

The Circles ...

*"Life is but a day's work—
do it well."**

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Relationships

A Privilege

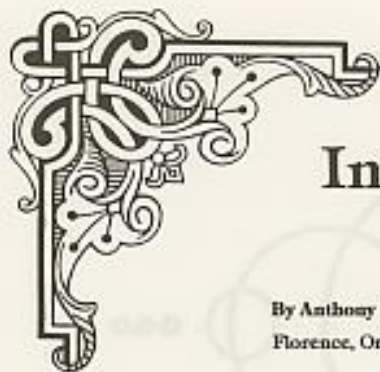
The thought occurred to me a few days ago that nursing offers a unique opportunity both to serve God's children and to follow in Michael's footsteps. At the time I was bathing my patient's feet, and I remembered when Michael washed the feet of the apostles. Michael used the situation to illustrate to the apostles that none of us should be "too good" to perform some loving service for our brothers. Even such a lowly task as washing feet can be a moment of communion with the Father through service to one of his children.

Some of the nurses I know resent bathing their patients or complain

about some of the more unpleasant tasks associated with nursing. I have learned, much to my joy, that everything can be done in two ways—in a mechanical, cold way or in a loving, gentle way. Even the technical nursing skills can be an episode of higher service. I can brighten a patient's day and bring him peace by my actions during routine care. There are many opportunities to touch patients physically and thereby spiritually. God's love can flow through one's touch so well. The expression on one's face, a non-critical, loving presence—there are so many avenues to express God's love.

See "Privilege" on page 13.

By Kathryn Gentry
Paris, Texas



In Relationship with "The Other"

By Anthony Porzio
Florence, Oregon

It seems evident to me that in order to be able to share in a personal relationship with another human being, it is imperative that a genuine personal relationship with God, the Spirit Father, first be established. I say this because I believe that all human relationships that are established without this initial precedent are basically neo-mammalian in nature and consequently self-centered in character; self-centered in the sense that the relationship functions for the sole purpose of gratifying the selfish needs of the individual relating partners as the main priority of goals. The purpose of the "other" person or persons in this, the most prevalent type of relational situation, is to provide a useful value to be exploited and consumed as a necessary contribution to the self-centered nature of the unspiritual-

ized personality. The emotional energy of "others" is demanded to fulfill the delusion of self-importance.

Such relationships are sustained for long periods of time, however unstable and turbulent they become, simply because the principle of the mutual use of one another is observed as everybody gets "their" turn of attention dominance of "others" while the game is played out in the drama of everyday life. And yet, throughout these relationships, while the egocentric demands are being met and everyone consumes each other psychically and emotionally, there is always the same sad complaint that no one really feels loved. The sensitive ones soon realize that there is no genuine personal regard for one another in these relationships. These are the souls

that begin to cry out to God for salvation from the physical animalistic level of human relationships.

Consistent with his character, God is always there waiting for some response to his call to enter into the truly personal relationship with Divine reality; that, when realized, will enable the individual to regard the personal free will of others in the same manner in which his or her personality has been regarded—with complete respect and freedom. The freedom to choose to love rather than the compulsive desire to dominate is what separates the spirit-born children of God from the unspiritualized children of human animals. Until this realization happens, the individual human personality is limited to the environmental determinants that regulate the creature as an organic machine, programmed to be dominated by either fear or forceful power assertion. But human personalities have, through the grace of the indwelling spirit of the Father, the opportunity to transcend their electrochemical dominance of the mind and experience salvation in the alternate spiritual life.

People always talk of how much they "love" this or that person or people, and I often wonder if they really understand what that word "love" means. It is all too easy to use that word "love" for any intent or meaning because so few people really experience what it means to "love" or "be loved." In the general confusion concerning the meaning of love, it is often used as a smokescreen for its actual opposite: disrespectful and domineering exploitation, the essence of hate. If love is the desire to do good to others, then that good-

A Letter To My Son...

February 12, 1983

Dear Michael,

This note is in remembrance of your birthday. It is now time for your second. As I awoke this morning, I asked God to "talk" with me—to give me good counsel to start the new day. With this "special insight" my next conscious thoughts were about a birthday, my birthday.

For the first time in my life, I knew what a birthday celebration really was all about. You see, until your birth, I was always operating under the false conception that my birthday was a day for me—all real friends, especially family, were supposed to give me wonderful presents and treat me with special honors on my day. This morning marks the birth of a new God-given awareness for me. As your father, I can now understand a fuller meaning of the celebration of the "birthday." Before you, birthday meant what will be given to me. Now, birthday means that I can look to my parents and say, "Thank you for your love. I know that this day marks a day of joy in your life, a day when you met me for the first time, a day that you loved me like no other people on earth could love me." My birthday is now a day that I can really celebrate. Thank you, Michael.

Your father,
George F. Van Arsdale
Louisville, Kentucky

See "The Other" on page 6.

The Commitment of Membership★

By Stephen Finlan
Fairfax, California

and

By Charles Lamar
San Francisco, California



If a religious group is "to dramatize the loyalties of religion...foster the attractions of supreme values...enhance the service of unselfish fellowship...provide wise counsel and spiritual guidance...encourage group worship (and) human friendship," (1092) there must be more than just the natural development of friendships. We must have determination systematically to overcome interpersonal problems as we work together to help the kingdom of heaven grow on earth.

Spiritual brotherhood is not natural to evolving man. It is from the fatherhood of God that we reason ourselves into the brotherhood of man. So as a religious fellowship we will progress when we deliberately bring

Love is the
shortest distance
between two people.

spiritual intentions into our personal relationships, as we attempt to work together with "unselfish devotion, courageous loyalty and sincere fairness," (2054) exemplifying the kingdom of heaven.

Relationships predicated upon self-interest can hardly personify the brotherhood of man. The "natural" development of friendships based on compatibility of psychological chemistry, is always paralleled by the natural development of antagonisms and divisions. Unless there is a determination to overcome such divisions, then "counsel" just becomes political maneuvering, "loyalties" are cli-

quish, and the demonstration of fellowship is of no more value to society than is an ordinary social club. If spiritual unity is to be more than a theoretical goal, there must be an effort to have love overcome our spiritual laziness. Membership in a group means a commitment to persevere with spiritual effort through the difficulties we are sure to encounter.

Fatherhood discloses the "each" relationship, brotherhood the resultant "all." Fatherly love is not a generalized attitude of good will. It always reveals a unique personal address to the real needs of another person: the talisman of love-friendship. It is the business of a religious group to encourage (without pressure) these personal attitudes to grow, for when fatherly attitudes grow up among us, the brotherhood of man will be portrayed.

Natural (material) human psychology doesn't lead to spiritual brotherhood, but spiritual brotherhood does grow up naturally as we try to do the will of God, both singly and together.

This doesn't mean a therapy group where everybody is constantly "working" on everybody else. Rather, the divine cause we work for takes much of the pressure off of relationships, as we pursue something greater than ourselves; although the service of one's fellows—both members and non-members—is the primary means of pursuing that end.

If brotherhood is our end, teamwork must be among our means; if spiritual maturity is our end, the ability to sustain a commitment to

religious fellowship must be one of the means.

If our interrelationships are to be mature instead of ease-drifting, if our ideals are to have more effect than our changing moods, then it behooves us to think of religious fellowship more as a network of spiritual marriages than as a series of easy affairs. Otherwise, there is no use in having membership at all, if it entails no spiritual commitment.

Whatever concrete membership procedures we decide upon, the essential underpinning is the idea of a commitment to spiritual ideals and to each other—"pooling our spiritual possessions" (1776) to enhance the "life of loving service." (2043)

David Zebedee's messenger corps, and not the often-divisive apostles, is called "the first attempt at the socialization of the Master's gospel of the brotherhood of man." (2031) And they were able to do what they did because of their oath to one another. ●



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Jena Pittman

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho

When we think of relationships, we ordinarily think of the people we love. We usually try *not* to think of the problems we have in those relationships. Many times though, through constructive confrontation, our problems can be resolved in a way which strengthens those loving relationships. Resolving our dissatisfactions or dealing with our friends' frustrations can open new avenues for intimacy, trust, and continuing spiritual growth. Constructive confrontation is a type of interaction that enables us truly to *live* our spiritual philosophies.

Offering criticism

Most of us can think of an interaction with someone when a frustration in our dealings has obstructed our ability to love that person. Often, deepening intimacy can make us

aware of traits we may observe which are inconsistent with their philosophy. Rather than scratch them from our list of friends or separate ourselves from them, we can take responsibility for helping them learn and grow, for perhaps sharing the lessons we've learned through similar experiences or for helping them see new ways to apply their philosophies.

We should always assume that our perception of their situation is obstructed, that we are unable to really see the "whole picture." We should try to talk to them, to more fully understand their philosophy. Many times, criticism is unnecessary since, once they start to talk about their philosophy, they realize the inconsistency with their lifestyle, or we realize the error in our perception.

If the topic is a touchy one and they are unable to open up about it, we need to decide whether it's really worth worrying about. Experiencing the results of an error in judgment is often necessary for personal growth. Our friend might not be ready for our criticism at this time or might be dealing with other more important problems. But if his actions are damaging to us or to others, we might decide to "force the issue" (after some preliminary research) and eventually approach him again. If possible, we can discuss the problem with other friends we have in common. Our other friends might also be trying to decide on an approach to the same problem or perhaps they have already said something and gained an insight into the situation which they can share with us.

From the Heart

Our father who abides on Paradise
Who is without beginning and end;
Shines through in each of our daily lives
As a loving parent and faithful friend.

One I can lean on through thick and thin
Who goes with me through every day,
He indwells the minds of women and men,
So he may better lead them along the way.

I had unhappy and unbelieving years
Before my life was deeply touched
By a special gift that erased my fears.
Now my life I cherish so very much.

My eternal career has been set in motion
By a faith that always sustains me.
As to what it will be like, I have a notion,
But I'm so anxious to actually see.

Sometimes life's waters are a little rough going,
I'm no exception since my new birth.
But I do have the added help of knowing
By each problem I solve, I can prove my worth.

May I always prove loyal, my Father, and true
And eternally thankful for my destiny divine.
My dream is to forever be of service to you
Returning the love you've given to be mine.

Susan Grzeskowiak
North Liberty, Tennessee

During our confrontation, we need to focus on our love for that individual. Tact is an important ingredient during the conversation. We should also be open to finding an error in our own evaluation. If we can maintain our caring attitude, both parties will gain a deeper understanding of one another. That is spiritual growth.

Accepting Advice

It's usually more difficult to be open to criticism. We all try to do the best we can in carrying out the Father's will, once we awake to that commitment. But sometimes we may not be aware of a conflict between our actions and our growing God-conscious philosophy.

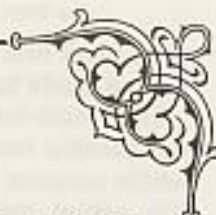
It is usually a great compliment when someone thinks enough about us to sincerely want to help us through a problem. Sometimes our total immersion in a situation prevents us from seeing it in proper perspective.

If we disagree with our friend's evaluation, we can discuss with him the reasons for our decision to act as we do. Perhaps his understanding of the situation is incomplete and after he comprehends the total picture, he will see his suggestion is in error. If the discussion does not yield an immediate "light of awareness" to either of us, and we both still believe we are in the right, it might be a good idea to go apart from one another and spend some time thinking about and praying for a glimmer of truth to appear. The problem will be easier to talk about after taking time to re-evaluate the information received during the confrontation.

Accepting the Challenge Of Spiritual Growth

Confrontations of this sort are capable of producing tremendous spiritual growth for all parties concerned, of really helping us to apply our spiritual cognizance to our everyday lives. But confrontations can also create great amounts of animosity and alienation if ego gets in the way of communication. Total honesty and sincerity is so important at these times.

People have to be ready and willing to handle such confrontations, so it



The Key

I hear a voice, softly saying, "Seek and you will find." So I seek and I find. But what I find is yet more to seek.

It seems that life has set me down in the midst of a deep mystery—amid questions that seem to be beyond my comprehension. Yet a voice from within, keeps saying, "Knock and the door will be opened." I knock and doors do open. But every open door leads to yet another door at which to knock.

This inner voice keeps saying, "Ask and your questions will be answered." I ask and I am answered. But every answer is itself another question.

It would seem that the key to this mystery be somewhere contained within the realm of the search and the question—that it must exist somewhere within the confines of my own mind. If this then be true, the key would seem to be in how I seek these answers, in how well I listen to that quiescent inner voice which answers my questions, and how, and in what fashion, I respond.

It might well be that before I can find this key, I must first learn to control my thoughts. I have tried this.

And with this new awareness, meditative prayer suddenly becomes a form of thinking which is more like listening than like speaking. My mind is free. All of God's created beings and his created things immediately become more beautiful, more meaningful.

I am now alive, and now I know that along with this gift of life, I have been given a mind with which to ask questions, a spirit to seek truth, and hands to knock at doors which, if I so choose, will be opened and lead to the long adventure of an everlasting life.

I now know that this key will not immediately take me to the end of this mystery, but it will take me to the beginning.

Having begun, I can go on...

By Don Deam
Topeka, Kansas

might be appropriate to discuss the possibility of including this type of openness in our friendships before attempting such interactions. Some people just don't want this level of intimacy. But keeping our frustrations and criticisms inside can erect a sudden and invisible block in our friendship that our friend will never understand. This type of reaction also denies him the opportunity to see himself from another point of view.

Also, we shouldn't discount the value of praise and approval of our friends' successes. We can grow from understanding the reasons for the actions they take, actions that are an active application of their spiritual philosophies. The more we discover the real motives of our friends, the more we can truly support them in their hopes and dreams.

Refer to Paper 159, "The Decapolis Tour." ●

ness must first be realized by contacting God's Spirit within.

The male-female, husband-wife relationship has, in my opinion, the whole purpose of our existence on this planet involved in a situation where spiritual growth is essential for the survival of the relationship itself, as well as for the individuals themselves. The very reason for the two sexes who are fundamentally attracted to each other, initially on the animal-emotional level right on up to eternal partnership in the spiritual realms, is essentially to produce the spiritual growth necessary for both sexes to transcend the material existence.

Animals have attraction for the opposite sex but do not communicate with each other outside of the basic purpose of procreation and the rearing of offspring. That is, since the qualities of personality are only inherent in the human species, there can be no possibility for personal communication among the other species. The divine bestowal of personality upon the human species has enabled the individuals to relate to each other in ways that go far beyond emotion-based instinctual urges. And yet the procreative family system remains the fundamental foundation for communication that transcends primitive human relationships.

The sharing of mutual concerns over the welfare of genetic offspring gives insight into the structure of universe government and cosmic relationships. Only by being a parent can the human mind fully understand the parental benevolence of the cosmic creators, and the human mind is capable of drawing the intellectual and spiritual connection between the macrocosmic and microcosmic relationship of the two realms. As their need to be together to insure the health and survival of their young is satisfied, a new sense of mutual respect can develop as the appreciation for each other's growing character increases from continually perceiving self-sacrifice and acts made for the benefit of the family. When the

See "The Other" on page 11.

Abraham and the Covenant

By Bill Cooper
Arlington, Texas

The following story, based upon information in The URANTIA Book pp. 1014-1022, was delivered at the Southwest Regional Forum in July 1983. Some of the details of the story have been enhanced in order to make it more vivid.

For hundreds of years before Abraham was born, the Melchizedeks of Urantia had observed the decline of the one God concept on this planet. They were concerned that monotheistic religion would decline so far and so thoroughly that it would be non-existent when the expected Bestowal Son arrived in the future.

Almost 4000 years ago, Machiventa Melchizedek incarnated at Salem near present-day Jerusalem and began teaching the third epochal revelation of God to man.

Abraham's family was in Ur, 650 miles across the Arabian desert, when they heard Machiventa's new gospel from one of his missionaries. They believed what they heard and set out on the 1100 mile journey around the desert to Melchizedek's capital at Salem in order to hear more.

When they had gone only halfway, they reached a city where Nahor, Abraham's brother urged the family to stop for a while. And the family remained there until Terah, Abraham's father, died.

Almost immediately upon Terah's death, Melchizedek dispatched a messenger to Abraham and Nahor. Imagine their surprise upon receiving this message from the Priest-

King of Salem, whom they had never met. And the message was something like this: "Greetings to Abraham and Nahor from Melchizedek, priest of El Elyon, the one God. You are invited to come to Salem to hear the truth of El Elyon for yourselves. The offspring of you two thus enlightened brothers will be a blessing to the whole world."

Abraham and Nahor were faced with a significant life decision: to pursue personal, material goals or to seek spiritual enlightenment. The brothers pondered this invitation and its promise. Nahor elected to stay behind to found a city-state. Abraham chose to go to Salem to hear what Melchizedek had to say.

Abraham and his nephew Lot journeyed on to Salem. Not long after they arrived, the need arose for them to journey to Egypt for food supplies. In Egypt, Abraham and Lot found a distant relative on the throne. With this connection, Abraham became a commander of two successful military campaigns. He and his wife Sarah lived as royalty.

Abraham had wealth and power in Egypt but he continued to think about Salem and about spreading Melchizedek's revelation of God. Once again, Abraham was faced with a significant life decision, and again he chose to give up his life of ease and to go to Salem to serve Melchizedek and God.

Abraham returned to Salem with a plan to wage war on the neighboring tribes in order to convert them to the

Salem religion. Melchizedek was able to restrain Abraham from his militarism for a while, but eventually Abraham parted from Melchizedek and moved to nearby Hebron where he set up his military capital.

Abraham made war on his neighbors and was victorious. He forced them to accept and financially support the Salem religion. Still Melchizedek counseled Abraham: "This is not God's way." Abraham persisted in his plans. He hoped to conquer all of Canaan.

But then he began seriously to ponder his lack of an heir. He had no children to carry his achievements forward. No doubt he remembered his original invitation from Melchizedek to come to Salem. Melchizedek had spoken then of the offspring of Abraham.

Abraham went to Salem to seek Melchizedek's advice about his lack of an heir. They talked for a long time. Finally, Melchizedek led Abraham out into the utterly clear blue-black of the desert night. Gesturing to the heavens, Melchizedek stated an offer to Abraham. "Abraham," he said, "count the stars, all of them if you are able. So numerous as these will be your descendants if you will only believe God's promises and follow his leading. God will do all the rest. Believe and follow is all you need do."

Abraham was faced with yet another significant life decision: to follow his own ambition or to follow God's will. Abraham believed Melchizedek's promise and chose God's way. And this decision to believe God's promise completed the agreement offered by Melchizedek.

Abraham returned home and ceased his wars. Sarah conceived and delivered Isaac. Abraham now became very solemn about this agreement, this covenant with God. And so he returned to Salem to have it put in writing. When the written covenant was complete, he held a formal ceremony of acceptance in which he symbolically put aside personal pride and ambition and dedicated his will to the doing of God's will.

An interesting thing about the Abraham-Melchizedek covenant was that God made a very attractive offer and treated it as a contract with Abraham. But this wasn't a unique arrangement for Abraham only. God, after all, is no respecter of persons. Abraham is one of the relatively few ever to accept the offer and certainly one of the very few to put it in writing. His uniqueness lies in the fact that he accepted and took the contract seriously. The offer was open to everyone. It still is. And still there are few takers. It is available today as an offer to you and to me and to

everyone.

I thought it would be interesting to see what the contract might look like, so I drafted a covenant. I want to share it with you. In the short run this covenant may seem to be a novelty, a curiosity. But I hope you will reconsider what it says from time to time. Who knows, you may eventually want to sign this contract with God and place it with your most precious documents. God's offer is outstanding. It will never be withdrawn. All we need do is accept it and observe our simple obligations. Look the covenant over and consider it. ●

Covenant

Be It Known to All

that I, El Elyon, the one and only God, the Father of all, do hereby make this offer to each of my offspring. This offer shall become a contract between me and my child upon his willing assent to its terms.

My beloved, if you will only believe my promises and follow my instructions, I will do the rest. Among my many promises to you are the following:

- 1. I will watch over you eternally.*
- 2. I will guide you constantly.*
- 3. Truth, beauty and goodness will be triumphant.*
- 4. Your sincere, unselfish desire to be like me will be successful.*
- 5. I will send my other sons and daughters to help you find the way.*
- 6. I will provide all that you need.*
- 7. I am with you always.*

My child, you may make this an eternally binding contract between us by having the faith to believe my promises and by listening for and following my leading. Your act of following my leading is itself a faith act. It is your proof to yourself that you are willing to experience my will in your life.

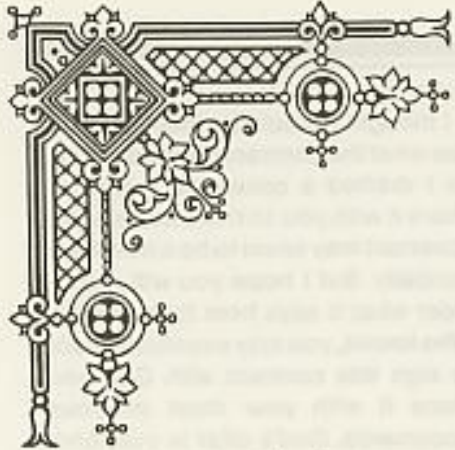
In all this and more, I stand eternally ready to bind myself personally to you.

In dedicated, loving and patient service to you,

signed *El Elyon*
the Father

accepted _____
the son

date _____



I, God the Father, Love You, My Child!

How I do love you, my child!

I love you past the height and depth and breadth that speech can utter.

I love you as an oceanic flood which must trickle out to you in streamlets so as not to drown you, the beloved subject of my affection.

I love you with the infinite dynamism of a boundlessly divine deity who seeks with all his omnipotence to achieve his fondest hope, the comprehended expression of my love for you.

I love you with the inarticulate attentiveness with which a devoted parent loves his progressing progeny.

I love you with the ever-fresh and ever new spontaneity of a youthful lover for his beloved, yet imbued with the finality of unending grace and power.

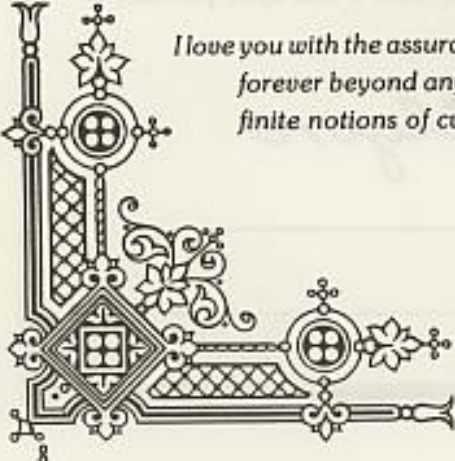
And, simultaneously, I love you with the unencompassable wisdom of being the Ancient One of Eternity, the finitely impenetrable all-wise One of all-knowledge and all-understanding.

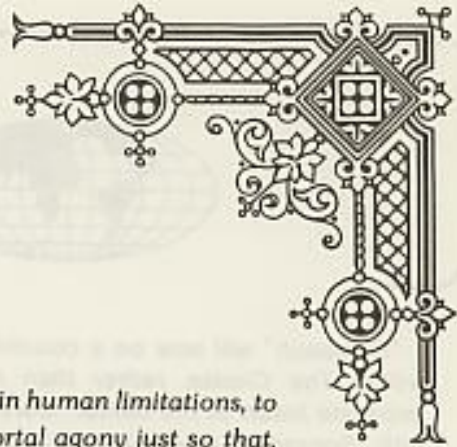
I love you with the foresight of the Perfect Parent who not only foresees but lives in the limitless Circle of Eternity, my appointed destiny for you, my child.

I love you to an exaltation which surpasses any achievable summit of understanding and affection, because my love is infinite, unfathomable, boundless, and ever-flowing.

I love you with the purity and forcefulness of a divine impetuosity which blasts away from your mortal frame the transient imperfections of temporal inexperience and ignorance as I prepare you for admittance into deathless Eternity and unending Love.

I love you with the assurance and the unalterability of one whose being and consciousness stretch far back forever beyond any conceivable idea of any beginning and which reach forward forever beyond all finite notions of culminating destinies: I love you as the I AM THAT I AM.





I love you more than sufficiently to incarnate as a helpless babe, to cloak myself in human limitations, to suffer degradation, rejection, desecration, conspiratorial murder, and mortal agony just so that, when all human prejudicial wrath had vent its fury and human ignorance had done its worst, I might again reaffirmingly express to you my unwavering love and my unending devotion to you and to all the members of my eternal family.

I love you enough to have made it possible for you to choose to turn forever away from me; and although that is possible, it is not possible for you to do anything which might cause me, your Eternal Father, to lessen or negate my eternal love for you, my child. For I AM all that is, and the infinity and eternity of my domain I will lovingly help you to find and experience if only you will entrust me with your ultimate welfare, victory, and love. I will be thrilled if you should choose to become my partner in the unending panorama of universe unfoldment and the eternalization of personal destinies.

I love you with the solemnity of everlasting trust, unfailing fairness, and incontrovertible truth.

I love you with the unchanging sincerity and unswerving honesty of my impeccable integrity.

I love you with the unaltering finality of the totality of my infinity, RIGHT NOW, in the eternal moment, transcending all imperfection, incompleteness of comprehension, and apparent transience and flux.

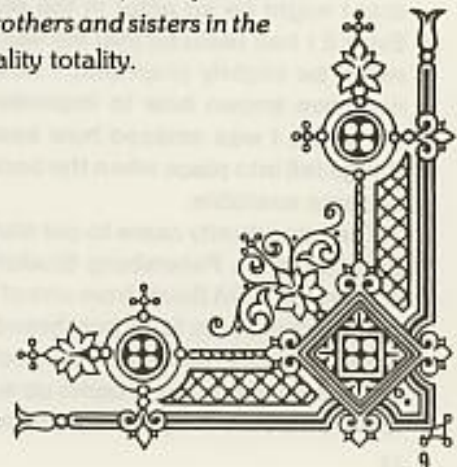
I love you as my irreplaceable and unique child of personal integrity and value which I will never abrogate and which I will honor forevermore throughout your unfolding eternal adventure which I even now fully perceive, for I AM its Source and Cause.

I love you, believe it or not, my child, as I love myself, for that Golden Rule unites me with you and with all your planetary peers and their tradition—as religious approximations of the comprehension of my love for you and them.

I love you through my Fatherhood which finds its ultimate satisfaction and pleasure when my love passes on through your sonship and your mutual brotherhood with all your fellow brothers and sisters in the foreverness family of Supremacy, Ultimacy, Absoluteness, and Infinity, reality totality.

Oh, how I, God the Father, love you, my child!

David Glass
Bradenton, Florida





Outreach

"Outreach" will now be a column within *The Circles*, rather than a separate insert in the center. Meredith Sprunger, who has so ably initiated "Outreach," has decided to retire from the actual editing, although he will continue to send articles from time to time. We wish to express our thanks to Meredith for the considerable work which he put into "Outreach."

We are eager to continue to report on reader's experiences with sharing the concepts from *The URANTIA Book* with others or introducing the book itself to new readers. Please send us your experiences.

the editors

The End of the Beginning

By Richard Bain
St. Petersburg, Florida

In a previous article in *The Circles* entitled "How to Know When to Begin," I suggested that now was the time to approach selected groups with *The URANTIA Book*. Dialogue is inexpensive, but action shouts. Little did I realize when I wrote the script that I might be an actor in the play. Even if I had realized that my words might be slightly prophetic, I would not have known how to implement my ideas. I was amazed how easily things fell into place when the books became available.

The opportunity came to our study group (The St. Petersburg Students of *The URANTIA Book*) from one of its members who on faith purchased a large quantity of *URANTIA Books* and asked the group to come up with ideas on distributing them. It seemed

a good idea to offer them to local ministers. The idea we conceived was to send out letters along with Meredith Sprunger's excellent brochure "*The URANTIA Book and Our Christian Heritage*." The project was initially carried out in St. Petersburg and Tampa. The offer for the donation of a book was sent mostly to Protestant ministers of the more liberal denominations. There were 21 books accepted (17% of the offers sent out) in St. Petersburg, and 13 books sent out (13% of the offers) in Tampa. The program was carried out in Ft. Myers (6 books), and in West Palm Beach (10 books), but in these cases, the ministers were approached in person.

At this point, only about half of the books had been distributed. Opportunity again reared its serendipitous head when several of us joined the Religious Futurists Network. The RFN is a subgroup of the Futurists movement. The RFN publishes an annual directory with the resumes of all its members. When we looked at this directory, we knew we had fallen into a gold mine. Most of the group are ministers, and many are in positions of responsibility at the national level of their denominations. The resumes of these people make it clear that they are seekers, people unafraid of new and novel concepts. The response from them confirmed that this was an accurate assessment; 45 books were sent out, a posi-

tive response of 43% of the letters sent out.

Others have tried this approach and have had poor results. Why should this project be successful, and others not? This is a very difficult question to answer without knowing how they went about doing it, but there are several factors which I see as contributing to the success of this project. The letter contained a list of concepts from the book that would be of interest to Christians, but the letter did not pass any judgment on the corresponding Christian concepts. The letter made it clear that we were not recruiting for any movement and that there were no strings attached to the offer. It might be said that it is a soft sell approach. Meredith's brochure was certainly an asset to this effort, since it is written by a minister and oriented toward ministers. The technique illustrated in the letter and the brochure is that of tailoring your message to your audience. Along with the letter and brochure, we sent an addressed stamped envelope and a form with the person's name. Ministers are usually busy people, so it is desirable to make it as easy as possible to respond to the offer. To receive a book, it was only necessary for them to check a block on the form, put it in the envelope, and mail it.

Many have advocated introducing the book to others only by personal contact. It cannot be denied that the



A man has made at least a start on discovering the meaning of human life when he plants shade trees under which he knows full well he will never sit.

personal touch in introducing the book is a desirable and effective method, but unfortunately many people who would be assets to the movement will not come into contact with a reader of the book. Even if they do, the student of the book may not be the sort who wishes to talk to others about the book. This method of sending out letters enables a group to reach a large number of people in a short time. Further, the letters can be carefully tailored to the interests and background of those who would be most likely to respond. The RFN project is a good example of this sort of effort. Other people have advocated

that mass publicity be used to draw attention to the book. The reason we prefer our method to this mass approach is that it offers selectivity as to who receives the message. Those who would be hostile to the book will be less likely to become aware of it. Those in this movement of students of *The URANTIA Book* should be looking for quality rather than mere quantity at this point in the evolution of the movement.

We are God's hands and feet in spreading the teachings of the book. It is time for us to be about our Father's business, and that business is getting the book to those who have

the potential to be leaders and teachers in our movement. Yes, we will make some mistakes; if we don't then we're probably not doing anything worthwhile. What our group did was an experiment. It worked. If fear of error or criticism prevents us from trying innovative methods of introducing people to the book, then our creativity will have been the victim of our fear. Some of the books we sow will fall on shallow or rocky minds, but others will fall on fertile minds and bring forth beautiful spiritual fruit to feed many generations of spiritually hungry seekers.

The brochure, The URANTIA Book and Our Christian Heritage, may be obtained by writing Meredith Sprunger, 4109 Plaza Drive, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46806. ●

The Letter

Dear

Our group has been studying a book called The URANTIA Book for a number of years. Through the kindness of a member of our group, a number of these books have been made available for donations to individuals and libraries. I have enclosed a brochure that will provide some insight into the nature of the book. We are undertaking this project because we feel that this book has enriched our spiritual and intellectual lives, and we feel that it will do likewise for persons of almost any religious persuasion. The book is not associated with any particular religion or religious movement. It integrates and correlates the insights and concepts of many of the world's religions. It illuminates both science and religion and shows them to be complementary, rather than antagonistic. It contains a biography of Christ that provides a touching and insightful picture of the human Jesus and his relationship to the divine Christ.

The book provides insight into both the personal contactable God and the impersonal God that powers the Universe and inhabits the circle of eternity. The book pictures God as the absolute head of a stratified Universe-wide spiritual administration. It speaks of a God who is absolute unity but who also chooses to manifest himself in three persons at the personal level.

The URANTIA Book teaches about the origins of life, its evolution, and the ultimate culmination of this process in the appearance of creatures capable of self-contemplation. The book speaks of the origins and development of man's various institutions, including government, religion and marriage.

It is not the objective of our group to proselytize for a movement, but rather we hope to familiarize open-minded, spiritually seeking people with the teachings of The URANTIA Book. We recognize that (as the Buddhists say) there are many paths up the mountain. Because each person is a unique individual, each person's path is uniquely his own. We believe that the book can shed light on whatever path of ascent that is followed. In this spirit, we would like to offer this book as a gift to you if you will accept it.

There is a form and stamped envelope enclosed so you may indicate your willingness to accept a book or not, or if you wish for us to call you with further information. We would appreciate any comments you have, whether positive or negative.

*Sincerely,
St. Petersburg
Students of
The URANTIA Book*

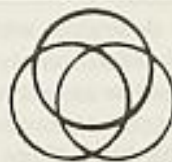
The Other, cont. from page 6.

personality is expressed this way, it is perceived as something distinctly apart from the useful value that the "other" represented to the egocentric self.

Personal free will is most expressed in selfless and self-sacrificing actions, for only that which liberates the personality from animal selfishness can truly give the personality the "freedom" to be able to "share" in communicative relationships. Men and women have the unique opportunity to come closest together as communicating human personalities while at the same time they share the most intimate of emotional relationships, that of mutually cooperating partners in the most spiritualizing of all situations—the family home. Happy are they that replicate the universe family system in their own private lives. ●

CHANGES OF ADDRESS

We appreciate your sending us notice of any address changes. If we aren't notified, three things happen: (1) we have to pay for each change of address the Post Office sends us; (2) the person who has moved doesn't get that copy of *The Circles*; and (3) people who leave no forwarding address no longer receive *The Circles*. Thanks for your help in this detail.



Working With God

By Laurie Guenther

Colorado Springs, Colorado

Working With God by Gardner Hunting. Lee's Summit, Missouri: Unity School of Christianity, 1953.

I found a little book called *Working With God* by Gardner Hunting, first published in 1934, to be inspiring and close to the Jesusonian teachings. Had he read *The URANTIA Book*, he certainly would have been a member of a study group. On the subject of "Learning to Love" he writes:

...Jesus said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me."... What did Jesus Himself do? He "went about doing good." He knew how to love God. Did you ever wonder what his early life must have been, before He began His ministry? I wonder if perhaps He did not spend all that first thirty years of His life learning how to love God by keeping His commandments, and how to love his neighbors by serving them. It seems to me that that is the explanation of all His wonderful power to help and heal and serve—and love. Just think of that young Jewish boy, whom the world called Jesus, son of Joseph and Mary, going quietly about "doing good" all through His youth and young manhood, and learning that it was the secret of power. Think of thirty years spent just learning the marvelous results of simply doing good. What a love developed in Him!

Don't you think love would develop in you and in me, if we made it our whole business to serve the good—which is God—and our Neighbors?

In Mr. Hunting's chapter on Self Expression, he has this to say:

It occurs to me that the greatest happiness, yes the keenest pleasure—if pleasure is what I want—is this expression of my self. God gives me that pleasure by inducing me to express myself. I learn tremendously as I endeavor to express myself; I become astonishingly happy; I find myself irresistibly attracted to God, because He lets me express myself. And these things being perfectly obvious to me, it becomes suddenly

obvious, too, that God's method is a singularly good one; that if He gives me education, delight, pleasure, by leading me to express myself, I shall be expressing Him still further and still better if I adopt His method with anyone whom I want to help. Instead of laying down laws, preaching, arguing, why do I not try to induce my friend, my pupil, my wife, my child, to express himself? Why not try to help him bring out his own ideas and make them appear to him to

See "Working" on page 14.

Pedestals

*I hope it did not hurt you when you fell,
From the pedestal I so thoughtlessly placed you on.
It was very heartless of me to have done this to you
and for this I'm truly sorry.*

*No more mortal could ever live up to the lofty ideals
I elevated you on.*

*Why do we place our loved ones on unreal heights
in the clouds.*

*Then, as we grow, the realization is bound to dawn
that, after all,*

*Those whom we've elevated are merely,
fallible mortals, too.*

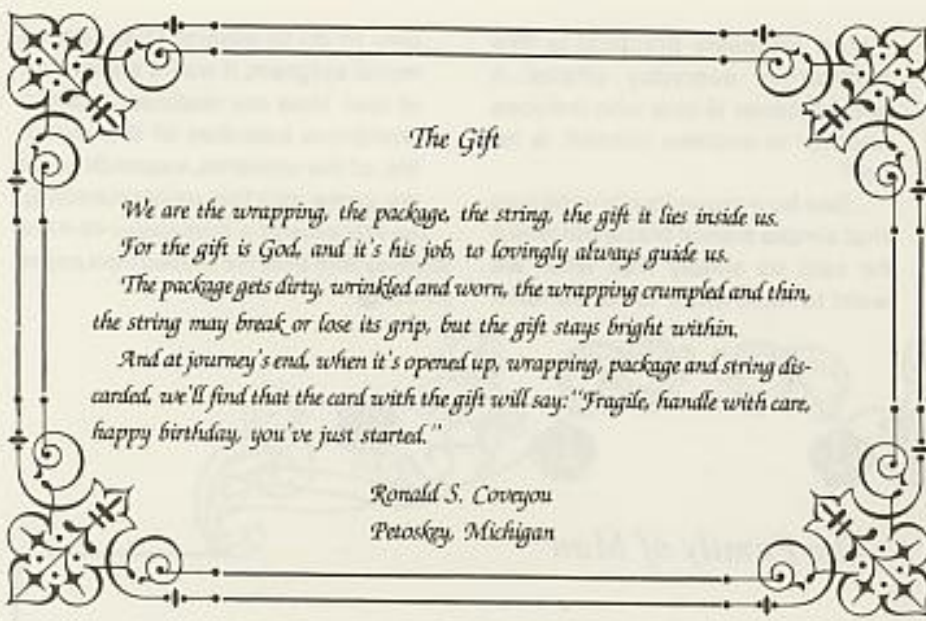
*My main hope is that your fall didn't hurt you;
As I recoiled with a sudden, resounding slap,
As the crystal, self-built pedestal collapsed.
And in my eyes, you with it, until I realized:*

*You were the same;
it was I who had changed.*

*Therefore, I hope you realize, I love you still
and more maturely now.*

*As I see you clearer, you're nearer, where you
always should have been.*

*Tommye Glendening
Blanco, Texas*



The Gift

*We are the wrapping, the package, the string, the gift it lies inside us.
For the gift is God, and it's his job, to lovingly always guide us.
The package gets dirty, wrinkled and worn, the wrapping crumpled and thin,
the string may break or lose its grip, but the gift stays bright within.
And at journey's end, when it's opened up, wrapping, package and string dis-
carded, we'll find that the card with the gift will say: "Fragile, handle with care,
happy birthday, you've just started."*

Ronald S. Coveyou
Petoskey, Michigan

Privilege, cont. from page 1.

When I establish a special relationship with a patient, I am really sharing with that patient my relationship with the Father. Perhaps through that sharing I can encourage or enhance his relationship with the Father. Each time I begin to work with a new patient, I try to determine his mental and spiritual needs as well as plan for his physical needs without intruding into his privacy. I pray fervently, "Please help me." Then I build a plan based on those needs. It is too heavy a responsibility to take by myself. Everything I do, every touch, every look needs to be right. It's a little frightening. I have to have help, and it is always there. I don't go into a patient's room by myself—ever.

Each morning I drag myself out of bed (I hate to get up early!) and the first thing I do is pray. I ask the Father to use me that day, to love and care for his sick children through me. By the time I get to the hospital, I am high with joy.

Many of the people I care for have cancer. They are suffering pain, trauma and fear. I can't help them through it all. I can't take away their problems. But if I can give them a taste of the Father's love, then they can call on him. Sometimes I use his name and sometimes not. Sometimes I feel a resistance to the spiritual. Some patients can take my love and comfort but are uncomfortable with support from a spiritual source. I let them take what they are


comfortable with. Some patients I can pray with, some I never approach about prayer. With others I simply reassure them that I will keep them in my prayers.

I have to be receptive to their needs, to what is going to reach each individual. My primary concern is that patient and his needs. I concentrate

on the person, not the bedpan which needs emptying. I have to deal with the whole person to build a relationship with him. I can't deal with his illness alone.

When I first felt the "call" to become a nurse, I fought the feeling. I couldn't imagine myself spending the rest of my life taking care of sick and dying people. I have always thought that service was supposed to be associated with sacrifice. Now I realize that not only is this work satisfying and self-sustaining, it is also the perfect path to a richer, all-encompassing relationship with the Father. Because I can give myself to his children, I can walk closer to him. I can feel a partnership with him that makes my work the most real and vital part of my life.

Now I realize that there is no sacrifice involved in this work. Rather, it is a privilege to care for my Father's children in this manner. This work may not be right for everybody, but I can't imagine ever giving it up. I feel singularly blessed. ●



To my brothers...

Compassion is decision;
Mercy is action.

You and I have the same heavenly Father and live on the same planet. We both struggle with the daily decisions and try to overcome the negatives in our environment. Though I cannot understand the things you have experienced and I have not, I can appreciate your trials. You, like myself, are a child of God and I choose to feel compassion for you and your experiences. I want to act on my decision. I must remember that one upward reach turns a negative into a positive. This, then, is my challenge: when we meet, if I perceive a negative about you, I want to show you mercy, reach

upward, and give you a positive to replace the negative.

Mercy is...

The soft answer that turneth away wrath;
A smile and the words, "It's OK," when the milk is spilled;
A hug when a swat would be easier;
The honest compliment to the clerk who has just overcharged you and has to start over;
Saying "Thank you for your patience" to the telephone person who has just checked your long distance calls for the fourth time.

Kathy King
Tulsa, Oklahoma

be his own discovery, his very own? As a matter of fact, they will be, just be of his own thinking, if they are ever to be his at all. I can only induce him to work the mine that is in his own heart and to find the treasure that already belongs to him.

How intensely practical is this method in everyday affairs!...A good listener is one who induces another to express himself, is he not?

...See how marvelously wise was that simple man of Nazareth when he said so simply that what we want to have done to us we have

only to do to others! That was no moral epigram, it was a statement of law! How our realization of the wondrous beauties of the law of life, of the universe, expands us as we come into this understanding.

The first excerpt is from pages 46-47 of Working With God, the second from pages 84-92. ●



The Family of Man

We struggle on and down the road
Making turns to here and there
And when one day with our load
We realize there's a plan somewhere

The people that we met along the way
Seemed to go on each alone
Then we came to realize one day
That we do our destiny own

The plan begins with just a spark
Which later shows a total blend
We can emerge from the dark
And find that all can be a friend

The plan is large, not all so clear
Yet part of which we can discern
All we must do is block out fear
With courage that does brightly burn

One speck we are in the cosmos great
Yet large enough to make it change
To us our God has given fate
That we our lives can rearrange

He wants us all, his children dear
To add to his perfection
And day by day it gets more clear
Just what is the direction

A speck, a dot, a single cell
We are to the Supreme
A brick which can the castle swell
Life better than a lovely dream

We grow, we learn, we make progress
Through day on better day
More and more through every stress
We find a brighter way

Perfection is the goal of time
I'm willing, aren't you?
Though age on age sublime
We will each be gaining anew

It is a thrill to know that we
Out here in the stretches of space
Can add to everything we see
A symmetry in the pace

With patience we will learn to take
Each challenge day by day
There is time to take a break
To feel the sun's warm ray

We get a glimpse of the part
That each of us can play
In a picture bigger than our heart
Can fathom on this day

We've started on the inward climb
We need not all of it master
We're gaining the pace, the rhythm, the rhyme
Some day we'll move on faster

Eternity lies before us now
There is no turning back
The way will show itself somehow
We're moving on the right track

He waits, he calls, he whispers
Right now we hear it faintly
While putting on the slippers
We tiptoe at first daintly

We're headed in his direction
We have ceased to roam
No more there is objection
We know we're going home

It's here, it's now, it's every when
It's doing what we can
That makes us all akin
The family of man

Charlene Morrow
Edmond, Oklahoma

That God is my Father means...

...that he provides the physical necessities of life.

...that he counsels and guides me as I grow.

...that I have the potential to grow up to be like him.

...that he loves me with that special, always-present, non-critical love of an ideal parent.

...that he loves just to be with me, to listen to me, to talk with me.

...that he has provided for my progressive self-discipline.

...that he is always there for me to turn to.

...that he rejoices in my growing maturity and independence.

...that nothing gives him greater joy than I—his child.

That I am his son means...

...that I love him with a pure and trusting love.

...that as I grow up, I begin to see more and more the "family resemblance" between us.

...that he is the one I pattern after—my goal. I want to be like him.

...that I seek his advice as I meet the difficulties and decisions of life for I trust his advice.

...that I do not worry about the material needs of life but know that he has provided enough if I have "willing hands."

...that he has provided for my spiritual inheritance.

...that all men are potentially his sons and my brothers.

...that I want to see my brothers fully enjoying the fellowship of the family.

...that I seek them out to bring them into the family circle.

...that I rejoice to be with my brothers who are family conscious.

...that we love to socialize.

...that I seek help and advice from them and give it in return.

...that we love each other as ourselves.

...that nothing gives me greater joy than loving my Father and brothers.

By Kaye Cooper
Arlington, Texas



***A Gracious Gift From God,
And Our Greatest Responsibility***

*Because God loves us wisely, he gives us all free will,
To love and serve each other, or be craven, even kill.
Yes, free will may be used well, or used ill in selfish styles,
But he truly has good reason to allow us freewill trials.
Indeed he knows our thoughts and acts should not result from force,
Because our hopes for dignity must have a freewill source.*

*He shines from every one of us, who lets his light come through,
But sad to say, for many, we much too rarely do.
So with love he sent his perfect son to help with higher ways,
But prideful temple rulers, refused and caused him frays.
Denying his true nature, they contrived to have him slain,
But his love and resurrection proved pharisaic sins are vain.*

*Of course he had some evil foes, who really thought him wrong,
But some who knew his righteousness still joined the deadly throng.
Yes, evil comes from ignorance, we know not what we do;
But sin is when we know better, yet knowing, we still do.
So this freedom that he gives us is our woe, as well as blessing;
Some choices surely serve his will, but some are most distressing.*

*For he does not stop our ill will, like that which slew his Son,
Nor does he will to interfere, when we choose our selfish "fun."
Even now, well meant Christians cant, and in errancy thank the Lord,
That pharisees so foully chose, to crucify Christ our Lord.
But Christ is not our scapegoat, nor his Father's fatted lamb;
He's our Savior, yet needless victim of God's abused free will plan.*

*Of course our Lord has risen, and reigns with God on high,
But neither force men's spirits into truth, or stay a lie.
Even prophets have free will, to say what they might want;
So some, they say it very well, while others, they do not.
However, even those who do, are sometimes found in error,
For perfection in God's will, is a wisdom very rare.*

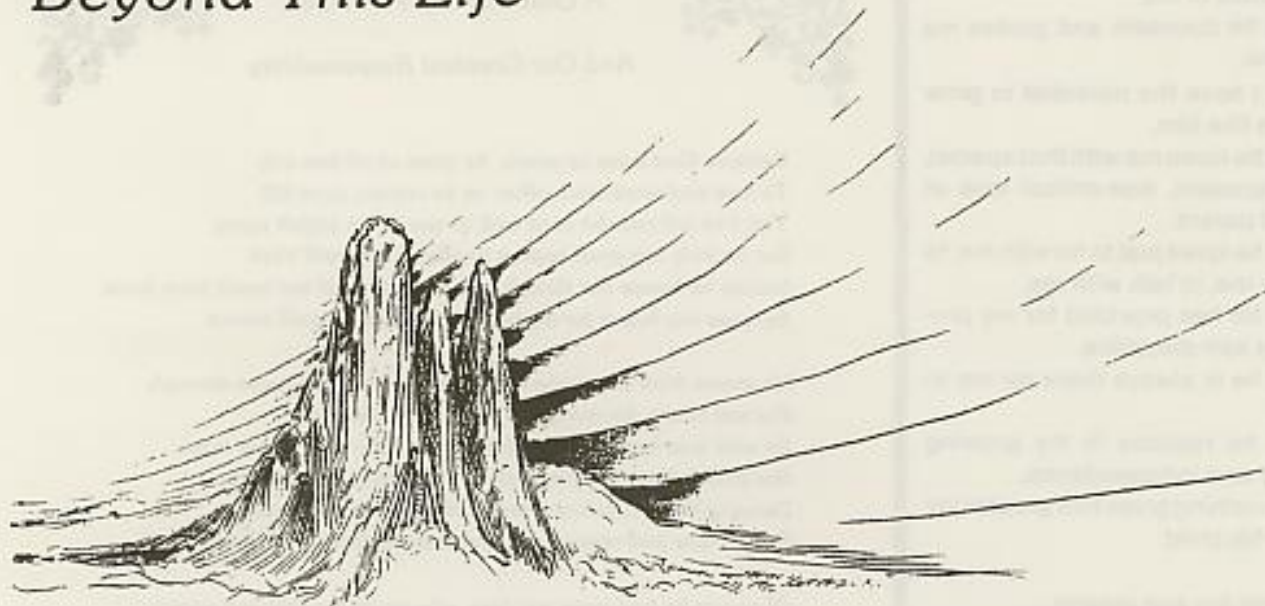
*That's why the very scriptures, whether old, or of today,
Are surely men's free thinking, and what they chose to say.
Some words are very sacred, inspired, divinely true,
But some are very ugly, God's love not coming through.
Yes, we know he forces no one, to pursue, or do his will,
But when we understand it, it becomes our greatest thrill.*



Richard Strickland
Flint, Michigan

The theme for the Fall 1984 issue of
The Circles is

Beyond This Life



Ronnie Dobyanski
Houston, Texas

In this issue we would like to take a look at the world beyond this one. To begin with the here and now, how do we cope with death—our own, those of our loved ones? How can we help those who don't read *The URANTIA Book* to cope with death? How can we "lay up treasures in heaven?" What experiences here might be preparation not for service in this material life but in the morontia career? How can we live the morontia life here?

Then to extend beyond this life, what will life be like in our universe career? You may want to speculate on your destiny. Would you like to be a celestial artisan (Celestial Musician, Heavenly Re-

producer, Divine Builder, Thought Recorder, Energy Manipulator, Designer and Embellisher, or Harmony Worker—pp. 497-8), a mighty messenger (p. 245), a parent of a creature-trinitized son (pp. 249-50)? Why would you enjoy being one? Why do you think you'd make a good one? Have you ever thought of questions you want to ask your seraphim when you awaken on the mansions worlds? What are some of those questions? Of the activities or places de-

scribed in *The URANTIA Book* as being a part of the life beyond this one, which are most interesting or intriguing? Let your imagination—and who knows, perhaps the spirit—guide you.

Please send your articles (We prefer to limit articles to approximately three typewritten pages.), poems, and artwork by May 15, 1984 to:

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