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on Human Destiny

Study Group of the Urantia® Book

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on Human

THE LETTER

"By the spirit fruits of your lives impel souls to believe the truth that man is a son of god, and that all men are brethren" - 193.5.2

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SUMMARY

ARTICLES

Is the French Translation of the Urantia Book Reliable ? p. 2

Talk about suffering p. 6

Prayer p. 8

NEWS

U.S.A. p. 9

CANADA p. 10

AUSTRALIA p. 11

GREAT BRITAIN p. 11

FINLAND p. 11

EDITORIAL

We are nearing 1992.

That means that the french-speaking countries have had «Le Livre d'URANTIA» for nearly 30 years. This is certainly worth a few moments of reflection. And it is an item of this reflection which is proposed in this «Letter».

In forty years of study we have been able to go deeper into many a concept which was then to us new and foreign to our ways of thinking. A better understanding should mean a better translation. Many readers have become aware, as years were passing by, that the earlier editions of our translation retained a number of more or less important mistakes. Jacques WEISS himself was aware of this state of things, and had already accepted some of them.

Thirty years is the time of maturity. We should not rest on our laurels.

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*** C.E.R.D.H. a non profit society, getting together readers of the URANTIA Book.*

IS THE FRENCH TRANSLATION
OF THE URANTIA BOOK RELIABLE ?

As regards translations, the «Cosmogonie d'URANTIA» or «Le Livre d'URANTIA» is a «première» in the history of our movement, and in this respect, it is highly instructive on all levels. Error is a technique for growth. With the passing of time, and on examining facts and their consequences, as objectively as possible, we can now proceed to a critical and constructive survey of the situation. I will here, voluntarily, restrict myself to the technical aspect of the translation which was undertaken by Jacques WEISS in 1955 and which he brought to completion (with courage and persistence) in 1961, devoting to this task, every day, from two to three hours of his time.

The result of this work was a text, the literary quality of which cannot be denied or even criticized, and many people would even say that, without him, there would not be any french speaking reader at the present time. (But that is to attach little importance to the efficiency of the Invisible Brotherhood, and I, personally, don't subscribe to that statement). As to the content, many are the students of the Book, who have noticed numerous mistakes in translation, from the simple missing out of a comma to the more serious mistranslation which completely misrepresents the thought of the author. But it could not be otherwise, for, how could anyone ask a translator to translate, in such a short time, a piece of work of over 2000 pages and containing concepts so new that many of them remain abstruse for us, even now? So, this literary translation is not faithful or accurate, and we shall see, in due course, that there is a danger in using it without emendations. In no ways do I intend to minimize Jacques's work, and even less to question his outstanding intellectual qualities. Some readers will judge my remarks

as severe and unfounded. To those readers I will ask to peruse this article right to the end, as for the students of the Revelation, and there are many of them, I know they already agree with me. Let the readers rest assured that the only motives that lead me to appeal to them are based on the respect we owe to the careful thought and work of the original writers of the text, and to the defense of the readers' right to having a reliable and faithful text. Thanks to a couple of personal experiences and a limited study of the translation of the first page of paper 112 we shall be able to better appreciate the range of these mistakes.

Some time in September, two friends of ours and readers of the URANTIA BOOK, were our guests, and as we were talking of the translation one of them remarked that there was no need for corrections and the message got through. Half way through the meal we came to discuss of biology and specially of chromosomes. Using modern scientific data they declared that reproducing human cells did not have 48 chromosomes, as stated by the Vorondadek Son in Paper 36, chapter 2, paragraph 11, and this was a blatant illustration of the numerous scientific mistakes currently to be found in the URANTIA Book. This question had already been debated in Geneva in 1985 during an eventful study meeting and I had, at the time, underlined the fact of a translation mistake. Jacques WEISS translation reads:

« Sur Urantia, les cellules sexuelles de la reproduction humaine comportent quarante-huit unités de contrôle archétypal, les chromosomes détermintaeurs de caractéristiques. »

Now, the original text in english is:

« On Urantia there are forty-eight units of pattern control -trait determiners- in the sex cells of human reproduction.»

If the revelators have not used the word «chromosomes» it is not out of ignorance, for the word is used in Paper 77 chapter 2 paragraph 5. We can easily see that they don't speak of chromosomes but of trait determiners, Jacques has simply added the word chromosomes, and this apparently innocent adjunction has misled all the french speaking readers who believed, rightly, that this was a mistake. We can read in a medical dictionary, namely «le petit LAROUSSE de la médecine»:

«One sperm, the first come, penetrates the ovum, for, as soon as penetration is achieved, the ovum becomes impenetrable for the others. Immediately after, begins the fusion of the elements of the two gametes. The «head» of the sperm, the male pronucleus, fuses with the nucleus of the ovum, the female pronucleus. The chromatin of each of them condenses into 23 chromosomes (i.e. in the human species) and that fusion leads to two times 23 chromosomes (that is 46)

But chromosomes do not constitute the totality of trait determiners, as mentioned by the Vorondadek Son, they are only part of them. There remains a pair of determiners which do not participate to either the material or the intellectual determination of the individual. What purpose do they serve then? Let us remember that the human race evolves on material, intellectual, and spiritual levels of reality. But that would take us too far so, I'll leave the reader to his own investigation.

To come back to the story I was telling you, my friends confessed that for over ten years they had been convinced that the Vorondadek Son was mistaken. Then they agreed to the necessity of a revision of Jacques WEISS's text.

I would like now to tell you something of another experience. A reader once told me that he did not understand where Philo's superiority

over Paul was, in the following text which was in contradiction with the whole Book and in particular with Paper 5 chapter 4. Here are the two texts:

« In only one matter did Paul fail to keep pace with Philo or to transcend the teachings of this wealthy and educated Jew of Alexandria, and that was the doctrine of the atonement; Philo taught deliverance from the doctrine of forgiveness only by the shedding of blood»(121.6.5)

« It is an affront to God to believe, hold, or teach that innocent blood must be shed in order to win his favor or to divert the fictitious divine wrath.» (4.5.4)

The translations are:

« Sur un seul sujet Paul ne réussit ni à se maintenir à la hauteur de Philon, ni à surpasser les enseignements de ce juif d'Alexandrie riche et instruit; Philon enseigna que le seul moyen de se libérer de la doctrine du pardon était le versement du sang.»

« C'est un affront à Dieu de croire, de soutenir ou d'enseigner qu'il faut verser du sang innocent pour gagner sa faveur ou détourner une colère divine fictive.» (4.5.4)

The underlined french phrase meaning that

« Philo taught that the only way to free from the doctrine of forgiveness was the shedding of blood.»

Which is, of course, a mistranslation of the english sentence and in contradiction with the second quotation.

The corrected sentence should be:

« Il s'agissait de la doctrine du rachat. Philon enseignait qu'il fallait se libérer de la doctrine selon laquelle le pardon ne s'obtenait qu'en versant le sang.»

I could proceed with other examples, but I think the readers will have understood how important it is to be able to have at one's disposal a

reliable translation. To finish with this demonstration we are going to examine, in part, the translation of the first page of Paper 112, and we will see that there are many mistakes, some of which are particularly serious.

« You have been endowed with a perfect guide, therefore, if you will sincerely run the race of time... »

« Vous avez été doté d'un guide parfait; si donc vous voulez courir la course du temps... »

J.WEISS has omitted the word «sincerely», in french «sincèrement», so that the text should read:

« Vous avez été doté d'un guide parfait; si donc vous voulez sincèrement courir la course du temps... »

Suppressing the word «sincèrement» disqualifies the individual's motive, and when we know how important the role of sincerity is in man's spiritual growth...

«1. Personality is that quality in reality which is bestowed by the Universal Father himself or by the Conjoint Actor, acting for the Father.

2. It may be bestowed upon any living energy system which includes mind or spirit.»

«1. La personnalité est cette qualité dans la réalité qui est conférée par le Père Universel lui-même, ou par l'Acteur Conjoint agissant pour le Père.

2. Elle peut être attribuée à tout système énergétique vivant qui inclut la pensée ou l'esprit.»

In the first sentence J.WEISS has translated the word «bestowed» by «conférée» and in the second by «attribuée» whereas in both instances the meaning is the same. Three remarks can be made: First of all, sheer logics would have that a word used several times with the same meaning be translated in the same way so as to maintain the consistency of the text. Then, the use of synonyms appreciably modifies the thought of the author which, then becomes rather vague and loses in quality. Lastly, we believe that the repetition of the same word, in

close connection, has a pedagogic value and is intended by the author.

In the second sentence J.WEISS uses the word «pensée» («the thought») to translate the word «mind», really meaning «mental» in french. This last point has been examined in an article by Jean ROYER in our Letter No 26. Let us just note that the word «mind» is used more than a thousand times in the original text. Thus, the new text now is:

«1. La personnalité est cette qualité dans la réalité qui est conférée par le Père Universel lui-même, ou par l'Acteur Conjoint agissant pour le Père.

2. Elle peut être conférée à tout système énergétique vivant qui inclut le mental ou l'esprit.»

Then we find:

«5. Personality, while devoid of identity, can unify the identity of any living energy system.

«13. Personality may survive mortal death with identity in the surviving soul.»

WEISS's translation is:

«5. Bien que dépourvue d'identité, la personnalité peut unifier l'identité de tout système énergétique vivant.

«13. La personnalité peut survivre au décès physique en conservant son identité dans l'âme survivante.»

In this last sentence there is a mistranslation because as it is translated, it means: «Personality can survive to mortal death, keeping his identity in the surviving soul.» In his translation, J.WEISS gives identity as something possessed by personality, and this is a definite mistranslation. If we look at the first sentence we realize that this mistranslation is in absolute contradiction with what is written there i.e. «Personality, while devoid of identity can...» which tells us clearly that personality has no identity.

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An attentive reader will easily conclude that the author is inconsistent and judging by the accumulated mistakes may reject the whole Book.

Lastly, we find:

«9. It is characterized by morality - awareness of relativity of relationship with other persons. It discerns conduct levels and choosingly discriminates between them.»

«9. Elle est caractérisée par la moralité - la conscience de la relativité des relations avec d'autres personnes.»

Here, J.WEISS has simply omitted translating the second sentence. The translation should be:

«9. Elle est caractérisée par la moralité - la conscience de la relativité des relations avec d'autres personnes. Elle discerne des niveaux de conduite et fait parmi eux un choix judicieux.»

We think that this omission is not devoid of importance for, knowing that it is personality that discerns conduct levels and chooses between a good or a bad conduct, makes man for ever responsible of himself. He is liberated from the fetters of fatalism.

In this critical study of the first page (in order not to render it even more indigestible) we have voluntarily left out minor mistakes such as voluntary repetitions which are not to be found in the french translation, or the use of slightly inaccurate words etc... To put it in a nutshell, we have found, in a half page, two omissions, including a whole sentence, a mistranslation, an important contradiction, several approximations, the wrong use of synonyms, not to speak of the punctuation. A correction of the translation was, therefore, felt to be necessary, not only to get rid of the mistakes but also to take account of the evolution of the language which, in thirty years, has witnessed a growth in its vocabulary thus allowing us a refined comprehension of our concepts. This correction was started 8 years ago and completed in the summer of 1990. With an average of 10

mistakes per page, that means about 20.000 emendations that would be brought to J.WEISS'S text. Let us emphasize that those who have done that work have tried to retain the quality of the style and that their suggestions are limited to the matter thus leaving all the literary quality of the text.

To conclude, we think we have shown how necessary it was, for all french speaking readers, to have a faithful and accurate translation. Discussions and negotiations are going on between those concerned, and we are looking forward to the day (which we hope to be nearing) when we have an emendated text.

Translating a philosophical or religious work is not easy. We can see that nowadays there are many translations of the Bible, each one expressing a particular religious thought or interpretation. It probably has not been so at the beginning, when one was used. Translations appeared as a response to religious «dogma» or to emend mistakes which were thought to be too grave for the supporters of a differing interpretation.

What will it be like in our movement in the coming decades? We have an original text from which translations are made. Now, we have noticed that a perfect translation can hardly be made at one go. Seeing the numerous difficulties we met as we proceeded with the correction of J. WEISS's translation, we thought of starting an entirely new translation. This solution might not have proved the best, and on a second thought, we realized that multiplying the number of translations would not have been favourable to the unity of our movement. Offering an improved translation, with periodic emendations, seems to us a more *satisfying and elegant solution*. If we judge J.WEISS's translation and give it a 70/100 mark, the corrected translation will reach a 90/100 mark. And I am not sure an entirely new translation would be able to reach that quality level. Within a few decades, a third correction will be able to let J. WEISS's translation reach a 95/100 mark.

This observation, concerning a betterment of J.WEISS text, could very well be applied to other translations such as the spanish one or the finnish one or the deutch one. By giving the readers high quality translations, both reliable and faithful, we think we are working after our Heavenly Father whose nature is perfection. Moreover, we minimize the risk of seeing a

number of eccentric or «cranky» translations, once the copyright is over. Should they, nevertheless, appear on the market, they would, then, be marginalized or even dropped out, not being able to compete with ours.

Blennes, F R A N C E
G.MICHELSON-DUPONT

TALK ABOUT SUFFERING

*God created men wanted them happy and most of us are suffering....
How must we consider suffering and deal with it ?*

Suffering is unreal.
Happiness is real.
We cannot compare something real with something unreal.

You wanted to heal suffering by looking for the causes and I said you're looking in the wrong direction because you're looking in the direction of unreality instead of the direction of reality. This is the faith struggle which we are to fight.

Jesus had his own technique for solving his problems and freeing himself from suffering by completely turning his mind in the other direction, the direction of God, his Father - and he meditated on the reality of his Father as goodness, beauty, truth, love, mercy, and all those qualities which are the nature of the Universal Father - And he struggled sometimes through long hours and through long nights to make reality real for him - because he had to realize reality in his mind - and the mind got impressions from below, from material level, from material relationships and so Jesus also struggled like we do, but he won the victory by realizing reality.

And now the amazing thing is that a problem is being solved when we really realize reality, because then, our faith is enlightened, our insight becomes deeper, our perspective becomes wider, and the spiritual energy system which is captivated when we are in trouble is becoming free, and because spirit is creative, it creates its own channels of manifestation.....

In my talk «Spiritual problem solving», I said the same thing, that is, by looking into reality, the solution to the problem arises spontaneously because spirit is creative and perhaps not at once, and not the whole solution of the problem at once, but nevertheless when we realize sonship with God - the presence of God - and realize his nature and how He works, that is more important than what we do.

To know how to work in the way God works, that is the will of the Father.

Then, we are always enabled to take the first step, and after the first step, the second step unfolds, and so, by keeping our mind state on God, we work out our own problems.

The Father does not say us what we should do, but He always says how we should work, and « how » is the value - and « what » is only the thing - And value is more important than the thing itself -

And so you see that instead of looking for the causes of the trouble , we solve the problem by looking for the causes of reality - and reality is like light which simply drives away the darkness; if you open your curtains , the darkness simply has gone.

And it is not theoretical, it is most practical. This way of problem solving , if we do not find the practical solution of the problem - in communion with the Father - it simply means that our communion with the Father is not deep enough, not good enough, but any how, whatever we do in the direction of the right effort, it always has some results.

That is the same with healing, we are mostly not capable of healing a case at once, but every truth which we realize in God consciousness is a strong dose of medicine.

We have conditions of unhappiness which simply belong to our level of living. There is a natural ebb and flow - says the U.B. - in spirituality, and you have to use also wisdom . You know, if you are very tired , you are in a position that the wrong kind of thinking, fear, is coming more easily to your mind than when you are fit and spiritually active - it's very difficult to be active in the spiritual field when you are physically very tired - And that is simply a matter of our level of living - we live in a material world and we work with a material body - And we have to use our wisdom -

Sometimes the best thing to do is just relax or sleep, and next morning when you are

rested then you are in a much better condition to realize reality. That is simply a matter of practical wisdom and be not disappointed if in a moment of tiredness, when you are exhausted mentally and even spiritually, because spiritual energy also can be exhausted, says the U.B., let alone the mental energy and the physical energy. - All can be exhausted when we have made a strong effort and therefore on the morontia worlds relaxation is such a very important thing . A third of the time is being spent on relaxation; and also the angels have their times for refreshing energies, the re-intake of spiritual energy, because they are becoming exhausted also. And that is all linked with the fact that we are limited beings, we are not actually perfect, we are potentially perfect but not actually, and we have to go a long way to come to that level.

On Paradise we do not need that relaxation because worship is the real relaxation on Paradise.

That is a matter of practical wisdom, but the fundamental thing is that we seek for reality, that we just realize the spiritual facts of being, and that is the struggles of faith. We are confronted with a situation which is completely different from the situation as the Father has meant for us. And we are all susceptible of taking that situation as a real situation, and now faith says «no» - That's not reality - I believe in the Universal Father, in his goodness, in his presence , and I turn away from my erroneous situation, from unreality to reality and I don't stop before I have realized that reality. And when I have spiritually and mindedly realized it, then the result comes spontaneously. I don't have to remedy the material situation. That is only the result of the other things.

**HENRY BEGEMANN †
WASSENAAR - HOLLAND**

PRAYER

For many years, (Since at least 1973, when I started reading the URANTIA Book) I was told in many ways that prayer was important, that it was the means of communication with God, the expression of the soul, and much more. These arguments in favor of prayer talked to me, to the point where I was saying to myself : «Jacques, you should get to work and start praying.

And it went on for years. Of course, I would pray occasionally with a group, or as I would really feel downcast, powerless or overwhelmed. And each time I prayed, I would feel somewhat better, more relaxed, serene even. But nevertheless, I still would not pray regularly, I was resisting.

I believe that part of the explanation for not giving in was due to the «bad praying habits» which I was taught by the catholic church rituals when a young child. All these mechanical formulas which we were forced to learn, and in which I, nor many others, even believed in, created this mental block.

I believe that I soon lost faith in these less than convincing rituals. It, in fact, had never worked for me (no true belief), it made non sense, and it was not true in my mind.

But, as I read and re-read the URANTIA Book over and over, plus other religious or spiritually flavored works, a new and stronger message slowly grew in my mind : «Prayer is good, useful and necessary». From then on, I was in a conflicting situation. On one side my intellect kept saying : «you know it doesn't work, it's a trick, it's useless. (the intelligence does that : keep its position)

But on the other side my heart, and I would also say my soul, was saying with increasing insistence : «Pray, discover true prayer ! «

In fact, God was calling me with a louder and more pressing voice, to «talk with Him ». But I kept saying to myself : «Yes, but I don't know how to pray ». In fact I was starting to listen. The desire was there, my perception was slowly changing, my attitude was finally evolving towards accepting prayer; so my behavior was to follow suite.

But I had already realized that whenever I had lent myself to praying (and it was lending myself, only), it had worked . When I was saying : «I give up (it was more letting go, than giving up), I can't go any further ». He was there, ready to help. And although I had all the reasons in the world to pray often, regularly and with faith and conviction, I still was not there yet.

To let go ones old reflexes , old patterns and old convictions, is never a simple thing . It is therefore the reason why it was so useful for me to read the URANTIA Book so many times. Repetition tends to wear out the shakles of old, fixed and petrified ideas . By the way, this is also how prayer works.

Finally, after all these years of pression, resistance, tribulations, desires, fears and other mixed feelings, I discovered «by luck» on the shelves of a public library a book originally written in English but which I read in French . The title in French is «La prière clé maîtresse de la vie « by James Dillet Freeman. I can only guess the

English title to be « Prayer, key to life (or to living) ».

This book was the trigger to my urge to pray. A beautiful book, written in a simple style, an convincing tone, but with a humble and true message. This man knows what he speaks about, I doubt not that he is a man of faith and of prayer. I am in my third reading of this book and it is a charming companion.

So I started praying, as I could, as I was, with my inhabilities but with all the inherent capacities which where there, in me. AND...IT WORKS ! The more I pray, the more I want to pray and the more praying makes sense and is meaningful.

«After a long travail, came the «rebirth». So I am only a newborn child.....of God. Then how could I tell you about prayer. I cannot, but I can tell you of my experience with prayer, and testify of my joy. God has become more real. My Father is

more present, my Thought Adjuster is adjusting my thoughts better. Life has a new meaning, and this is just a beginning. So if you are going through a similar experience of hesitations, tribulations and «incompetence», do not give up. Please keep your desire alive, be on watch, and jump in when your time comes.

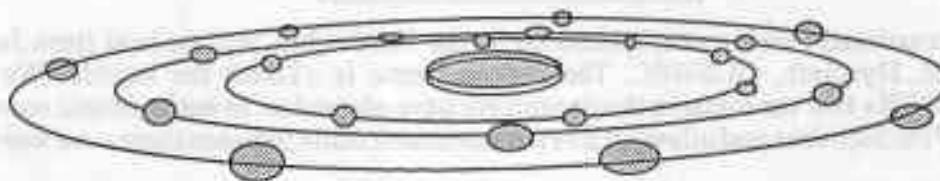
Before closing , I would like to add that all prayers of life are answered. And if you pray, then we pray together. Prayer unites. And the last words I would like to dedicate to God, thanking Him for His constant support :

Father, I love you
Your son,

JACQUES TETRAULT
ST LOUIS DE TERREBONNE - CANADA
June 1991

P.S. I have not become someone else. I am jus becoming more of myself. There is less fear and more faith.

INTERNATIONAL



NEWS

U.S.A.

The former Brotherhood, now called The FELLOWSHIP since its separation from the FOUNDATION, held during the past Summer its triennial delegate assembly; there also was a meeting of the General Council. Many decisions were taken, among others were the following.

Concerning the triennial delegate assembly:

- Election of the new members in replacement of those whose term expired in 1991.
- Diverse resolutions, including «a resolution requesting the current Trustees of URANTIA Foundation to resign in order to enable the FOUNDATION to properly carry out its trust responsibilities».

that the URANTIA Book had to share, fifty fifty, with URINEX, an exhibitor selling a therapy based on fresh morning urine! On her table, next to ours, she had deposited a bottle of urine, and as the URANTIA Book was so near, people could read our poster saying: «if you are thirsty for Truth, Beauty, and Goodness, the URANTIA Book is for you!»

And yet, we had asked to be paired with a compatible exhibitor. It probably was the (stupid) computer which has done the trick. Lise, then, asked the Midwayers to come to our rescue, and when I came back from dinner, Urinex had gone, finding the emplacement too far from the others. We took possession of the whole kiosk for the rest of the exhibition and this anecdote, which had started as something embarrassing, turned out to be rather funny in the end.

Bravo! and thank you Lise and Pierre for this piece of humour; it is not so frequent to have a good laugh while reading the URANTIAN prose! «Humor is the divine antidote for exaltation of ego» (48.4.15)

AUSTRALIA

We have received, like many other readers, an interesting study entitled:»*The science content of the URANTIA Book*» published by four students of the Book, among whom is Ken GLASZIOU, well known among the participants of our last meeting in Montvillargenne. It is somewhat unlucky that so few of us command enough of Shakespeare's language to be able to fully appreciate this study. We certainly wish we could have it in french.

GREAT BRITAIN

Reading «*The ASCENDER*», a periodical published by Chris MOSLEY (344 Gosbrook Rd. CAVERSHAM, Berks. RG4 8EG ENGLAND) we learn of a meeting of readers from the 28 to the 29th of September. to be held at Pamela and Gez LAMB's home 21 Westmorland Rd., North Harrow, LONDON. Readers, who feel interested, may contact the organizers by phoning to 44.81.427-3593.

FINLAND

The URANTIA movement was started in Finland in the early sixties. In April 1989 the first non american society was born there. Affiliated to the Foundation, they publish a bulletin called «*REFLEXION*», the only other bulletin, with our «Letter» to be published in two languages, namely finnish and english.

On reading it we realize that the members of this society are very active, they organize

- Twice a year a conference, one in Summer, one in Winter. Four training seminaries for those responsible of study groups and for teachers.
- A week-End for teachers and leaders.

Moreover 17 study groups (having from 4 to 12 participants) meet every fortnight, having at their head a member of the URANTIA Society who functions as leader or moderator.

All this is a witness to an impressive dynamism, and the participants to the Montvillargenne meetings will, no doubt, remember the kindness and the alertness of our finnish friends.