

Center of Study and Reflexion
on Human Destiny

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LETTER No 25

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THE TASK

Foreword

A few years ago, the URANTIA Foundation and the URANTIA Brotherhood published and widely diffused an article written by Mr. Meredith SPRUNGER, Philosophical Doctor in Theology, protestant minister and ex-president of the URANTIA Brotherhood entitled " OUR TASK ".

Years have passed, points of vue have changed but the basic question as to the task with regards to the 5th epocal revelation remains for most readers of the URANTIA Book a pertinent one. I will adress this question here but not in terms of our, your or their task i.e. on the social level but in terms of my task, as I perceive it and as I feel it, because I am convinced that this revelation was not given to some society or to the masses but truly to individuals, a one on revelation to promote personal religious growth.

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MY TASK

I cannot consider this question other than by asking : What does God ask of me ? What is his will ? And even if I cannot formulate a precise answer as to what specific action, I should take in daily living, I can surely adress this question in terms of finality.

First, must I recognize God and God as my father. This initial step may be an intellectual recognition of this fact but this is hardly enough. I must then, make the personal experience this fact.

My celestial father demands that I grow and that I build and expand my soul. He proposes that I explore the paths of beauty, of truth and of goodness, so as to learn how to love.

Finally, he asks that I become perfect as he is. There is my finality and my mission.

He is not only requesting that I read the URANTIA Book, that I attend study groups, that I promote the URANTIA Book or its teachings or that I organize a church.

So, is my task clear and relatively simple, although not easy.

My experience of sonship with God also entices that I behave in a brotherly fashion with all my humain brothers and even all personalized created beings.

Then, if my mission is clear, the means which I will choose to accomplish this task are not always easily identifiable.

I can avoid getting lost though, if at all times, and in every occasion, I take my decisions with a clear understanding of what my basic mission is, and if I associate this spirit with my intelligence.

Once engaged in this adventure of finding God and learning how to submit my will to his will, the main obstacle is the call of the ego. There is always a danger that I will substitute my will to his and that I will subject my divine urges to my humain/animal desires. The only way that I have found to be of any help is more praying, more thinking, more meditating, more worship and more joyous submission to spiritual pressure.

And if, as I believe, my task and your task are essentially the same, then, must I not give you advice but offer to share with you while doing my task, to love you.

My task is never ending, it will expand as my capacity to love grows and the spiritual fruits of service will benefit the whole univfers through the chanel of the Supreme.

I have a mission. I have been awarded a perfect guide within my own thought. I am a son of God called to perfection. My task is to accomplish, day by day, without haste this plan which God has set for me and which calls me to his eternel service.

But you will say : That's all very nice, but what does God ask of me specifically, what is MY OWN task, what are my orders ?

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What is my job description, what are the tasks which I must do now? As I see it, the asking of such a question is the evidence of a lack of faith and that is the pattern which I followed for many years.

If I know that I am a loved son of God, that God inhabits in me, that he has created a friendly universe which is favorable to my growth, then, must I let myself be guided. I am absolutely sure that I will be guided on the right paths. I will experience all that I must experience to grow in perfection.

I must have confidence in the love and wisdom of God and of his senior sons. I am sure that an important part of my task right now is to learn to submit myself with joy and calm to his plan and to his will. So, why do I still feel the need to know in advance what my daily tasks are to be? I still lack in faith.

Never will I exhaust opportunities to grow even if I have not yet learned to become a true spiritual opportunist.

My daily tasks will be presented to me in due time as long as I remain available to do God's will.

A strong faith cannot be built without trust.

If I take the risk of defining for myself and by myself a mission or various missions and that I want to control everything, I will probably do MY will or at least impose MY vision of the task which God could have assigned me but I will not grow much spiritually.

I am happier and better satisfied when doing my best at what is presented to me daily, learning to do my duty in all simplicity and with humility rather than to mission myself in any and all directions.

When I submit myself to God's will with enthusiasm, life becomes a growth path and a service opportunity ground, rather than a stenuous task.

I know that a vast majority of believers have up to now preferred to let other individuals or institutions tell them what to do, tell what their tasks were. I also have the impression that a good portion of URANTIA Book readers also wish openly or secretly to be told what to think, or do.

It is my conviction that this revelation does not point in this direction. The Revelators as Jesus himself had done, invite us to liberate ourselves from fear and to take charge our religious life with the help and guidance of all the spiritual agents around us. We are urged to develop our faith and to become personally responsible for our spiritual growth, that is my task. And I will have all the help I need.

The strongest among the truth seekers and the more robust souls show the way towards personal religious engagement which produces abundant spiritual fruits of love and altruistic service.

Meanwhile will social, religious and socio-religious institutions continue for sometime to feed and somewhat control the religious or ritualistic hopes of many fearful truth seekers.

This article was not written to convince any one but to commune with those who share with me this view point, as each of us works with joy at his task. It is important to me and I suppose to us, that we more fully realize that we also work together by our personal efforts for the broadening of the spiritual kingdoms.

It is not a collective task with individual benefits, but an individual task with social benefits.

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REFLECTION ON THE PRESENT SITUATION *according to the Urantia Book.*

First of all let us make a brief return in the past, in order to compare the reactions related to the Fifth Revelation with the reactions that followed the Fourth Revelation.

The Jewish society worshiped God through sacrifices and many traditions. To come close to God, meant to respect an unbroken succession of rituals. Such a religion is a religion of the mind.

To this society, Jesus came to reveal God as a loving and merciful Father, and he made it clear that a sincere faith in God was enough to initiate between Him and the creature a loving Father-son relationship. This religion is a religion of the spirit in total conflict with the religion of the mind. Access to the religion of the spirit requires to be born of the spirit: it is the second birth.

" Jesus made it clear that the great difference between the religion of the mind and the religion of the spirit is that, while the former is upheld by ecclesiastical authority, the latter is wholly based on human experience." (1729 A)

In other words, to the religion of duty and fear, Jesus substituted the religion of love and mercy.

The great majority of this Jewish society has remained or has come back to the religion of the mind: obedience to a visible institution.

" These multitudes listen to the truth and believe it superficially with their minds, but few of them permit the word of truth to strike down into the heart with living roots." (1927 C)

However a minority in this society have attached themselves to the religion of the spirit.

" Many of you have dared to believe my teachings and have already entered into the joy and liberty of the consciousness of sonship with God " (1905 D)

Only some apostles and disciples understood this gospel of the spiritual fatherhood of God from which came the brotherhood of men.

" When Jesus' immediate followers recognized their partial failure to realize his ideal of the establishment of the kingdom in the hearts of men by the spirit's domination and guidance of the individual believer, they set about to save his teaching from being wholly lost by substitution for the Master's ideal of the kingdom the gradual creation of a visible social organization, the Christian church. And when they had accomplished this program of substitution, in order to maintain consistency and to provide for the recognition of the Master's teaching regarding the fact of the kingdom, they proceeded to set the kingdom off into the future. The church, just as soon as it was well established, began to teach that the kingdom was in reality to appear at the culmination of the Christian age, at the second coming of Christ." (1865 B)

" Christianity, as it developed from that day, is: the fact of God as the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, in association with the experience of believer-fellowship with the risen and glorified Christ." (2059 C)

The Fifth Revelation was given to us in Chicago in the first half of this century, and we witness reactions similar to those of the Fourth Revelation: some readers stop at the mind level of the teachings, others, less numerous, perceive the law of love and seek to integrate it in their life.

The reader who stops at the mind level has the pleasure of understanding the beauty of the concepts, but cannot apply them in his life or refuses to do it. He accepts in his mind, at least in part, the revelations on the working out of the universes, but he does not get involved. His everyday horizon is self limited to the material and intellectual life of his time; his motivations are mindal and his scale of values has remained in accordance with his terrestrial experience. His faith is traditional or intellectual, or both.

On the other hand the reader born on the spiritual level sees his scale of values entirely renewed, reversed - The first have become the last - The material goals have given precedence to the spiritual goals - He is conscious of, and lives his filiation with God. He has become cosmic and his treasures are the ones which survive: the fruits of the spirit. His motives are the motives of his soul : service. His faith is personal and spiritual.

This new scale of values carries with it a new personal involvement. Let us think about Jesus' statement which says that those who are not able to sacrifice, father, mother and children for the kingdom, are not worthy to enter it.

The materialistic man will be able to sacrifice, father, mother and children out of patriotism, to risk his life bravely for the traditions of his country; but refusing to be born of the spirit, he cannot be motivated on this level by a divine ideal.

Man born to the spirit simply places God well overhead of his dearest attachments to life. He has an absolute trust in Him. He is always ready to give up his life for a divine ideal.

Jesus clearly shows us the choice between living under the jurisdiction of the mind or under the jurisdiction of the spirit.

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Being enlightened by the reaction brought about by the Fourth Revelation and considering the Fifth Revelation as the reactualization of the Fourth, we are invited to study Jesus' teachings, integrate them into our personal life and be watchful to avoid any deviation, as was the case with the Fourth Revelation.

Jesus' religion is purely spiritual; but it starts with the second birth, the birth of the spirit.

The kingdom is not in the future, it is now in the heart of everybody through this individualized presence of the Father with whom we are called to fuse and who is our constant guide towards the life of the spirit.

The teachings of the Urantia Book present us with the line of conduct to be followed, when Rodan tells us: *"I see in the teachings of Jesus, religion at its best. This gospel enables us to seek for the true God and to find him. But are we willing to pay the price of this entrance into the kingdom of heaven? Are we willing to be born again? to be remade? Are we willing to be subject to this terrible and testing process of self-destruction and soul reconstruction? Has not the Master said: 'Whoso would save his life must lose it. Think not that I have come to bring peace but rather a soul struggle'? True, after we pay the price of dedication to the Father's will, we do experience great peace provided we continue to walk in these spiritual paths of consecrated living. (1782 A)*

Let us now listen to Jesus:

"Jesus taught that faith, simple childlike belief, is the key to the door of the kingdom, he also taught that, having entered the door, there are the progressive steps of righteousness which every believing child must ascend in order to grow up to the full stature of the robust sons of God.

It is in the consideration of the technique of receiving God's forgiveness that the attainment of the righteousness of the kingdom is revealed. Faith is the price you pay for entrance into the Family of God; but forgiveness is the act of God which accepts your faith as the price of admission. And the reception of the forgiveness of God by a kingdom believer involves a definite and actual experience and consists in the following four steps, the kingdom steps of inner righteousness:

1- God's forgiveness is made actually available and is personally experienced by man just in so far as he forgives his fellows.

2- Man will not truly forgive his fellows unless he loves them as himself.

3- To thus love your neighbor as yourself is the highest ethics.

4- Moral conduct, true righteousness, becomes, then, the natural result of such love. It therefore is evident that the true and inner religion of the kingdom unfailingly and increasingly tends to manifest itself in practical avenues of social service. Jesus taught a living religion that impelled its believers to engage in the doing of loving service. But Jesus did not put ethics in the place of religion. He taught religion as a cause and ethics as a result." (1861 D)

But watchfulness is also most required inside the group. Jesus said :

" You are all the children of light; therefore stumble not into the misunderstanding entanglements of mortal suspicion and human intolerance. If you are ennobled, by the grace of faith, to love unbelievers, should you not equally love those who are your fellow believers in the far-spreading household of faith? Remember, as you love one another, all men will know that you are my disciples. "(2042 A)

" Be you all as brethren. And when the kingdom grows to embrace large groups of believers, likewise should you refrain from contending for greatness or seeking preferment between such groups."(1942 D)

" Always we may have diversity of intellectual comprehension and interpretation, even varying degrees of socialization, but lack of spiritual brotherhood is both inexcusable and reprehensible." (1866 C)

" Have faith in God; have faith in one another; and so shall you enter into the new service of the kingdom of heaven." (2040 D)

"Neither should you seek to lord it over your brethren in the kingdom. Remember, I have taught you that he who would be greatest among you should become the server of all." (1907 A)

" To Jesus the kingdom was the sum of those individuals who had confessed their faith in the fatherhood of God, thereby declaring their wholehearted dedication to the doing of the will of God, thus becoming members of the spiritual brotherhood of man.

The Master fully realized that certain social results would appear in the world as a consequence of the spread of the gospel of the kingdom; but he intended that all such desirable social manifestations should appear as unconscious and inevitable outgrowths, or natural fruits, of this inner personal experience of individual believers, this purely spiritual fellowship and communion with the divine spirit which indwells and activates all such believers." (1865 A)

Such believers individually live their sonship with the Father, and their sensitivity toward the divine gifts (Thought Adjuster, Spirit of Truth, Holy Spirit... etc) is such that their points of view, different as they may generally be, can be harmoniously reconciled and that the society they would be bound to set up would depend on an authority standing above the level of human laws. For, although unaware of it, they labor under the watchcare of the Supreme.

That such believers, contact each other and create a network from which will emerge a progressive structure of Jesus' disciples who only want to depend on Him. What we mean here by network is an harmonious coordination of individual actions which are impregnated with the same spirit.

Each one of us has to make a great effort to break away from the past, and readapt in order to live this ideal of Jesus. Some of us, certainly among the most courageous, have invested themselves in this movement, and, in a spirit of dedication have given the best of themselves in a path which, becoming more and more difficult, now turns out to be a side track. We must be unqualifiedly thankful towards them, for this difficult experience bears

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Let us all be under the sole authority of the Master; not by exterior manifestations, but by the individual effort in which each one looks for the truth of his attitude through spiritual contact with his divine gifts.

Let every reader, sensitive to this inner research, outwardly manifest a peace which will dissolve all the existing dissensions.

" Divine love does not merely forgive wrongs; it absorbs and actually destroys them." (20180A)

"True love does not compromise nor condone hate; it destroys it." (20180B)

By our prayers let us unite in spirit, and devote our lives to proving that love is the greatest thing in the world. (see 2047 C)

But let us be patient; the midwayers are telling us: "It is our sincere belief that the gospel of Jesus' teaching, founded as it is on the father-child relationship, can hardly enjoy a world-wide acceptance until such a time as the home life of the modern civilized peoples embraces more of love and more of wisdom.

C.E.R.D.H.