard-won advances in religious thought.

Mithraism, like any other religion, prospered because it did something for men's religious needs (and it was only for men).

Massey stretches the similarity between the Mithras myth and Jesus's resurrection, saying that Mithras "dies and, on the third day, arises from the dead and ascends to heaven." (7,2) The UB does not say this. It lists similarities between Mithraism and Christianity (1083) and this does not appear there. Actually it is the myth of Attis (son/lover of Cybele, the Great Mother) which has a death and resuscitation of the god. In Rome, acting under the protection of the Mother cult, Mithras tended to take on some of the Attis myth, but (to my knowledge) this imagery does not appear in Mithraism in Europe and Asia Minor. "Mithra is the only god who does not suffer the same tragic destiny as the gods of the other Mysteries."¹

The Mithras myth deals with this god's difficulties in slaying the Primeval Bull at the dawn of time, in fighting off the demons of the Evil One, and in accepting the mantle of power from Helios, the Sun. He is seen as the intercessor and savior for men. And it seems that the cult adapted some version of the Zoroastrian Messiah concept. Zoroastrian scripture speaks of the coming of "the Saoshyant," who would be born of a virgin and would lead a band of resurrected heroes in the final and victorious battle against "the Demon and the Lie." After this "commences the renovation of the universe," including the judgment of the dead.²

2. Judaism a Poor Third?

Speculating about the pre-bestowal survey of Uranian religions, Massey says the "Aten cult" would have been the best choice, had it prospered. He calls the visit by some Alexandrian priests to the infant Jesus, "the only direct recognition of his divinity from traditional human sources that would mark his entire life on Urantia." (10,1)

"As Michael surveyed Urantia from Salvington, he must have thought that, given the limitations of the Aten cult, the next-best venue for his ministry would be the Hebrews, who held the essential truths of his teachings buried deep within their complex theology... [But] their concept of divine truth had degenerated into a religion of the book." (6,1) Massey seems to forget that the principle remnants of Egyptian monotheism today are found in the Bible (UB 1046-8).

Michael found gobs of material in the "supposedly sacred texts" (6,1) of the Jews which he used for preaching (some favorites were Psalm 51:10 and Hosea 6:6) and for describing his mission on earth (especially Isaiah 61).

(Continued on page 6)



Neba, Mother of the Universe

Artist: Patrick Yesh

When asked a question about anger, he reeled off eleven straight Bible quotes on the subject (1673).

But Massey especially denigrates Judaism in comparison with his favorite mystery cult. Mithraism is "the religion of destiny," (10,2) while "the Hebrews suffered under primitive tribal standards of socialization." (6,2)

This belittling the religion of the bestowal race is (to say the least) unscientific. This will not be the method of UB scholars who will make a contribution to this study. Coming to understand the importance of Mithraic elements in Christianity will not mean denying the importance and value of the Jewish element.

Let us now establish some values and some manners for future research: honoring the truth-values by which ethical monotheists have lived; recognizing the complexity of religious history; and having some faith in Michael's far-sightedness—his ability to anticipate the influx of ideas from other religions, and to know how to bring out their truths.

3. The Big Trick

Massey asserts that, although Michael incarnated as a Hebrew, he secretly planned to fulfill the hopes of the Mithraic cult. His choice of the Hebrews was reluctant, and halfway through his public ministry he forgot about them and decided to "live the life of a mythic hero...to reinforce the myth." (14,2) Thus he ensures that his gospel will get a Mithraic slant and will "take over the structure of the widespread Mithraic cult." (13,1)

Massey feels Jesus *gave up* on the idea of conveying truth: "Nowhere was there either a literal or a psychic basis for opening a dialogue." (5,2) Thus he was willing to resort to trickery: "The belief system of the human race was tricked by God for two thousand years in a way which displays respect for the human mind only as a vehicle of free will choice." (15,1)

No!—it is with truth and by truth, and not by trickery, that Jesus makes use of any religious idea.

Massey seems to feel that humanity is so stupid, so "totemic," that truth-methods don't work, but trickery and coercion do.

4. Material Power

Many of his conclusions seem to descend from the idea that religion, to prosper, must have a political base, a "literal, material institution," (15,2) "a homogeneous social institution," (5,1) or an "organized body of mortal culture." (6,2) Jesus' revelation might have died out and been forgotten if it weren't linked to the favorite mystery cult of the Roman soldiers, and then made into the state church of a decadent Rome. The midwayers tell us there are other avenues the movement could have gone: it could have done better in Asia, for instance.

But Massey seems to feel that it had to be adopted by a political power in order to endure, and he nominates Rome (6,2). Mithraism's link with Rome is probably his reason for ranking it over Judaism. God uses this same kind of material reasoning: "Michael will structure...his life in such a way as to mesh with the salvation myth of Mithraism, which is, in material if not in spiritual content, much closer to the facts than the myth of the Jewish Messiah." (12,2)

And how will Mithraism carry the torch? "Because of the extreme organization of the army, as well as the organization of the Mithraic cult, the infusion of spiritual power would create a social force able to begin the reformation of planetary culture." (13,2)

If this is how culture is transformed, then Christianity didn't begin its work until after Constantine, after it became the state church. But its real power *diminished* then. The greatest works were done in the first 300 years.

The Author of the Spirit of Truth does not suppress truth....

Christianity did absorb many lines of Persian religious thought, as well as Achaean, Thracian, and Egyptian. Christ was alive in the midst of it, but that doesn't mean he was responsible for the precise developments of Christianity, much less for its failures.

5. Blaming Jesus

"Religious truth will be submerged on Urantia for fifty generations in the cocoon of a gross pagan myth that the incarnate deity decided to literalize in order to capture the attention of a totem-minded culture. The factualization of this myth will make it terribly difficult to uncover the truth, except through the passage of time. Those far-seeing souls who dare to penetrate the myth to secure the truth will be persecuted by Jesus' appointed managers of human affairs even more outrageously than the Master himself was persecuted by Jewish authorities." (14,2-15,1)

This is crazy. The Author of the Spirit of Truth does not suppress truth—and certainly not to "capture attention"! He could have captured all outward power by dazzling people with miracles. But the man who refused kingship did not need tricks. And he *does* work by truth—that is precisely why his gospel has suffered abuse, because he will not suppress lies by force, but only with truth. He will *win* us over, not trick us.

The craziest notion is that Jesus is to blame for what persecutors have done in his name! Inquisitors and power-trippers are not Jesus' "appointed ministers." Nor is Jesus to blame for the continuing incomprehension of intellectuals.

6. Last Thoughts

We have left untouched many of the questions that prompted Massey's article: the tendency of humans to idolize and lionize instead of to listen and learn; the degree to which a Mithraicization of his message may have been foreseen by Jesus; the extent of Persian elements within Christianity (including the element of Mithraic thought involved in Paul's atonement doctrine). But without solid scholarship, this just leads to pointless speculation anyway. Also, philosophy must maintain a humble recognition of its debts to religion.

Otherwise we have religious speculation, and "speculation invariably falsifies its object." (1121:4)

—Stephen Finlan, San Francisco, CA

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Author's Reply:

I have been most gratified by the interest which my paper, "But who say you that I am?" has generated among readers of *The Journal*. The paper was presented at the midpoint of the Education Committee's program of study of Part IV of *The Urantia Book*, and was designed as a contribution to the total study agenda. Readers who have followed the development of these programs over the years understand that there is a multiple focus—study of the book, stimulus to study the book, and demonstration of methods of study and stimulus. The fact that many readers have written to me with positive observations about the paper has been gratifying.

The fact that two readers, Mr. Andrews and Mr. Finlan, presented negative views is also gratifying, since they took the time and effort to put their objections in writing to share with others. To the extent this debate stimulates others to examine the issues, the paper serves its actual purpose. For this reason, I will not provide a lengthy defense of the paper. Instead, I will point out a few ways Mr. Finlan, like Mr. Andrews, has distorted the intent and thrust of the paper. I invite readers of *The Journal* to examine the issues in this light.

Mr. Finlan's response to my paper confuses the *method* employed to stimulate thought and study with the *topic* under discussion. He seems particularly offended by my use of the image of a *trickster* deity to

reflect the teachings of *The Urantia Book* in a way which undermines traditional myths of Christianity. This offense at my method leads him into an argumentative complaint that, by his own admission, fails to address the actual topic of my paper.

Mr. Finlan's pronouncements on Mithraism, in spite of his elegant bibliography, are quite biased. Students of *The Urantia Book* should know that virtually nothing is academically recognized as known about the belief systems and worship practices of Mithraism. *The Urantia Book*, understood as a revelation of truth, contains more authoritative information about Mithraism than all the sources cited by Mr. Finlan. The failure of students of comparative religion to identify Mithraic roots stems from the fact that (reformed) Mithraism is alive and well today within Christianity. Like Urantian astronomers struggling to map Orvonton from a point within its vast star clouds, these academicians have largely failed to grasp that this ancient myth is one pillar of their own belief system. Revelation corrects this problem. Whether or not one agrees with David Ulansey's interpretation of Mithraism is irrelevant to the point of my paper. I thought Ulansey's book useful for background because it is written from a *secular* viewpoint and is concerned with the Mithraism of Tarsus, home of the tentmaker, Saul.

Mr. Finlan's response to my paper confuses the method employed to stimulate thought and study with the topic under discussion.

My paper does not portray Judaism as "a poor third." It is quite obvious that Mithraism was the "poor third." It is also quite obvious that first century Mithraism (as an organized system) achieved some temporal "success" and that first century Judaism (also as an organized system) failed literally, mindally, and spiritually.

Mr. Finlan misunderstands the idea of "trick" in religion. A trick is, for example, an apparently innocuous situation arranged by deity in such a way that the person of good intent emerges blessed by the experience, while a person of evil intent experiences reproof and a chance to adopt a better attitude. There is nothing malicious or negative about the trick. It is one of the most common ways in which good comes to triumph over evil. One element of Jesus' ministry was such a trick: would he be accepted as the Son of Man or the Son of God? The path taken, the choice of the Son of God, amplified evil hidden in the hearts and minds of mankind so it could eventually be corrected. Anyone might believe Jesus is the Son of God. Only the truly pure of heart can know Jesus as the Son of Man.

(Continued on page 15)

The artwork on pages 8 and 9 concludes a series by Judy Mace on Adam and Eve that has been published in three parts by *The Journal*.



13. *Story Time*



14. *Dancing Eden*



15. *Eve and Cano*



16. "Oh, Eve!"



17. "And then, Adam..."



18. It's Over Now

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. More recently, at the second symposium held in Oklahoma, 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 in *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."

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...scientific inaccuracies we think we find in the book might really be our own preconceived notion that modern science is infallible...or even something as simple as not reading the text carefully.

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 hangups 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 Book* 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 Book* 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 UB*: "...faith does not maintain an unreasoning prejudice toward the discoveries of scientific investigation." So let us be reasonable.

Only recently have I become aware that this thing called science is an extremely imperfect process con-

ducted 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 Book* 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.

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In all my years of study, I've never come across anyone with a *Urantia Book* fetish.

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.

Even opponents of the book recognize its commanding use of English.

It has been suggested that the revelators purposefully planted erroneous information in the book, "time bombs" that would explode on the page, flawing the content of the book, thus making it tainted and unattractive to those readers who would 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 English.

One such so-called "time bomb" is contained 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.

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 Book* says 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 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 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.

(Continued on page 15)

1992 What will it do For me and you?

At the begin of each approaching year
We pitch new hope against old fear
"Will we have profit or loss—
Laughter, joy or sorrowful dross?"
Expectations — justified or not
Occupy much of our wishful lot.

For now, we mostly see
Disorder of a high degree
Shaking our ancient orientation
In a world-confusing situation.

Our would-be leaders—
Overwhelmed by ever-changing throes
Are barely able to look past
Their much fore-shortened nose—
Learned scholars
Who should know far better
Remain stuck, in horrendous bondage
To their beloved letter.

The order of progressive transformation
Unaccepted by this materialistic generation
Nevertheless will have to be understood
If survive we would.

Already 'Aquarius'—The Spirit's Age
Has opened up his foremost page
And it is blinded eyes
Who cannot see
This final road to our delivery.

What has been preached
As "Second Coming"
Is already loudly
Battle-drumming
To penetrating rhythm
Of its birthing march.
Already we are passing through
Its painful stinging arch.

Still, many fail to see
Fulfillment of old prophecy
Don't recognize, are unawares
Of spears pounded to plowshares.

Much less perceive that "Iron Rod"
As lesson-teacher of our GOD
Powerfully hammering away
At regressive forces
And their depressing say.

Rotten systems must be smashed to crumble
Hidden lies — exposed to stumble
Upon the greater purer NEW
Expanding our narrow view
Unto that panoramic screen
As only few till now have seen.

Step by step
Nation by nation
We must move through
Earth-shaking purification.

From race to race
And person to person
Truth will open our eyes
To recognize short-falling lies.
Her Spirit will empower
A new order to endure
And guardedly guarantee
The godly evolution
Towards our destiny.

This year will clearly bring
To antiquated concepts
A revolutionary spring
Since we exist to move ahead
Into greater clarity alive
Instead to stagnate dead.

Centuries of backward motion
Now demand a super-power-potion
And with a giant 'quantum leap'
This generation has a pace to keep.

Therefore become aware!
And do prepare
To transform the old
And become bold
To grasp the NEW —
Which brings a greater growth to you.

As all old must die
That the young can live
We will not progress
Unless this truth we do confess.

Don't you know the all-revealing saying:
"I make Everything NEW!"?
And to this end we must keep on praying!

—Harry Roloff, 4-1-92

Law Is Life Itself and Not the Rules of Its Conduct

an essay by David Elders

Much of the rhetoric, the symbols, and the analysis born in this year of a change in governance, while intended to clarify, instead cloud our ability to understand and act upon the differing values and motivations arising from the inside and outside of our individual and collective lives.

This confusion is sometimes obvious in our national pride. As we congratulate ourselves for the freedom we believe was born in what we call democracy, we forget that democracy exists because in truth all people are already free. No system of government produced human beings; in fact, it is the reverse. Though an immature system of governing may enslave the bodies of its citizens for a time, it cannot for long enslave the minds, spirits, or unique personhood contained therein. Eventually, the innate freedom of minds, spirits, and persons gives birth to a better collective expression of itself. It is people who give birth to government. It is people who give birth to democracy.

In the endless debate about the power of liberal or conservative approaches to improve the lives of our collective citizenry, we tend to forget that though *ideas* can affect outer behavior and lead to change, it is *ideals* that ultimately lead to our growth to higher levels of civilization. Both liberal and conservative ideas of governing, while nurtured in the mind, are born of a single ideal known only in the soul—that the very existence of each unique person can be no less than an expression of that person's intrinsic value and any collective activity must both recognize and reflect that ideal. That is the law of life.

As we beat about the bush of encouraging civilized behavior with this new idea or that, the law of life itself continues unabated in the inner experience of each person, apparently unconcerned about the rules we may establish outside. Notwithstanding who lays claim to power on any given day, the real meaning and true value of life itself emerges from the inside out, expressive of a unique convergence of genetics, experience, and the mysteries of self-conscious existence. While governments pass or rescind laws governing behavior on the outside, the laws of fear or faith truly govern human motivation and action. The willingness of one person to fuel his or her life by the taking of another's is the unmistakable expression of fear; the willingness to fuel another's life by the giving of one's own is the unmistakable expression of faith. If nourished by the recognition that fear causes most human misery, true government will come to reflect our collective agree-

ment to provide an exterior environment in which each individual can live a safer life. Then, as faith begins to fill fear's place in the inner life of its dwelling, its transformed host, not rules of law, will take us to higher levels of attainment. There is no other way.

Understanding this principle of the law of life exposes a serious flaw in our debate about which idea of governing—liberal or conservative—works best. As the pendulum of politics swings first right then left and back again, we shift but don't extinguish the fear that truly governs faulty human actions. Today, those who view themselves as weak fear that government won't prevent the strong from abusing them. Tomorrow, another group fears weakness from the foibles of a fickle electorate and charge their leaders to protect *them* for awhile. The viewers on a swinging pendulum are never truly mindful of the ideal of the intrinsic value of every human life and busy themselves instead with the work of justifying their particular solutions. In a misguided attempt to prove worth and ability, both conservative and liberal alike raise fears of the other's approach, and so make unintended contribution to that which fuels the very human responses they seek to modify. Neither the death penalty nor its lack can still the violent human response to inner fear; civil rights laws cannot extinguish racial hatred; laws favoring either abortion or its prevention cannot instill the sense of sacred trust implicit in the creation of new life. It is inner fear or faith that truly governs the actions by which our humanity may be stained or glorified.

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...it is transformed people, not government, who will transform our civilization.

So, while we argue *ideas* about family life and call them *values*, life itself produces family not simply with the birth of a new body, but when one or two people make the unselfish commitment to care for a child, or an aged parent, or a sick friend. An army capable of protecting its citizens is not forged alone by outer conformity to qualifying characteristics, codes of behavior, or discipline, but in the end by the unselfish commitment each soldier makes to another fueled by that inner faith in ideals that overcomes fear. A civilization is not molded

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LAW (Continued from page 14)

by its laws, but its laws are molded by the civility of its citizens. The true birthplace of civilization is the inner world of humankind, where dwells the awesome motivating spirit of conscious life itself. If the evolutionary legacy of animal fear sits upon the throne of this inner kingdom, our world will witness violence. If it is faith that rules our inmost being, the world will witness acts of kindness.

There is a hopeful light. Emerging from the mists of our confusion there seems a growing consciousness that claims of new ideas to solve the old ideas' problems are hollow claims indeed. Only by seeking return to the simple ideal embodied in the unifying commonality of the very existence of each and every person will we be able to reach new levels of living. For it is transformed people, not government, who will transform our civilization. Thus, we must demand of ourselves and of those we call to service in this mechanism of our collective, outer lives, that our acts derive from and reflect the integrity, unselfish dedication, and principle that is rooted in faith and which engenders trust, not fear, in all the rest of us. Then, and only then, will we be able to accomplish the challenge which Maya Angelou placed before us: to look into another person's face, to see her soul, and make her morning good. □



Photo by Mary Rector

SCIENCE (Continued from page 11)

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" here, for 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. □

WHO SAY YOU (Continued from page 7)

My paper does not "blame Jesus" for the temporally hideous outcome of the trick. Rather, it recognizes that Jesus knew what would happen, knew how his life and teachings would be perverted, knew the incalculable toll of human suffering that would result, and knew that, through the Spirit of Truth, he would experience every single bit of it. The Apostles made a free will choice to reject the Son of Man. Knowing them well enough to see the inevitability of this, with supreme grace Jesus offered them the Son of God as a way to protect and foster the light of truth. □

—Dan Massey

Poems by E. Ann Star

*Angels in this early hour
Come calling on me before bedrest:
The Angels of Love, Truth, Courage, Beauty,
And Angels of Purpose, Freedom, and Spontaneity—
All Seven enfold me in their Love,
Will watch over me as I sleep.
Thank you, Angels,
I welcome you and will slumber
Under Thy protecting wings.*

Amen.

*There is a special place
where none can go but me;
A place no other human has been,
or ever shall be;
A sacred place only God
is allowed to see.
He reserved this place,
where He and I can meet
For quiet talks about my hurts
and needs;
A place where all I've been
is seen or heard only with
my permission.
Otherwise, no mortal or celestial
can enter in.
You, too, have such a place—
a very special place;
a sacred rendezvous,
for chosen times—by you.
Even God won't intrude without
your request that He
enter in and sup with thee.
Nor will He allow others
to violate
The privacy of your very
special place.*

*In my sleep I know Thou art present,
When time to awaken, Thy love arouses me.
My days are never lonely,
They are filled with Thy fellowship
Through everyone I call friend.
Even the casual passersby
Smile Thy smile through their eyes.
When sorrow envelops me
Like a dark cloud shrouding the sun,
Thy Presence is heard
In Thy whispered word,
This, too, shall pass.
When I rejoice from joys unsurpassed,
Thine arms enfold me with boundless love,
While angel choruses sing
Their eternal songs of bliss.
Whether awake or asleep,
On mountain top or valley deep,
Thou art with me abiding.*

*The sun does shine within you,
Just as it shines upon Earth;
Nurturing life with its warmth.*

*So must your inner sunshine
Nurture your thoughts and words;
Reflected in every action
Daily, to which you give birth.*

This what your life is worth.

*Simple are the joys
When peaceful is the heart;
Peaceful is the heart
When overflowing with Love;
All responds lovingly
To a heart radiating Love.*