



When
Things
Go
Wrong

Selections from
The Urantia Book
for those times

When
Things
Go
Wrong

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Oklahoma City, OK 73179 U.S.A.

Grateful thanks to North Star Fund
for its generous support in this project.

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PREFACE

My stimulus for writing this booklet was a conversation with a friend of many years whose granddaughter was very sick. It was one of those heartbreaking times all around. She said how helpful it would be if there were a booklet containing some of the comforting and encouraging passages from the Urantia Book which was small enough to carry along to the hospital in times such as she was going through. It is my hope this booklet will help meet that need, recognizing that no group of selections can do justice to the life-changing power of the Urantia Book itself. Its panoramic description of God and his dealings with us, taken as a whole, provide immeasurably greater insight and comfort than can this or any other booklet. There is no substitute for reading the book itself; in particular, to benefit by learning the details of Jesus' life, seeing how he met and mastered the same trials of living we all confront.

There are two terms in this booklet which may be unfamiliar to readers unacquainted with the Urantia Book. "Thought Adjuster" refers to the fragment of our heavenly Father's spirit which he sends to indwell, love and guide each of us, and "Urantia" is the name given to the earth. The numbers following each quote signify its Paper:Section.Paragraph location; for example, the selection listed at (2:5.9) is found at Paper 2, section 5, paragraph 9. The introductory material in each section was written by this author.

The Urantia Book is published by The Fellowship, a not-for-profit reader organization located at 529 Wrightwood, Chicago, Illinois 60614, from whom information regarding study groups and conferences in your area may be obtained.

The Fellowship's telephone number is (773) 327-0424. Its website address is <http://www.ubfellowship.org>.

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I. WHEN FEELING LONELY OR ISOLATED

There are times when the earth seems cruel and desolate, and life inconsequential; when believed friends care not about our mounting troubles; when we feel left alone to repair unfair problems, needing tools we do not own. Unbuttressed by hope, our cathedral's walls, weakened and vulnerable, stress toward collapse.

Loneliness can be a steep-sided pit without foothold, where heart-stopping panic strips rationality. It can also be a deadening, what's-the-use boredom which paralyzes every good intention. Only spiritual insight, the eye of faith, pulls back the curtain to show us we are not alone, that all our worry has been for naught. The glass we saw through darkly obscured bands of angels, high purposes, eternal life. Our isolation resulted from fear our fellows would reject us, when in fact they required us as fervently as we did them.

Life's vagaries often cause us to be alone. Loneliness might arise through travel or employment, although most often it is through the rupture of valued relationships. The consecrated soul is not immune to such pain, but our heavenly Father provides an inner stability which imparts joy and peace in the midst of all the capricious circumstances of life.

In years past, families tended to stay together, sometimes living in the same house for generations. Neighbors were the sons and daughters of their parents' childhood friends. With social stability and continuity, everyone knew his settled place. Since the freedom and movement of modern life render such situations no longer common, many feel physically and emotionally dislocated, and long to return to the stable, dependable relationships of which their parents or grandparents spoke.

But there is no return to bygone days; we must find stability through higher relationships: companionship with God and in the community of the spiritual kingdom. In this mutually supporting fellowship of believers connected to the spirit Father there is support for those of shared values and dedication, and in which the true cure for loneliness is found.

Those who know only this world's pleasures are condemned to experience bitter loneliness. Attending meaningless social events or sitting in bars hoping to meet someone new can be no more than temporary distraction. But in the absence of spiritual companionship, a procession of new things or people must continue to replace the fleeting allure of that which exposure has tarnished. Perhaps we dread forsaking what we know out of fear that emptiness will take its place. But in losing what we know, we find what 'til now has been missing. Enduring relationships based on spiritual seeking, not things, alone satisfy the hungry human heart.

When once we know God's love and power, our meager stores no longer seem so slight, for the bounty of Father's infinite provision becomes ours for the asking. Our feeling of isolation was bad dream and illusion, because the Source of all comfort had been there all along, ready to replenish our exhausted souls with abundant hope and give us faith in our ability to fulfill his perfect will.

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The Father's love follows us now and throughout the endless circle of the eternal ages. As you ponder the loving nature of God, there is only one reasonable and natural personality reaction thereto: You will increasingly love your Maker; you will yield to God an affection analogous to that given by a child to an earthly parent; for, as a father, a real father, a true father, loves his children, so the Universal Father loves and forever seeks the welfare of his created sons and daughters. (2:5.9)

Mortal man cannot possibly know the infinitude of the heavenly Father. Finite mind cannot think through such an absolute truth or fact. But this same finite human being can actually *feel*—literally experience—the full and undiminished impact of such an infinite Father's LOVE. (3:4.6)

The Father desires all his creatures to be in personal communion with him. He has on Paradise a place to receive all those whose survival status and spiritual nature make possible such attainment. Therefore settle in your philosophy now and forever: To each of you and to all of us, God is approachable, the Father is attainable, the way is open; the forces of divine love and the ways and means of divine administration are all interlocked in an effort to facilitate the advancement of every worthy intelligence of every universe to the Paradise presence of the Universal Father. (5:1.8)

The love of the Father absolutely individualizes each personality as a unique child of the Universal Father, a child without duplicate in infinity, a will creature irreplaceable in all eternity. The Father's love glorifies each child of God, illuminating each member of the celestial family, sharply silhouetting the unique nature of each personal being against the impersonal levels that lie outside the fraternal circuit of the Father of all. The love of God strikingly portrays the transcendent value of each will creature, unmistakably reveals the high value which the Universal Father has placed upon each and every one of his children. . . (12:7.9)

Do not allow the magnitude of the infinity, the immensity of the eternity, and the grandeur and glory of the matchless character of God to overawe, stagger, or discourage you; for the Father is not very far from any one of you; he dwells within you, and in him do we all literally move, actually live, and veritably have our being. (12:7.12)

And when such a life of spirit guidance is freely and intelligently accepted, there gradually develops within the human mind a positive consciousness of divine contact and assurance of spirit communion; sooner or later “the Spirit bears witness with your spirit (the Adjuster) that you are a child of God.” (34:6.12)

Religion effectually cures man’s sense of idealistic isolation or spiritual loneliness; it enfranchises the believer as a son of God, a citizen of a new and meaningful universe. Religion assures man that, in following the gleam of righteousness discernible in his soul, he is thereby identifying himself with the plan of the Infinite and the purpose of the Eternal. Such a liberated soul immediately begins to feel at home in this new universe, his universe.

When you experience such a transformation of faith, you are no longer a slavish part of the mathematical cosmos but rather a liberated volitional son of the Universal Father. No longer is such a liberated son fighting alone against the inexorable doom of the termination of temporal existence; no longer does he combat all nature, with the odds hopelessly against him; no longer is he staggered by the paralyzing fear that, perchance, he has put his trust in a hopeless phantasm or pinned his faith to a fanciful error.

Now, rather, are the sons of God enlisted together in fighting the battle of reality’s triumph over the partial shadows of existence. At last all creatures become conscious of the fact that God and all the divine hosts of a well-nigh limitless universe are on their side in the supernal struggle to attain eternity of life and divinity of status. Such faith-liberated sons have certainly enlisted in the struggles of time on the side of the supreme forces and divine personalities of eternity; even the stars in their courses are now doing battle for them; at last they gaze upon the universe from within, from God’s viewpoint, and all is transformed from the uncertainties of material isolation to the sureties of eternal spiritual progression. Even time itself becomes but the shadow of eternity cast by Paradise realities upon the moving panoply of space. (101:10.7-9)

Of God, the most inescapable of all presences, the most real of all facts, the most living of all truths, the most loving of all friends, and the most divine of all values, we have the right to be the most certain of all universe experiences. (102:7.10)

You have been endowed with a perfect guide; therefore, if you will sincerely run the race of time and gain the final goal of faith, the reward of the ages shall be yours; you will be eternally united with your indwelling Adjuster. Then will begin your real life, the ascending life, to which your present mortal state is but the vestibule. (112:0.1)

But no God-knowing mortal can ever be lonely in his journey through the cosmos, for he knows that the Father walks beside him each step of the way, while the very way that he is traversing is the presence of the Supreme. (117:6.27)

Outcast and despairing men and women flocked to hear Jesus, and he never turned one away. (139:7.7)

“Concerning the kingdom and your assurance of acceptance by the heavenly Father, let me ask what father among you who is a worthy and kindhearted father would keep his son in anxiety or suspense regarding his status in the family or his place of security in the affections of his father’s heart? Do you earth fathers take pleasure in torturing your children with uncertainty about their place of abiding love in your human hearts? Neither does your Father in heaven leave his faith children of the spirit in doubtful uncertainty as to their position in the kingdom. If you receive God as your Father, then indeed and in truth are you the sons of God. And if you are sons, then are you secure in the position and standing of all that concerns eternal and divine sonship. If you believe my words, you thereby believe in Him who sent me, and by thus believing in the Father, you have made your status in heavenly citizenship sure. If you do the will of the Father in heaven, you shall never fail in the attainment of the eternal life of progress in the divine kingdom.” (142:5.2)

“Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And yet I declare that not one of them is forgotten in God’s sight. Know you not that the very hairs of your head are all numbered? Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than a great many sparrows.” (150:4.3)

“Doubt not any of these truths even after you are scattered abroad by persecution and are downcast by many sorrows. When you feel that you are alone in the world, I will know of your isolation even as, when you are scattered every man to his own place, leaving the Son of Man in the hands of his enemies, you will know of mine.” (181:1.6)

The experience of parting with the apostles was a great strain on the human heart of Jesus; this sorrow of love bore down on him and made it more difficult to face such a death as he well knew awaited him. He realized how weak and how ignorant his apostles were, and he dreaded to leave them. He well knew that the time of his departure had come, but his human heart longed to find out whether there might not possibly be some legitimate avenue of escape from this terrible plight of suffering and sorrow. And when it had thus sought escape, and failed, it was willing to drink the cup. The divine mind of Michael knew he had done his best for the twelve apostles; but the human heart of Jesus wished that more might have been done for them before they should be left alone in the world. Jesus’ heart was being crushed; he truly loved his brethren. He was isolated from his family in the flesh; one of his chosen associates was betraying him. His father Joseph’s people had rejected him and thereby sealed their doom as a people with a special mission on earth. His soul was tortured by baffled love and rejected mercy. It was just one of those awful human moments when everything seems to bear down with crushing cruelty and terrible agony.

Jesus' humanity was not insensible to this situation of private loneliness, public shame, and the appearance of the failure of his cause. All these sentiments bore down on him with indescribable heaviness. In this great sorrow his mind went back to the days of his childhood in Nazareth and to his early work in Galilee. At the time of this great trial there came up in his mind many of those pleasant scenes of his earthly ministry. And it was from these old memories of Nazareth, Capernaum, Mount Hermon, and of the sunrise and sunset on the shimmering Sea of Galilee, that he soothed himself as he made his human heart strong and ready to encounter the traitor who should so soon betray him.

Before Judas and the soldiers arrived, the Master had fully regained his customary poise; the spirit had triumphed over the flesh; faith had asserted itself over all human tendencies to fear or entertain doubt. The supreme test of the full realization of the human nature had been met and acceptably passed. Once more the Son of Man was prepared to face his enemies with equanimity and in the full assurance of his invincibility as a mortal man unreservedly dedicated to the doing of his Father's will. (182:3.9-11)

II. WHEN IN DOUBT OR CONFUSION

Meaningful decisions are never easy, for life in this world is continual compromise. We must earn a living to stay alive and, whether reluctantly, enter mammon's service. We crave to serve others, but seek personal success as well.

"Father show us!" our souls cry, but no clear answer comes, and we stumble on, unsure of the path, hesitant and indecisive. We marvel at those who think they see life's beacons and march toward them, damning all obstacles, direct as army ants in their devouring quest, while we, spectators, flounder in time-wasting inanities, trying first one thing, and upon its failure, something else. Nights we lie awake seeking guidance while a veil of unknowing separates us from what we sought most—a sense of personal purpose and destiny.

"The people perish without a vision," Proverbs said, and indeed, without direction, our motivation to accomplish worthy purposes is unstable as children's blocks. We require goals to nourish our spirits and provide the momentum to carry us through life's briery thickets, when its cuts and welts might otherwise cause us to question whether the goal on the far side is worth the pain.

Doubt and confusion are quite different. Occasional confusion is nothing more than the byproduct of grappling with new ideas, and does no harm provided we do not become rutted in its disorienting corridors. Confusion arises from immaturity in the face of the multiplicity of human philosophies and the surface logic appearing to justify them. Confusion is unavoidable, but so long as we remain in relationship with our Father, ongoing spiritual revelation dissipates its transient debilitation.

Doubt is more sinister, for it rationalizes taking our own way instead of God's. Doubt is deliberate turning away from the human heart's natural orientation toward God. Doubt is denial of God's presence in our minds, the most real and true thing within us. It is abandonment of our highest values of love, truth, service, hope, and faith. Doubt turns us toward nothingness, toward the void which exists in the absence of spirit. Doubt is the ultimate enemy, and is fought by turning back to God, where Father's radiant love drives away all that might harm our souls.

Doubt is the aberration, faith the normal condition. Faith is a gift; to receive it requires only that we open our minds and hearts to God. Faith brings our souls into the upward stream of universal love which Father bestows upon all who love and follow him. It is the way of life. We feel the difference between the nothingness of doubt and the expansiveness of faith, and the joy and peace of spiritual communion provide positive proof of Father's presence in our souls.

The knowledge of Father's power, loving-kindness, and guidance becomes our spiritual gyroscope against life's Sargassos of ennui and hurricanes beyond our

meager control, stabilizing our ship as it slices through the darkness of the unknown sea.

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After all, the greatest evidence of the goodness of God and the supreme reason for loving him is the indwelling gift of the Father—the Adjuster who so patiently awaits the hour when you both shall be eternally made one. Though you cannot find God by searching, if you will submit to the leading of the indwelling spirit, you will be unerringly guided, step by step, life by life, through universe upon universe, and age by age, until you finally stand in the presence of the Paradise personality of the Universal Father. (2:5.5)

Religious living is devoted living, and devoted living is creative living, original and spontaneous. New religious insights arise out of conflicts which initiate the choosing of new and better reaction habits in the place of older and inferior reaction patterns. New meanings only emerge amid conflict; and conflict persists only in the face of refusal to espouse the higher values connoted in superior meanings.

Religious perplexities are inevitable; there can be no growth without psychic conflict and spiritual agitation. The organization of a philosophic standard of living entails considerable commotion in the philosophic realms of the mind. Loyalties are not exercised in behalf of the great, the good, the true, and the noble without a struggle. Effort is attendant upon clarification of spiritual vision and enhancement of cosmic insight. And the human intellect protests against being weaned from subsisting upon the nonspiritual energies of temporal existence. The slothful animal mind rebels at the effort required to wrestle with cosmic problem solving.

But the great problem of religious living consists in the task of unifying the soul powers of the personality by the dominance of LOVE. (100:4.1-3)

Belief may not be able to resist doubt and withstand fear, but faith is always triumphant over doubting, for faith is both positive and living. The positive always has the advantage over the negative, truth over error, experience over theory, spiritual realities over the isolated facts of time and space. (102:6.7)

You humans have begun an endless unfolding of an almost infinite panorama, a limitless expanding of never-ending, ever-widening spheres of opportunity for exhilarating service, matchless adventure, sublime uncertainty, and boundless attainment. When the clouds gather overhead, your faith should accept the fact of the presence of the indwelling Adjuster, and thus you should be able to look beyond the mists of mortal uncertainty into the clear shining of the sun of eternal righteousness on the beckoning heights of the mansion worlds. . . . (108:6.8)

Confusion, being puzzled, even sometimes discouraged and distracted, does not necessarily signify resistance to the leadings of the indwelling Adjuster.

Such attitudes may sometimes connote lack of active co-operation with the divine Monitor and may, therefore, somewhat delay spiritual progress, but such intellectual emotional difficulties do not in the least interfere with the certain survival of the God-knowing soul. Ignorance alone can never prevent survival; neither can confusional doubts nor fearful uncertainty. Only conscious resistance to the Adjuster's leading can prevent the survival of the evolving immortal soul. (110:3.5)

“I will trust in the Lord with all my heart; I will lean not upon my own understanding. In all my ways I will acknowledge him, and he shall direct my paths.” (131:2.8)

[Jesus] decided to leave the final untangling of this complicated situation to the outworking of the Father's will. (137:5.3)

And when Jesus heard these words, he looked down into the father's anxious face, saying: “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.” And then James of Safed spoke those long-to-be-remembered words of commingled faith and doubt, “Lord, I believe. I pray you help my unbelief.” (158:5.2)

Jesus experienced that natural ebb and flow of feeling which is common to all human experience. . . . (182:3.7)

Theology may fix, formulate, define, and dogmatize faith, but in the human life of Jesus faith was personal, living, original, spontaneous, and purely spiritual. This faith was not reverence for tradition nor a mere intellectual belief which he held as a sacred creed, but rather a sublime experience and a profound conviction which *securely held him*. His faith was so real and all-encompassing that it absolutely swept away any spiritual doubts and effectively destroyed every conflicting desire. Nothing was able to tear him away from the spiritual anchorage of this fervent, sublime, and undaunted faith. Even in the face of apparent defeat or in the throes of disappointment and threatening despair, he calmly stood in the divine presence free from fear and fully conscious of spiritual invincibility. Jesus enjoyed the invigorating assurance of the possession of unflinching faith, and in each of life's trying situations he unfailingly exhibited an unquestioning loyalty to the Father's will. And this superb faith was undaunted even by the cruel and crushing threat of an ignominious death. (196:0.5)

III. WHEN FEELING GUILTY

When we behave poorly, guilt holds up the mirror of our own violated moral standards. Like pain which appries us of a splinter driven deep into our flesh, guilt demands a halt to whatever wrong we are committing by creating a *terrifying sense of failure before God and separation from our loved ones*. Physical pain abates once the splinter is removed, but guilt can debilitate years after the thought or act which gave it birth. Such rogue guilt must simply be shut out, forsaken, and forgotten—denied entry at the gates of our minds. Having accomplished its valid purpose, having delivered its unwelcome message regarding our unacceptable behavior, if the messenger of guilt refuses to flee before the dawn of Father's forgiveness, it must be forcibly ejected by all who crave peace.

We all know the darkness of dread which surrounds our souls in guilt. We experience guilt when we know we have done wrong, and also when we have been made to feel as if we have for not adhering to social customs which have no bearing on spiritual loyalties. For example, whether church services, mass, or synagogue are regularly attended has nothing to do with sin, irrespective of the sanction these activities might have within their respective communities. Imputed guilt regarding such matters must simply be rejected. Jesus came into our world *proclaiming spiritual freedom and a righteousness solely based on cooperation with, and dependence on, the will of God*, and this must take precedence over obedience to human mores and observances. Jesus demonstrated a forgiving God who is incapable of fostering guilt within the Parent-child relationship.

Perspective lightens the agony of guilt. Who consistently lives up to the bright star of his ideal life? Occasional sin is inevitable, a natural outcome of God having made us free yet immature; it is part of being human. The important thing is quick recovery from the error which gave rise to the guilt, effective learning, and heightened guard against repeating it in the future.

In the case of deliberate departure from what we know is right, the easy cure is confession and repentance coupled with a sincere intent never again so to err. Forgiveness thus sought opens the floodgates of Father's forgiveness, whose healing surges through our souls. Unacknowledged sins fester in the recesses of our minds, but once sincerely confronted and confessed, God blots them out forever, and we must therefore summon up the courage to forgive ourselves. Rehashing our shortcomings only gives their demons more power. We must rather disown them, for the past is over. God has made us whole, ready to march unencumbered into the challenges of future life.

Sometimes we cannot accept that Father has forgiven, and continue to wallow in self-reproach. The problem here may not be lack of repentance, but lack of knowledge of God's understanding and forgiving nature. Those who see God as a stern judge have great trouble with guilt. All of us fall short, every one of

us, and apart from understanding Father's parental acceptance, guilt lingers as an ongoing condition which poisons our spiritual lives and robs us of joy.

Guilt by omission is perhaps the most difficult variety with which to deal, for our ideals expand faster than our ability to live up to them. Regarding such guilt, we should remember that Father created mortal man altogether immature, and this fact precludes us from living a perfect life on earth. It could not be otherwise. Being human, we must pursue the highest without being seriously troubled that we constantly fall short of the goals which our expanding spiritual insight identifies with the perfect will of God. Our Father is comfortable with our pasts and we should be as well, confident in his ability to build on them on our road to perfection.

It is not Father's wish that his children live in guilt. Guilt is no more than a useful marker to remind our souls that better behavior and attitudes are required. Indulged in, however, guilt harasses and debilitates us, impeding our spiritual journey towards that state in which sin becomes impossible—the fusion of our souls with Father's indwelling spirit.

All we have to do is sincerely endeavor to live by our highest light of spiritual understanding, allowing no conscious sin to exist in our lives. Inadvertent sins are momentary lapses which have no impact on the spiritual life, but repeated sin is a soul poison which must be eradicated if we are not to regress. To stay clean within we avoid all ongoing sin through the power of our relationship with God, the joy of which renders increasingly unlikely its dislocations. Father will take care of all the rest. Our Parent loves us supremely, sees what we can become, and works to help us fulfill the destiny he established for us before the worlds began.

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God is divinely kind to sinners. When rebels return to righteousness, they are mercifully received, "for our God will abundantly pardon." "I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins." (2:5.4)

In every mortal there exists a dual nature: the inheritance of animal tendencies and the high urge of spirit endowment. During the short life you live on Urantia, these two diverse and opposing urges can seldom be fully reconciled, they can hardly be harmonized and unified; but throughout your lifetime the combined Spirit ever ministers to assist you in subjecting the flesh more and more to the leading of the Spirit. Even though you must live your material life through, even though you cannot escape the body and its necessities, nonetheless, in purpose and ideals you are empowered increasingly to subject the animal nature to the mastery of the Spirit. There truly exists within you a conspiracy of spiritual forces, a confederation of divine powers, whose exclusive purpose is to effect your final deliverance from material bondage and finite handicaps. (34:6.9)

The normal urges of animal beings and the natural appetites and impulses of the physical nature are not in conflict with even the highest spiritual attainment except in the minds of ignorant, mistaught, or unfortunately overconscientious persons. (34:7.7)

The sense of guilt (not the consciousness of sin) comes either from interrupted spiritual communion or from the lowering of one's moral ideals. Deliverance from such a predicament can only come through the realization that one's highest moral ideals are not necessarily synonymous with the will of God. Man cannot hope to live up to his highest ideals, but he can be true to his purpose of finding God and becoming more and more like him. (103:4.3)

But man's interpretation of these early conflicts between the ego-will and the other-than-self-will is not always dependable. Only a fairly well unified personality can arbitrate the multiform contentions of the ego cravings and the budding social consciousness. The self has rights as well as one's neighbors. Neither has exclusive claims upon the attention and service of the individual. Failure to resolve this problem gives origin to the earliest type of human guilt feelings. (103:5.4)

Jesus said: "My friend, we are all Jonahs with lives to live in accordance with the will of God, and at all times when we seek to escape the present duty of living by running away to far-off enticements, we thereby put ourselves in the immediate control of those influences which are not directed by the powers of truth and the forces of righteousness. The flight from duty is the sacrifice of truth. The escape from the service of light and life can only result in those distressing conflicts with the difficult whales of selfishness which lead eventually to darkness and death unless such God-forsaking Jonahs shall turn their hearts, even when in the very depths of despair, to seek after God and his goodness. And when such disheartened souls sincerely seek for God—hunger for truth and thirst for righteousness—there is nothing that can hold them in further captivity. No matter into what great depths they may have fallen, when they seek the light with a whole heart, the spirit of the Lord God of heaven will deliver them from their captivity; the evil circumstances of life will spew them out upon the dry land of fresh opportunities for renewed service and wiser living." (130:1.2)

The human mind does not well stand the conflict of double allegiance. It is a severe strain on the soul to undergo the experience of an effort to serve both good and evil. The supremely happy and efficiently unified mind is the one wholly dedicated to the doing of the will of the Father in heaven. Unresolved conflicts destroy unity and may terminate in mind disruption. But the survival character of a soul is not fostered by attempting to secure peace of mind at any price, by the surrender of noble aspirations, and by the compromise of spiritual ideals; rather is such peace attained by the stalwart assertion of the triumph of that which is true, and this victory is achieved in the overcoming of evil with the potent force of good. (133:7.12)

The three apostles were shocked this afternoon when they realized that their Master's religion made no provision for spiritual self-examination. . . . But Jesus said nothing which would proscribe self-analysis as a prevention of conceited egotism. (140:8.27)

Even the forgiveness of sin operates in this same unerring fashion. The Father in heaven has forgiven you even before you have thought to ask him, but such forgiveness is not available in your personal religious experience until such a time as you forgive your fellow men. God's forgiveness in *fact* is not conditioned upon your forgiving your fellows, but in *experience* it is exactly so conditioned. (146:2.4)

Jesus fully understood how difficult it is for men to break with their past. He knew how human beings are swayed by the preacher's eloquence, and how the conscience responds to emotional appeal as the mind does to logic and reason, but he also knew how far more difficult it is to persuade men to *disown the past*. (154:6.8)

Do not become discouraged by the discovery that you are human. Human nature may tend toward evil, but it is not inherently sinful. Be not downcast by your failure wholly to forget some of your regrettable experiences. The mistakes which you fail to forget in time will be forgotten in eternity. Lighten your burdens of soul by speedily acquiring a long-distance view of your destiny, a universe expansion of your career. (156:5.8)

One evening at Hippos, in answer to a disciple's question, Jesus taught the lesson on forgiveness. Said the Master:

"If a kindhearted man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, does he not immediately leave the ninety and nine and go out in search of the one that has gone astray? And if he is a good shepherd, will he not keep up his quest for the lost sheep until he finds it? And then, when the shepherd has found his lost sheep, he lays it over his shoulder and, going home rejoicing, calls to his friends and neighbors, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' I declare that there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety and nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Even so, it is not the will of my Father in heaven that one of these little ones should go astray, much less that they should perish. In your religion God may receive repentant sinners; in the gospel of the kingdom the Father goes forth to find them even before they have seriously thought of repentance." (159:1.1-2)

Never hesitate to admit failure. Make no attempt to hide failure under deceptive smiles and beaming optimism. It sounds well always to claim success, but the end results are appalling. Such a technique leads directly to the creation of a world of unreality and to the inevitable crash of ultimate disillusionment. (160:4.7)

“Divine forgiveness is inevitable; it is inherent and inalienable in God’s infinite understanding, in his perfect knowledge of all that concerns the mistaken judgment and erroneous choosing of the child. Divine justice is so eternally fair that it unfailingly embodies understanding mercy.” (174:1.3)

IV. WHEN IN SICKNESS OR HARDSHIP

Seeing afflicted innocents, some have questioned God's love, even his existence. But Father loves all his children, and wants none to be hurt, sick, or crushed by circumstance. The existence of suffering rather proves that God has placed us in the only sort of world where strong characters could possibly be built, that is, a place where freely taken actions have real consequences. God never visits tribulation upon his children, but created our world as it is that we might learn and mature through contact with actual reality. Such an education can be harsh, but worth the gain in making us strong, faithful people who can believe in spiritual values in the midst of so much that seems totally contrary to all that is good, beautiful, and true.

So how will we greet the unwelcome guests of sickness and hardship when they arrive, as arrive they inevitably do? We can be hunkered-down fatalists, who are rarely disappointed in their expectation of the worst; whiners and complainers, who vainly look for someone else to blame for their problems; reflexive optimists, who dream on in their world of unreality; or, we can face life with simple faith in Father's willingness to give us strength to solve and overcome life's problems, confident in his ability to draw good out of every situation. In partnership with God we make the most of whatever comes our way, in expectant faith and with aggressive determination to prevail.

Father could, of course, heal all human sickness with a word, but to do so would violate the physical laws of his ordaining and would not lead men into the kingdom. The five thousand whom Jesus fed on the shores of Galilee did not enter the kingdom, nor the five hundred at Capernaum whom he healed at sunset.

While progressing science gradually solves the problems of disease, we should take comfort in our Father's knowledge of our affliction. When all within human power to ameliorate the situation has been done, we should accept our lot, remembering that all affliction is temporary, and can conduce to upbuild our eternal souls provided we accept our situation with dignity, faith, and complete submission to Father's will. After all personal resources are exhausted, we can rest in our Parent's love, where wholehearted faith in God can bring about the healing of any affliction.

Man does not live by bread alone, but bread is necessary for man to live. Inadequate financial resources is one of the most common hardships. But many perceiving themselves in financial hardship merely lack what they would *like* to have. Jesus taught that a man's life does not consist in covetousness but in every word from the mouth of God. Far better to be poor, sick, and meek—seeking for God—than to be proud and spiritually self-sufficient, which is to say, barren, cut off from God. Father is the source of all abundance, and delights to provide all

that we truly need which does not at the same time interfere with the progress of our souls.

When the kingdom of heaven is our goal of existence, material considerations are relegated to proper subordination. Life inevitably involves suffering, but for those who can see Father's greater purposes behind the veil, he offers sustaining inner peace which enables us to rise above any deprivation that might come our way.

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God is inherently kind, naturally compassionate, and everlastingly merciful. And never is it necessary that any influence be brought to bear upon the Father to call forth his loving-kindness. The creature's need is wholly sufficient to insure the full flow of the Father's tender mercies and his saving grace. (2:4.2)

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people, I have heard their cry, and I know their sorrows." For "the Lord looks from heaven; he beholds all the sons of men; from the place of his habitation he looks upon all the inhabitants of the earth." Every creature child may truly say: "He knows the way I take, and when he has tried me, I shall come forth as gold." "God knows our downittings and our uprisings; he understands our thoughts afar off and is acquainted with all our ways." "All things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do." And it should be a real comfort to every human being to understand that "he knows your frame; he remembers that you are dust." Jesus, speaking of the living God, said, "Your Father knows what you have need of even before you ask him." (3:3.2)

All evolutionary creature life is beset by certain *inevitable*s. Consider the following:

1. Is *courage*—strength of character—desirable? Then must man be reared in an environment which necessitates grappling with hardships and reacting to disappointments.

2. Is *altruism*—service of one's fellows—desirable? Then must life experience provide for encountering situations of social inequality.

3. Is *hope*—the grandeur of trust—desirable? Then human existence must constantly be confronted with insecurities and recurrent uncertainties.

4. Is *faith*—the supreme assertion of human thought—desirable? Then must the mind of man find itself in that troublesome predicament where it ever knows less than it can believe.

5. Is the *love of truth* and the willingness to go wherever it leads, desirable? Then must man grow up in a world where error is present and falsehood always possible.

6. Is *idealism*—the approaching concept of the divine—desirable? Then must man struggle in an environment of relative goodness and beauty, surroundings stimulative of the irrepressible reach for better things.

7. Is *loyalty*—devotion to highest duty—desirable? Then must man carry on amid the possibilities of betrayal and desertion. The valor of devotion to duty consists in the implied danger of default.

8. Is *unselfishness*—the spirit of self-forgetfulness—desirable? Then must mortal man live face to face with the incessant clamoring of an inescapable self for recognition and honor. Man could not dynamically choose the divine life if there were no self-life to forsake. Man could never lay saving hold on righteousness if there were no potential evil to exalt and differentiate the good by contrast.

9. Is *pleasure*—the satisfaction of happiness—desirable? Then must man live in a world where the alternative of pain and the likelihood of suffering are ever-present experiential possibilities. (3:5.5-14)

The mortal mind can immediately think of a thousand and one things—catastrophic physical events, appalling accidents, horrific disasters, painful illnesses, and world-wide scourges— and ask whether such visitations are correlated in the unknown maneuvering of this probable functioning of the Supreme Being. Frankly, we do not know; we are not really sure. But we do observe that, as time passes, all these difficult and more or less mysterious situations *always* work out for the welfare and progress of the universes. (10:7.5)

The confusion and turmoil of Urantia do not signify that the Paradise Rulers lack either interest or ability to manage affairs differently. The Creators are possessed of full power to make Urantia a veritable paradise, but such an Eden would not contribute to the development of those strong, noble, and experienced characters which the Gods are so surely forging out on your world between the anvils of necessity and the hammers of anguish. Your anxieties and sorrows, your trials and disappointments, are just as much a part of the divine plan on your sphere as are the exquisite perfection and infinite adaptation of all things to their supreme purpose on the worlds of the central and perfect universe. (23:2.5)

The last rest of time has been enjoyed; the last transition sleep has been experienced; now you awake to life everlasting on the shores of the eternal abode. “And there shall be no more sleep. The presence of God and his Son are before you, and you are eternally his servants; you have seen his face, and his name is your spirit. There shall be no night there; and they need no light of the sun, for the Great Source and Center gives them light; they shall live forever and ever. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things have passed away.” (27:1.5)

When the heights of perfection and eternity are attained, all the more honor to those who began at the bottom and joyfully climbed the ladder of life, round by round, and who, when they do reach the heights of glory, will have gained a personal experience which embodies an actual knowledge of every phase of life from the bottom to the top.

In all this is shown the wisdom of the Creators. It would be just as easy for the Universal Father to make all mortals perfect beings, to impart perfection by his divine word. But that would deprive them of the wonderful experience of the adventure and training associated with the long and gradual inward climb, an experience to be had only by those who are so fortunate as to begin at the very bottom of living existence. (32:3.10-11)

While it is all too true that good cannot come of evil to the one who contemplates and performs evil, it is equally true that all things (including evil, potential and manifest) work together for good to all beings who know God, love to do his will, and are ascending Paradiseward according to his eternal plan and divine purpose. (54:4.7)

We are a part of a gigantic creation, and it is not strange that everything does not work in perfection; our universe was not created in perfection. Perfection is our eternal goal, not our origin. (75:8.6)

[Thought Adjusters] are not interested in making the mortal career easy; rather are they concerned in making your life reasonably difficult and rugged, so that decisions will be stimulated and multiplied. The presence of a great Thought Adjuster does not bestow ease of living and freedom from strenuous thinking, but such a divine gift should confer a sublime peace of mind and a superb tranquillity of spirit.

Your transient and ever-changing emotions of joy and sorrow are in the main purely human and material reactions to your internal psychic climate and to your external material environment. Do not, therefore, look to the Adjuster for selfish consolation and mortal comfort. It is the business of the Adjuster to prepare you for the eternal adventure, to assure your survival. It is not the mission of the Mystery Monitor to smooth your ruffled feelings or to minister to your injured pride; it is the preparation of your soul for the long ascending career that engages the attention and occupies the time of the Adjuster. (108:5.5-6)

The endowment of imperfect beings with freedom entails inevitable tragedy, and it is the nature of the perfect ancestral Deity to universally and affectionately share these sufferings in loving companionship. (110:0.1)

Uncertainty with security is the essence of the Paradise adventure—uncertainty in time and in mind, uncertainty as to the events of the unfolding Paradise ascent; security in spirit and in eternity, security in the unqualified trust of the creature son in the divine compassion and infinite love of the Universal Father; uncertainty as an inexperienced citizen of the universe; security as an ascending son in the universe mansions of an all-powerful, all-wise, and all-loving Father.

May I admonish you to heed the distant echo of the Adjuster's faithful call to your soul? The indwelling Adjuster cannot stop or even materially alter your career struggle of time; the Adjuster cannot lessen the hardships of life as you journey on through this world of toil. The divine indweller can only patiently

forbear while you fight the battle of life as it is lived on your planet; but you could, if you only would—as you work and worry, as you fight and toil—permit the valiant Adjuster to fight with you and for you. You could be so comforted and inspired, so enthralled and intrigued, if you would only allow the Adjuster constantly to bring forth the pictures of the real motive, the final aim, and the eternal purpose of all this difficult, uphill struggle with the commonplace problems of your present material world.

Why do you not aid the Adjuster in the task of showing you the spiritual counterpart of all these strenuous material efforts? Why do you not allow the Adjuster to strengthen you with the spiritual truths of cosmic power while you wrestle with the temporal difficulties of creature existence? Why do you not encourage the heavenly helper to cheer you with the clear vision of the eternal outlook of universal life as you gaze in perplexity at the problems of the passing hour? Why do you refuse to be enlightened and inspired by the universe viewpoint while you toil amidst the handicaps of time and flounder in the maze of uncertainties which beset your mortal life journey? Why not allow the Adjuster to spiritualize your thinking, even though your feet must tread the material paths of earthly endeavor? (111:7.1-3)

Most of what a mortal would call providential is not; his judgment of such matters is very handicapped by lack of farsighted vision into the true meanings of the circumstances of life. Much of what a mortal would call good luck might really be bad luck; the smile of fortune that bestows unearned leisure and undeserved wealth may be the greatest of human afflictions; the apparent cruelty of a perverse fate that heaps tribulation upon some suffering mortal may in reality be the tempering fire that is transmuting the soft iron of immature personality into the tempered steel of real character. (118:10.9)

“Mother-Mary, sorrow will not help us; we are all doing our best, and mother’s smile, perchance, might even inspire us to do better. Day by day we are strengthened for these tasks by our hope of better days ahead.” [Jesus’] sturdy and practical optimism was truly contagious; all the children lived in an atmosphere of anticipation of better times and better things. And this hopeful courage contributed mightily to the development of strong and noble characters, in spite of the depressiveness of their poverty.

Jesus possessed the ability effectively to mobilize all his powers of mind, soul, and body on the task immediately in hand. He could concentrate his deep-thinking mind on the one problem which he wished to solve, and this, in connection with his untiring *patience*, enabled him serenely to endure the trials of a difficult mortal existence—to live as if he were “seeing Him who is invisible.” (127:3.14-15)

Jesus is rapidly becoming a man, not just a young man but an adult. He has learned well to bear responsibility. He knows how to carry on in the face of disappointment. He bears up bravely when his plans are thwarted and his purposes temporarily defeated. He has learned how to be fair and just even in the

face of injustice. He is learning how to adjust his ideals of spiritual living to the practical demands of earthly existence. He is learning how to plan for the achievement of a higher and distant goal of idealism while he toils earnestly for the attainment of a nearer and immediate goal of necessity. He is steadily acquiring the art of adjusting his aspirations to the commonplace demands of the human occasion. He has very nearly mastered the technique of utilizing the energy of the spiritual drive to turn the mechanism of material achievement. He is slowly learning how to live the heavenly life while he continues on with the earthly existence. More and more he depends upon the ultimate guidance of his heavenly Father while he assumes the fatherly role of guiding and directing the children of his earth family. He is becoming experienced in the skillful wresting of victory from the very jaws of defeat; he is learning how to transform the difficulties of time into the triumphs of eternity. (127:6.12)

“Do not forcibly resist injustice; put not your trust in the arm of the flesh. If your neighbor smites you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. Be willing to suffer injustice rather than to go to law among yourselves. In kindness and with mercy minister to all who are in distress and in need.

“I say to you: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who spitefully use you. And whatsoever you believe that I would do to men, do you also to them.” (140:3.14-15)

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.” (141:3.8)

“But of one thing you may be sure: The Father does not send affliction as an arbitrary punishment for wrongdoing. The imperfections and handicaps of evil are inherent; the penalties of sin are inevitable; the destroying consequences of iniquity are inexorable. Man should not blame God for those afflictions which are the natural result of the life which he chooses to live; neither should man complain of those experiences which are a part of life as it is lived on this world. It is the Father’s will that mortal man should work persistently and consistently toward the betterment of his estate on earth. . . .

“Do not doubt the love of the Father just because some just and wise law of his ordaining chances to afflict you because you have innocently or deliberately transgressed such a divine ordinance.” (148:5.3-4)

“The eternal God is your refuge, while underneath are the everlasting arms.’ . . . ‘He knows your body; he remembers that you are dust.’ ‘He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.’ ‘He is the hope of the poor, the

strength of the needy in his distress, a refuge from the storm, and a shadow from the devastating heat.' 'He gives power to the faint, and to them who have no might he increases strength.' 'A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax he will not quench.' 'When you pass through the waters of affliction, I will be with you, and when the rivers of adversity overflow you, I will not forsake you.' 'He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and to comfort all who mourn.'” (148:5.5)

Teach all believers to avoid leaning upon the insecure props of false sympathy. You cannot develop strong characters out of the indulgence of self-pity; honestly endeavor to avoid the deceptive influence of mere fellowship in misery. Extend sympathy to the brave and courageous while you withhold overmuch pity from those cowardly souls who only halfheartedly stand up before the trials of living. Offer not consolation to those who lie down before their troubles without a struggle. Sympathize not with your fellows merely that they may sympathize with you in return. . . .

Teach all believers that those who enter the kingdom are not thereby rendered immune to the accidents of time or to the ordinary catastrophes of nature. Believing the gospel will not prevent getting into trouble, but it will insure that you shall be *unafraid* when trouble does overtake you. If you dare to believe in me and wholeheartedly proceed to follow after me, you shall most certainly by so doing enter upon the sure pathway to trouble. I do not promise to deliver you from the waters of adversity, but I do promise to go with you through all of them. (159:3.11-13)

“Let not your hearts be troubled; all things will work together for the glory of God and the salvation of men.” (182:2.1)

When thinking men and women look upon Jesus as he offers up his life on the cross, they will hardly again permit themselves to complain at even the severest hardships of life, much less at petty harassments and their many purely fictitious grievances. His life was so glorious and his death so triumphant that we are all enticed to a willingness to share both. There is true drawing power in the whole bestowal of Michael, from the days of his youth to this overwhelming spectacle of his death on the cross. (188:5.10)

To Jesus, mortal life had dealt its hardest, cruelest, and bitterest blows; and this man met these ministrations of despair with faith, courage, and the unswerving determination to do his Father's will. Jesus met life in all its terrible reality and mastered it—even in death. He did not use religion as a release from life. The religion of Jesus does not seek to escape this life in order to enjoy the waiting bliss of another existence. The religion of Jesus provides the joy and peace of another and spiritual existence to enhance and ennoble the life which men now live in the flesh. (194:3.3)

Pentecost endowed mortal man with the power to forgive personal injuries, to keep sweet in the midst of the gravest injustice, to remain unmoved in

the face of appalling danger, and to challenge the evils of hate and anger by the fearless acts of love and forbearance. (194:3.12)

V. WHEN FEELING DISCOURAGED OR DEFEATED

Flush with success, it's natural to laugh and tell funny stories; harder, though, to search for good in the collapsed rubble of our fondest dreams. Discouragement and defeat often follow sad circumstance, insinuating it's no use, the battle is lost anyway. But if we concur, we allow ourselves to be rendered helpless by the undertow of evil and pain in this imperfect world; if we furl our standard without a fight, discouragement has won a needless victory.

Discouragement arises from continued failure which causes us to wonder if we will ever measure up to our own or others' standards. But the only standard which matters in God's sight is whether we follow his spirit in our lives. We are not accountable for causes of failure beyond our control, such as circumstance, lack of natural giftedness in the area of our efforts, or interference by selfish individuals.

By the world's standards, Jesus' life ended in failure, with his apostles and disciples scattered and himself crucified by enemies. Yet Father in heaven accepted his life's work, and we likewise must judge success from a spiritual perspective. Faithfulness in doing our duty and our loving intention wisely to serve can be the only measure of success in any undertaking. Only lack of intelligent effort and diligence should we lay at our own doors.

Defeat cannot be understood apart from evaluating the goals toward which the effort was directed. Within us are human abilities to accomplish goals far beyond those of which we avail ourselves. When to these human talents are added the divine reinforcement of the Spirit of Truth, the Holy Spirit, Father's indwelling spirit, and the support of angels, our human capacity to accomplish is immeasurably increased. This addition of power results from aligning our human selves with the power of God. When we sincerely attempt to do Father's will, all things become possible—all things—for God cannot be limited.

Experiencing defeat is a normal and valuable aspect of life. It induces us to reexamine the entire situation in which we find ourselves with a view toward helpful course correction. Wallowed in, however, defeat paralyzes our wills and creates a self-fulfilling continuance in that failure from which deliverance is sought. There is nothing unusual about failure or defeat. The city's gate does not give in at the battering ram's first blow; persistence is required. So long as life remains, only good can come from challenging life's hardships, for all things work together for good for those who love God and are dedicated to his will. From our Father's perspective, the crash of our life's plans and the heavy clouds of failure, darkness, and pain are giving birth to deeper wisdom and greater opportunities for growth and service.

We use failure and defeat, then, to reevaluate the validity of that which we seek, asking Father whether our goals and chosen means are in accordance with his plan. If they are not, failure must sooner or later ensue, because we will find

ourselves arrayed against the on-moving course of Reality itself. When, however, we feel God's assurance that our goals and means are acceptable in his sight, we must not allow anything to deflect us; we must reject any human characterization of failure for efforts which meet divine approval; we must aggressively continue despite all indications to the contrary, allowing nothing to discourage our righteous efforts. Communion with Father's loving nature lessens our struggles and empowers us to achieve his loving will.

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The consciousness of a victorious human life on earth is born of that creature faith which dares to challenge each recurring episode of existence when confronted with the awful spectacle of human limitations, by the unflinching declaration: Even if I cannot do this, there lives in me one who can and will do it, a part of the Father-Absolute of the universe of universes. And that is "the victory which overcomes the world, even your faith." (4:4.9)

But long before reaching Havona, these ascendant children of time 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. Long since, the battle cry of these pilgrims became: "In liaison with God, nothing—absolutely nothing—is impossible." (26:5.3)

From [these angels] you will learn to let pressure develop stability and certainty; to be faithful and earnest and, withal, cheerful; to accept challenges without complaint and to face difficulties and uncertainties without fear. They will ask: If you fail, will you rise indomitably to try anew? If you succeed, will you maintain a well-balanced poise—a stabilized and spiritualized attitude—throughout every effort in the long struggle to break the fetters of material inertia, to attain the freedom of spirit existence?

Even as mortals, so have these angels been father to many disappointments, and they will point out that sometimes your most disappointing disappointments have become your greatest blessings. Sometimes the planting of a seed necessitates its death, the death of your fondest hopes, before it can be reborn to bear the fruits of new life and new opportunity. (48:6.24-25)

Jesus portrayed the profound surety of the God-knowing mortal when he said: "To a God-knowing kingdom believer, what does it matter if all things earthly crash?" Temporal securities are vulnerable, but spiritual sureties are impregnable. When the flood tides of human adversity, selfishness, cruelty, hate, malice, and jealousy beat about the mortal soul, you may rest in the assurance that there is one inner bastion, the citadel of the spirit, which is absolutely unassailable; at least this is true of every human being who has dedicated the keeping of his soul to the indwelling spirit of the eternal God.

After such spiritual attainment, whether secured by gradual growth or specific crisis, there occurs a new orientation of personality as well as the development of a new standard of values. Such spirit-born individuals are so remotivated in life that they can calmly stand by while their fondest ambitions perish and their keenest hopes crash; they positively know that such catastrophes are but the redirecting cataclysms which wreck one's temporal creations preliminary to the rearing of the more noble and enduring realities of a new and more sublime level of universe attainment. (100:2.7-8)

What you are today is not so important as what you are becoming day by day and in eternity. (111:1.5)

“The Lord is near all who call upon him in sincerity and in truth. Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” (131:2.9)

And when these maladjusted human beings had told Jesus about their troubles, always was he able to offer practical and immediately helpful suggestions looking toward the correction of their real difficulties, albeit he did not neglect to speak words of present comfort and immediate consolation. And invariably would he tell these distressed mortals about the love of God and impart the information by various and sundry methods, that they were the children of this loving Father in heaven. (132:4.2)

The disciples early learned that the Master had a profound respect and sympathetic regard for *every* human being he met, and they were tremendously impressed by this uniform and unvarying consideration which he so consistently gave to all sorts of men, women, and children. He would pause in the midst of a profound discourse that he might go out in the road to speak good cheer to a passing woman laden with her burden of body and soul. He would interrupt a serious conference with his apostles to fraternize with an intruding child. Nothing ever seemed so important to Jesus as the *individual human* who chanced to be in his immediate presence. (138:8.9)

“Again I say to you: Ask and it shall be given you; seek and you shall find; knock and it shall be opened to you. For every one who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks the door of salvation will be opened.” (144:2.3)

“Much of man's sorrow is born of the disappointment of his ambitions and the wounding of his pride. Although men owe a duty to themselves to make the best of their lives on earth, having thus sincerely exerted themselves, they should cheerfully accept their lot and exercise ingenuity in making the most of that which has fallen to their hands. All too many of man's troubles take origin in the fear soil of his own natural heart. . . .

“Seek not, then, for false peace and transient joy but rather for the assurance of faith and the sureties of divine sonship which yield composure, contentment, and supreme joy in the spirit.” (149:5.3-4)

The measure of the spiritual capacity of the evolving soul is your faith in truth and your love for man, but the measure of your human strength of character is your ability to resist the holding of grudges and your capacity to withstand brooding in the face of deep sorrow. Defeat is the true mirror in which you may honestly view your real self. (156:5.17)

Forget not that I will stop at nothing to restore self-respect to those who have lost it, and who really desire to regain it. (159:3.3)

Failure is simply an educational episode—a cultural experiment in the acquirement of wisdom—in the experience of the God-seeking man who has embarked on the eternal adventure of the exploration of a universe. To such men defeat is but a new tool for the achievement of higher levels of universe reality. (160:4.9)

He taught men to place a high value upon themselves in time and in eternity. Because of this high estimate which Jesus placed upon men, he was willing to spend himself in the unremitting service of humankind. . . . What mortal can fail to be uplifted by the extraordinary faith Jesus has in him? (196:2.10)

VI. WHEN FEELING IMPATIENT OR STAGNANT

The impatient person is angry because the tree refuses to bear fruit before due season. Impatience assumes God is not acting fast enough—that we creatures grasp events better than the Creator in whom we live and move and have our being.

Those who do things before their appointed time fail in their endeavors, because conditions conducive to success have not yet been prepared. Acting on faith, however, we cooperate with our all-wise Father's schedule and experience peace in relinquishing responsibility over events beyond our control. We no longer carry so many of earth's weary burdens, and being thus released, are free to work all the harder on the tasks uniquely our own. We cease making personal plans for the lives of others since we are called to love our brothers, not to pressure them to act contrary to their own free will.

Impatience evidences lack of submission to Father's will. The impatient person has his own plan, which seems to him superior to God's. Most lethally, impatience tempts him to seek short-cuts, to do things his way instead of God's. But such hurry-along efforts come to naught, because the multitude of circumstances necessary for their success is not yet in place. Our Father's schedule is supreme, and nothing of true value happens apart from it. God supplies both the power which makes possible, and the pattern for, all lasting accomplishment.

While impatience takes too much action, stagnation—fearing to live—does not take enough. Stagnation carries the rutted feeling of being looped in unproductive patterns of living. We linger in such wasteful and monotonous experience out of fear that even if we tried, we would fail to extricate ourselves, and should we by some fluke succeed, life outside the rut would probably be worse. Stagnation's cure is prayer to know God's will, then bold, committed ACTION grounded in faith in God's ability to bring about his perfect will in, through, and for us.

Water becomes stagnant when it doesn't move. Likewise, spiritual atrophy sets in when we fail to risk acting according to our highest concept of God's plan for our lives. Stagnation and impatience are opposite poles of a common problem—lack of submission to Father's plan. There are times to wait and there are times to act, and those who follow God's spirit are guided as to the proper time in all their actions. Worship and service bind us to the heart of God, provide the spiritual energy for decisive action, and make us increasingly effective in those fields of service to which we are called.

Spiritual stagnation results from failing to seek spiritual truth and pass along what we have received to others. Those who serve can never become stagnant, for Father leads them into ever more challenging and fruitful avenues in which his love can be revealed. Those with surfeit of this world's goods may stave off

stagnation by a frenetic procession of ever-changing toys, but in the service of God, even common toil is holy and sacred.

Stagnation bespeaks absence of challenge, which in turn betrays the lack of a living spiritual connection with God, who continually moves us into higher realms of service. We should therefore submit to Father's will and make his plans our own in every particular, trusting in his wisdom and loving-kindness, for apart from him we are nothing.

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You must wait, and ascend while you wait, for truly, "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither has it entered into the mind of mortal man, the things which the Universal Father has prepared for those who survive the life in the flesh on the worlds of time and space." (11:4.5)

Love of adventure, curiosity, and dread of monotony—these traits inherent in evolving human nature—were not put there just to aggravate and annoy you during your short sojourn on earth, but rather to suggest to you that death is only the beginning of an endless career of adventure, an everlasting life of anticipation, an eternal voyage of discovery.

Curiosity—the spirit of investigation, the urge of discovery, the drive of exploration—is a part of the inborn and divine endowment of evolutionary space creatures. These natural impulses were not given you merely to be frustrated and repressed. True, these ambitious urges must frequently be restrained during your short life on earth, disappointment must be often experienced, but they are to be fully realized and gloriously gratified during the long ages to come. (14:5.10-11)

There is a great and glorious purpose in the march of the universes through space. All of your mortal struggling is not in vain. We are all part of an immense plan, a gigantic enterprise, and it is the vastness of the undertaking that renders it impossible to see very much of it at any one time and during any one life. We are all a part of an eternal project which the Gods are supervising and outworking. The whole marvelous and universal mechanism moves on majestically through space to the music of the meter of the infinite thought and the eternal purpose of the First Great Source and Center.

The eternal purpose of the eternal God is a high spiritual ideal. The events of time and the struggles of material existence are but the transient scaffolding which bridges over to the other side, to the promised land of spiritual reality and supernal existence. . . .

As regards an individual life, the duration of a realm, or the chronology of any connected series of events, it would seem that we are dealing with an isolated stretch of time; everything seems to have a beginning and an end. And it would appear that a series of such experiences, lives, ages, or epochs, when successively arranged, constitutes a straightaway drive, an isolated event of time flashing momentarily across the infinite face of eternity. But when we look at all this from behind the scenes, a more comprehensive view and a more complete

understanding suggest that such an explanation is inadequate, disconnected, and wholly unsuited properly to account for, and otherwise to correlate, the transactions of time with the underlying purposes and basic reactions of eternity.

To me it seems more fitting . . . to conceive of eternity as a cycle and the eternal purpose as an endless circle, a cycle of eternity in some way synchronized with the transient material cycles of time. (32:5.1-4)

There is in the mind of God a plan which embraces every creature of all his vast domains, and this plan is an eternal purpose of boundless opportunity, unlimited progress, and endless life. And the infinite treasures of such a matchless career are yours for the striving!

The goal of eternity is ahead! The adventure of divinity attainment lies before you! The race for perfection is on! whosoever will may enter, and certain victory will crown the efforts of every human being who will run the race of faith and trust, depending every step of the way on the leading of the indwelling Adjuster and on the guidance of that good spirit of the Universe Son, which so freely has been poured out upon all flesh. (32:5.7-8)

The consciousness of the spirit domination of a human life is presently attended by an increasing exhibition of the characteristics of the Spirit in the life reactions of such a spirit-led mortal, “for the fruits of the spirit are love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance.” Such spirit-guided and divinely illuminated mortals, while they yet tread the lowly paths of toil and in human faithfulness perform the duties of their earthly assignments, have already begun to discern the lights of eternal life as they glimmer on the faraway shores of another world; already have they begun to comprehend the reality of that inspiring and comforting truth, “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit.” And throughout every trial and in the presence of every hardship, spirit-born souls are sustained by that hope which transcends all fear because the love of God is shed abroad in all hearts by the presence of the divine Spirit. (34:6.13)

To the Adjuster-fused mortal the career of universal service is wide open. What dignity of destiny and glory of attainment await every one of you! Do you fully appreciate what has been done for you? Do you comprehend the grandeur of the heights of eternal achievement which are spread out before you?— even you who now trudge on in the lowly path of life through your so-called “vale of tears”? (40:7.5)

The universe of universes, including this small world called Urantia, is not being managed merely to meet our approval nor just to suit our convenience, much less to gratify our whims and satisfy our curiosity. The wise and all-powerful beings who are responsible for universe management undoubtedly know exactly what they are about; and so it becomes Life Carriers and behooves mortal minds to enlist in patient waiting and hearty co-operation with the rule of wisdom, the reign of power, and the march of progress. (65:5.3)

Never, in all your ascent to Paradise, will you gain anything by impatiently attempting to circumvent the established and divine plan by short cuts, personal inventions, or other devices for improving on the way of perfection, to perfection, and for eternal perfection. (75:8.5)

No matter how much you may grow in Father comprehension, your mind will always be staggered by the unrevealed infinity of the Father-I AM, the unexplored vastness of which will always remain unfathomable and incomprehensible throughout all the cycles of eternity. No matter how much of God you may attain, there will always remain much more of him, the existence of which you will not even suspect. . . . The quest for God is endless! (106:7.5)

Can you really realize the true significance of the Adjuster's indwelling? Do you really fathom what it means to have an absolute fragment of the absolute and infinite Deity, the Universal Father, indwelling and fusing with your finite mortal natures? When mortal man fuses with an actual fragment of the existential Cause of the total cosmos, no limit can ever be placed upon the destiny of such an unprecedented and unimaginable partnership. (107:4.7)

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 and eventually wreck the mortal career upon the evil shoals of rejected mercy and upon the rocks of embraced sin. With your consent, this faithful pilot will safely carry you across the barriers of time and the handicaps of space to the very source of the divine mind and on beyond, even to the Paradise Father of Adjusters. (111:1.9)

When man consecrates his will to the doing of the Father's will, when man gives God all that he *has*, then does God make that man more than he is. (117:4.14)

The time unit of immaturity concentrates meaning-value into the present moment in such a way as to divorce the present of its true relationship to the not-present—the past-future. The time unit of maturity is proportioned so to reveal the co-ordinate relationship of past-present-future that the self begins to gain insight into the wholeness of events, begins to view the landscape of time from the panoramic perspective of broadened horizons, begins perhaps to suspect the nonbeginning, nonending eternal continuum, the fragments of which are called time. (118:1.8)

The Nazareth carpenter now fully understood the work before him, but he chose to live his human life in the channel of its natural flowing. . . . (128:1.6)

One day when Ganid asked Jesus why he had not devoted himself to the work of a public teacher, he said: "My son, everything must await the coming of its time. You are born into the world, but no amount of anxiety and no

manifestation of impatience will help you to grow up. You must, in all such matters, wait upon time. Time alone will ripen the green fruit upon the tree. Season follows season and sundown follows sunrise only with the passing of time. I am now on the way to Rome with you and your father, and that is sufficient for today. My tomorrow is wholly in the hands of my Father in heaven.” And then he told Ganid the story of Moses and the forty years of watchful waiting and continued preparation. (130:5.3)

And it was, and is, ever thus. That which the enlightened and reflective human imagination of spiritual teaching and leading wholeheartedly and unselfishly wants to do and be, becomes measurably creative in accordance with the degree of mortal dedication to the divine doing of the Father’s will. When man goes in partnership with God, great things may, and do, happen. (132:7.9)

That same evening Jesus made the long-to-be-remembered address to the apostles regarding the relative value of status with God and progress in the eternal ascent to Paradise. Said Jesus: “My children, if there exists a true and living connection between the child and the Father, the child is certain to progress continuously toward the Father’s ideals. True, the child may at first make slow progress, but the progress is none the less sure. The important thing is not the rapidity of your progress but rather its certainty. Your actual achievement is not so important as the fact that the *direction* of your progress is Godward. What you are becoming day by day is of infinitely more importance than what you are today.” (147:5.7)

It requires time for men and women to effect radical and extensive changes in their basic and fundamental concepts of social conduct, philosophic attitudes, and religious convictions. (152:6.1)

And then the Master, turning to all of them, said: “Be not dismayed that you fail to grasp the full meaning of the gospel. You are but finite, mortal men, and that which I have taught you is infinite, divine, and eternal. Be patient and of good courage since you have the eternal ages before you in which to continue your progressive attainment of the experience of becoming perfect, even as your Father in Paradise is perfect.” (181:2.25)

Do not try to satisfy the curiosity or gratify all the latent adventure surging within the soul in one short life in the flesh. Be patient! be not tempted to indulge in a lawless plunge into cheap and sordid adventure. Harness your energies and bridle your passions; be calm while you await the majestic unfolding of an endless career of progressive adventure and thrilling discovery. (195:5.10)

VII. WHEN FEARFUL

Fear is the overwhelming terror we feel when, defenseless, we hear the drums of the enemy marching. Reason and common sense are swords too dull to cut the knot which binds us to fear's downward spiral of pain and destruction. Fear weakens our moral values and paralyzes our wills, leaving us hunkered down helpless before imagined foes; or, it can spin uncontrolled into panic as we claw wildly like cornered animals. Fear is the corrosive which sets upon faith—the child's relationship with God. Fear runs riot in its destructive cycle, interdicting every good intention, devouring first the one who is afraid. Fear is the vacuum left when love and trust are gone.

Fear's power is founded on ignorance and confirmed in isolation. But when we face fear in the assurance of Father's love it flees like a nightmare before the morning sun. Fears which controlled us fall away and become as if they had never been. Past demons become no more than cartoon characters, forgotten once the page is turned.

Trapped in dread's grasp, attacked on all sides, we need only retreat to our inner bastion of safety and peace, the spiritual kingdom within, the realm of order and love, there to find comfort and strength stronger than that of any adversary. Faith is the key to this kingdom's secure gates, and it comes from our willingness to trust Father's care and protection. Within its massive walls we live in Father's presence and power and know our certain place in his affection. Within, Father calms our minds and tells us that all our fears are needless, that his loving arms surround and keep us safe.

Fear, feeding upon itself, devastates the human soul. But deliverance from terror is only a step of faith away, and faith is a gift of God. To subdue fear we need only set our minds upon God, and through that relationship, that pipeline from the infinite reservoir of our Father's love, pours power from above to the healing of our panicked emotions.

Fear is not conquered, as it were, by frontal attack, because the emotional strength with which to overcome it has already proved inadequate to the fight, otherwise the fear would not have arisen. Fear is rather vanquished by our realization of an all-powerful love, before which fear cannot stand. The power of nature's storm, the malignancy of evil or non-caring people, the indifference of circumstance, all shrink before the onrush of help from above.

Fear is the needless panic of the child alone in the night, when all along his parents are in the next room. Fear is our peril when we feel weak, pride when we feel strong. Both arise when our connection with God is impaired by immaturity, indifference, or willful perversity. Under any of these circumstances life is painful, for it is out of alignment with the currents of Father's plan, which alone provides health of body, mind, emotions, soul, personality, and spirit. Father desires that his children be free from fear and makes available the power by which we may.

“I will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on me.” “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.” “Be still and know that I am God.” “Out of him shall flow rivers of living water to the nourishment of many souls.” “Come unto me, all you who travail and are heavy laden, and I shall give you rest for your fearful souls.”

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Even on Urantia [these angels] counsel the human teachers of truth and righteousness to adhere to the preaching of “the goodness of God, which leads to repentance,” to proclaim “the love of God, which casts out all fear.” Even so have these truths been declared on your world:

The Gods are my caretakers; I shall not stray;
Side by side they lead me in the beautiful paths and glorious refreshing
of life everlasting.
I shall not, in this Divine Presence, want for food nor thirst for water.
Though I go down into the valley of uncertainty or ascend up into the
worlds of doubt,
Though I move in loneliness or with the fellows of my kind,
Though I triumph in the choirs of light or falter in the solitary places
of the spheres,
Your good spirit shall minister to me, and your glorious angel will
comfort me.
Though I descend into the depths of darkness and death itself,
I shall not doubt you nor fear you,
For I know that in the fullness of time and the glory of your name
You will raise me up to sit with you on the battlements on high.
(48:6.8)

Even on Urantia, these seraphim teach the everlasting truth: If your own mind does not serve you well, you can exchange it for the mind of Jesus of Nazareth, who always serves you well. (48:6.15)

By this time the young man very much desired to talk with Jesus, and he knelt at his feet imploring Jesus to help him, to show him the way of escape from his world of personal sorrow and defeat. Said Jesus: “My friend, arise! Stand up like a man! You may be surrounded with small enemies and be retarded by many obstacles, but the big things and the real things of this world and the universe are on your side. The sun rises every morning to salute you just as it does the most powerful and prosperous man on earth. Look—you have a strong body and powerful muscles—your physical equipment is better than the average. Of course, it is just about useless while you sit out here on the mountainside and grieve over your misfortunes, real and fancied. But you could do great things with your body if you would hasten off to where great things are waiting to be done. You are trying to run away from your unhappy self, but it cannot be done. You and your problems of living are real; you cannot escape them as long as you live. But look

again, your mind is clear and capable. Your strong body has an intelligent mind to direct it. Set your mind at work to solve its problems; teach your intellect to work for you; refuse longer to be dominated by fear like an unthinking animal. Your mind should be your courageous ally in the solution of your life problems rather than your being, as you have been, its abject fear-slave and the bond servant of depression and defeat. But most valuable of all, your potential of real achievement is the spirit which lives within you, and which will stimulate and inspire your mind to control itself and activate the body if you will release it from the fetters of fear and thus enable your spiritual nature to begin your deliverance from the evils of inaction by the power-presence of living faith. And then, forthwith, will this faith vanquish fear of men by the compelling presence of that new and all-dominating *love of your fellows* which will so soon fill your soul to overflowing because of the consciousness which has been born in your heart that you are a child of God.

“This day, my son, you are to be reborn, re-established as a man of faith, courage, and devoted service to man, for God’s sake. And when you become so readjusted to life within yourself, you become likewise readjusted to the universe; you have been born again—born of the spirit—and henceforth will your whole life become one of victorious accomplishment. Trouble will invigorate you; disappointment will spur you on; difficulties will challenge you; and obstacles will stimulate you. Arise, young man! Say farewell to the life of cringing fear and fleeing cowardice. Hasten back to duty and live your life in the flesh as a son of God, a mortal dedicated to the ennobling service of man on earth and destined to the superb and eternal service of God in eternity.” (130:6.3-4)

“**Ganid, I have absolute confidence** in my heavenly Father’s overcare; I am consecrated to doing the will of my Father in heaven. I do not believe that *real* harm can befall me; I do not believe that my lifework can really be jeopardized by anything my enemies might wish to visit upon me, and surely we have no violence to fear from our friends. I am absolutely assured that the entire universe is friendly to me—this all-powerful truth I insist on believing with a wholehearted trust in spite of all appearances to the contrary.” (133:1.4)

To the runaway lad Jesus said: “Remember, there are two things you cannot run away from— God and yourself. Wherever you may go, you take with you yourself and the spirit of the heavenly Father which lives within your heart. My son, stop trying to deceive yourself; settle down to the courageous practice of facing the facts of life; lay firm hold on the assurances of sonship with God and the certainty of eternal life, as I have instructed you. From this day on purpose to be a real man, a man determined to face life bravely and intelligently.” (133:4.11)

He sought to make it clear that the world is not to be regarded as an enemy; that the circumstances of life constitute a divine dispensation working along with the children of God. (140:8.3)

“Fear not those who, although they may be able to kill the body, after that have no more power over you. I admonish you to fear none, in heaven or on earth, but to rejoice in the knowledge of him who has power to deliver you from all unrighteousness and to present you blameless before the judgment seat of a universe.

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And yet, when these birds flit about in quest of their sustenance, not one of them exists without the knowledge of the Father, the source of all life. To the seraphic guardians the very hairs of your head are numbered. And if all of this is true, why should you live in fear of the many trifles which come up in your daily lives? I say to you: Fear not; you are of much more value than many sparrows.” (165:3.3-4)

“You have dedicated your lives to the ministry of the kingdom; therefore be not anxious or worried about the things of the temporal life, what you shall eat, nor yet for your body, what you shall wear. The welfare of the soul is more than food and drink; the progress in the spirit is far above the need of raiment. When you are tempted to doubt the sureness of your bread, consider the ravens; they sow not neither reap, they have no storehouses or barns, and yet the Father provides food for every one of them that seeks it. And of how much more value are you than many birds! Besides, all of your anxiety or fretting doubts can do nothing to supply your material needs. Which of you by anxiety can add a handbreadth to your stature or a day to your life? Since such matters are not in your hands, why do you give anxious thought to any of these problems?

“Consider the lilies, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. If God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is cut down and cast into the fire, how much more shall he clothe you, the ambassadors of the heavenly kingdom. O you of little faith! When you wholeheartedly devote yourselves to the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom, you should not be of doubtful minds concerning the support of yourselves or the families you have forsaken. If you give your lives truly to the gospel, you shall live by the gospel. If you are only believing disciples, you must earn your own bread and contribute to the sustenance of all who teach and preach and heal. If you are anxious about your bread and water, wherein are you different from the nations of the world who so diligently seek such necessities? Devote yourselves to your work, believing that both the Father and I know that you have need of all these things. Let me assure you, once and for all, that, if you dedicate your lives to the work of the kingdom, all your real needs shall be supplied. Seek the greater thing, and the lesser will be found therein; ask for the heavenly, and the earthly shall be included. The shadow is certain to follow the substance.

“You are only a small group, but if you have faith, if you will not stumble in fear, I declare that it is my Father’s good pleasure to give you this kingdom. You have laid up your treasures where the purse waxes not old, where no thief

can despoil, and where no moth can destroy. And as I told the people, where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (165:5.2-4)

“What more shall I say? The downfall of nations, the crash of empires, the destruction of the unbelieving Jews, the end of an age, even the end of the world, what have these things to do with one who believes this gospel, and who has hid his life in the surety of the eternal kingdom? You who are God-knowing and gospel-believing have already received the assurances of eternal life. Since your lives have been lived in the spirit and for the Father, nothing can be of serious concern to you. Kingdom builders, the accredited citizens of the heavenly worlds, are not to be disturbed by temporal upheavals or perturbed by terrestrial cataclysms. What does it matter to you who believe this gospel of the kingdom if nations overturn, the age ends, or all things visible crash, since you know that your life is the gift of the Son, and that it is eternally secure in the Father? Having lived the temporal life by faith and having yielded the fruits of the spirit as the righteousness of loving service for your fellows, you can confidently look forward to the next step in the eternal career with the same survival faith that has carried you through your first and earthly adventure in sonship with God.” (176:3.2)

“Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; continue to believe also in me. Even though I must leave you, I will not be far from you. I have already told you that in my Father’s universe there are many tarrying-places. If this were not true, I would not have repeatedly told you about them. I am going to return to these worlds of light, stations in the Father’s heaven to which you shall sometime ascend. From these places I came into this world, and the hour is now at hand when I must return to my Father’s work in the spheres on high.

“If I thus go before you into the Father’s heavenly kingdom, so will I surely send for you that you may be with me in the places that were prepared for the mortal sons of God before this world was. Even though I must leave you, I will be present with you in spirit, and eventually you shall be with me in person when you have ascended to me in my universe even as I am about to ascend to my Father in his greater universe.” (180:3.4-5)

“The Father sent me into this world, but only a few of you have chosen fully to receive me. I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, but all men will not choose to receive this new teacher as the guide and counselor of the soul. But as many as do receive him shall be enlightened, cleansed, and comforted. And this Spirit of Truth will become in them a well of living water springing up into eternal life.

“And now, as I am about to leave you, I would speak words of comfort. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I make these gifts not as the world gives—by measure— I give each of you all you will receive. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be fearful. I have overcome the world, and in me you shall all triumph through faith.” (181:1.4-5)

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. (181:1.10)

VIII. WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT ALL

“There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.” This river is Father’s will, and it flows out to all who are willing to receive the water of life. Life has no meaning apart from a relationship with God. The goods and thrills of a vainglorious generation are spiritually meaningless, failing to satisfy the deepest and truest reality in the human heart. Father longs for his children to be with him and live in his love. To so live requires only that we seek him with a whole heart and abandon those things which stand between us and the kingdom of life, health, and happiness.

The problems addressed in this booklet are like a series of exam questions which all have the same two answers. There is no emotional or spiritual problem which cannot be resolved by intimately sharing our lives with God and enjoying meaningful companionship with our fellows. Loneliness, isolation, doubt, confusion, guilt, discouragement, defeat, impatience, stagnation, and fear are each readily vanquished by that Power which created the world.

Except for the operation of higher laws, the facts of material existence must simply be accepted. Prayer alone cannot heal, but it can open up a vision of spiritual healing which connects with unlimitable *faith*, wherein we accept Father’s solution to every one of our problems, big and small, and wherein even tragedies work for good.

When we come before our Father we experience peace which passes all understanding. The difficulties and tragedies of life do not cease to occur, but we learn that he passes through all of them with us. In partnership with God we take on new courage; we gain insight into the wholeness of events; we begin to see things through his eyes. We are glad to experience life in all its vicissitudes, knowing that Father put us here for this short but intense test, and that eternal life awaits on the other side, where material difficulties will no longer loom so large. We are invigorated by the vision of being part of a greater whole where righteousness and beauty reign. We see this sin-darkened sphere as a training ground which God has made holy and sacred. We see Father in the glance of a passing friend, and learn to love others as he loves us.

As we find our Father and share our lives with him, his energy renews us hour by hour. He takes us to a high plain from which we look down over the breadth of life’s problems, and there!—off in the distance, we see the shining city of our dreams. His power commingles within us, and we see ourselves as part of a larger effort, wherein all the sons and daughters of God work together for the advancement of the greater whole, helping speed the day when this world becomes the place he intends it to be.

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Having started out on the way of life everlasting, having accepted the assignment and received your orders to advance, 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.” (34:7.8)

[L]earn to suffer less through sorrow and disappointment, first, by making fewer personal plans concerning other personalities, and then, by accepting your lot when you have faithfully performed your duty. (48:6.25)

Do not be so slothful as to ask God to solve your difficulties, but never hesitate to ask him for wisdom and spiritual strength to guide and sustain you while you yourself resolutely and courageously attack the problems at hand. (91:6.5)

If you would engage in effective praying, you should bear in mind the laws of prevailing petitions:

1. You must qualify as a potent prayer by sincerely and courageously facing the problems of universe reality. You must possess cosmic stamina.

2. You must have honestly exhausted the human capacity for human adjustment. You must have been industrious.

3. You must surrender every wish of mind and every craving of soul to the transforming embrace of spiritual growth. You must have experienced an enhancement of meanings and an elevation of values.

4. You must make a wholehearted choice of the divine will. You must obliterate the dead center of indecision.

5. You not only recognize the Father’s will and choose to do it, but you have effected an unqualified consecration, and a dynamic dedication, to the actual doing of the Father’s will.

6. Your prayer will be directed exclusively for divine wisdom to solve the specific human problems encountered in the Paradise ascension—the attainment of divine perfection.

7. And you must have faith—living faith. (91:9.1-8)

It had always been Jesus’ practice, when facing any new or serious decisions, to withdraw for communion with his own spirit that he might seek to know the will of God. (136:4.8)

“In the coming kingdom, be not mindful of those things which foster your anxiety but rather at all times concern yourselves only with doing the will of the Father who is in heaven.” (137:1.6)

When Jesus had listened to the apostolic chief relate his troubles, he said: “Andrew, you cannot talk men out of their perplexities when they reach such a stage of involvement, and when so many persons with strong feelings are concerned. I cannot do what you ask of me—I will not participate in these

personal social difficulties—but I will join you in the enjoyment of a three-day period of rest and relaxation. Go to your brethren and announce that all of you are to go with me up on Mount Sartaba, where I desire to rest for a day or two. . . .

This was a marvelous occasion in the experience of each of them; they never forgot the day going up the mountain. Throughout the entire trip hardly a word was said about their troubles. Upon reaching the top of the mountain, Jesus seated them about him while he said: “My brethren, you must all learn the value of rest and the efficacy of relaxation. You must realize that the best method of solving some entangled problems is to forsake them for a time. Then when you go back fresh from your rest or worship, you are able to attack your troubles with a clearer head and a steadier hand, not to mention a more resolute heart. Again, many times your problem is found to have shrunk in size and proportions while you have been resting your mind and body.” . . .

The third day when they started down the mountain and back to their camp, a great change had come over them. They had made the important discovery that many human perplexities are in reality nonexistent, that many pressing troubles are the creations of exaggerated fear and the offspring of augmented apprehension. They had learned that all such perplexities are best handled by being forsaken; by going off they had left such problems to solve themselves. (143:3.1-6)

“But when you pray, you exercise so little faith. Genuine faith will remove mountains of material difficulty which may chance to lie in the path of soul expansion and spiritual progress.” (144:2.6)

Our Father who is in heaven,

Hallowed be your name.

Your kingdom come; your will be done

On earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our bread for tomorrow;

Refresh our souls with the water of life.

And forgive us every one our debts

As we also have forgiven our debtors.

Save us in temptation, deliver us from evil,

And increasingly make us perfect like yourself. (144:3.3)

“To you and to all who shall follow in your steps down through the ages, let me say: I always stand near, and my invitation-call is, and ever shall be, Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am true and loyal, and you shall find spiritual rest for your souls.”

And they found the Master’s words to be true when they put his promises to the test. And since that day countless thousands also have tested and proved the surety of these same promises. (163:6.7-8)