



Journal of The Brotherhood of Man Library, an Information, Telecommunication and Lending Service Resource for Students of *The URANTIA Book*.

Favorite Places
from
The Urantia Book

The Divine Spirit must dominate...

The dead theory of even the highest religious doctrines is powerless to transform human character or to control mortal behavior. What the world of today needs is the truth which your teacher of old declared: "Not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Spirit." The seed of theoretical truth is dead, the highest moral concepts without effect, unless and until the divine Spirit breathes upon the forms of truth and quickens the formulas of righteousness.

Those who have received and recognized the indwelling of God have been born of the Spirit. "You are the temple of God, and the spirit of God dwells in you." It is not enough that this spirit be poured out upon you; *the divine Spirit must dominate and control every phase of human experience.*

It is the presence of the divine Spirit, the water of life, that prevents the consuming thirst of mortal discontent and that indescribable hunger of the unspiritualized human mind. Spirit-motivated beings "never thirst, for this spiritual water shall be in them a well of satisfaction springing up into life everlasting." Such divinely watered souls are all but independent of material environment as regards the joys of living and the satisfactions of earthly existence. They are spiritually illuminated and refreshed, morally strengthened and endowed.

In every mortal there exists a dual nature: the inheritance of animal tendencies and the high urge of spirit endowment. During the short life you live on Urantia, these two diverse and opposing urges can

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Everything must await the coming of its time...I am now on my way to Rome with you and your father and that is sufficient for today. My tomorrow is wholly in the hands of my Father in heaven.

Jesus to Ganid (1436)

seldom be fully reconciled; they can hardly be harmonized and unified; but throughout your lifetime the combined Spirit ever ministers to assist you in subjecting the flesh more and more to the leading of the Spirit. Even though you must live your material life through, even though you cannot escape the body and its necessities, nonetheless, in purpose and ideals you are empowered increasingly to subject the animal nature to the mastery of the Spirit. *There truly exists within you a conspiracy of spiritual forces, a confederation of divine powers, whose exclusive purpose is to effect your final deliverance from material bondage and finite handicaps.* (380/381)

What Does It Mean to Talk about God. A Catholic View.

Dr Peter Vardy, Professor of Religious Studies,
University of London

If a human being is said to be good, this means that the person has some characteristics which are regarded as admirable when they might have been otherwise. A person who is kind, gentle, forgiving, compassionate, who gives to the poor, visits the sick, and acts unselfishly might well be regarded as good and might be praised for these virtues when so many other people are selfish, impatient, cold and indifferent to the needs of others. In this case *good* is being used in a moral sense.

In Plato's *Euthyphro*, Socrates is portrayed in dialogue with a young man, Euthyphro, and the issue is whether the gods will what is good independently of their willing it, or whether what they will is good just because they will it.

All finite knowledge and creature understanding are relative. Information and intelligence, gleaned from even high sources, is only relatively complete, locally accurate, and personally true. (42)

In its true essence, religion is a faith-trust in the goodness of God. (40)

The *Euthyphro* dilemma

This gives rise to the *Euthyphro Dilemma*:

- does God only will the good when measured by some external standard, or
- is God the source of morality so that whatever God wishes is good just because God's wishes are the final arbiter of goodness.

Whichever option is chosen gives rise to difficulties:

- If there is an independent standard against which God can be measured, then there is something to which God is subject and which God did not create.
- However, if God's wishes are the final arbiter of goodness, then *goodness* is not a reason for worshipping God since whatever God wants is good.

Aquinas' answer to the problem was to reject both horns of the dilemma and say that God's goodness is not to be considered in moral terms at all. Instead it should be looked at in a totally different way. Aquinas considered that it is possible to prove the existence of God through the *Five Ways*—these he held demonstrate that there is a being 'X' such that 'X' explains the existence of the universe. To this 'X' Aquinas gave the name 'God.'

Aquinas maintained that this God is wholly simple and therefore timeless, spaceless, bodiless, and totally unchangeable. But if so, how can language drawn from our spatio-temporal universe be applied to God? One of the hallmarks of Aquinas' genius was to respond to this challenge.

Aquinas rejected two options. Language about God cannot be:

- Univocal. If language about God has only one

meaning (univocal), it would mean that language can be applied to God in broadly the same way as language is applied to things in our universe. Hence God would be part of the universe, a view utterly rejected by Aquinas.

- Equivocal. If language about God was equivocal, it would mean that the same words were being used in totally unrelated ways when applied to God and when applied to the universe. (e.g. the word *pen* is equivocal when applied to a pen we write with and a pig pen). So if language about God was equivocal, it would be devoid of meaningful content.

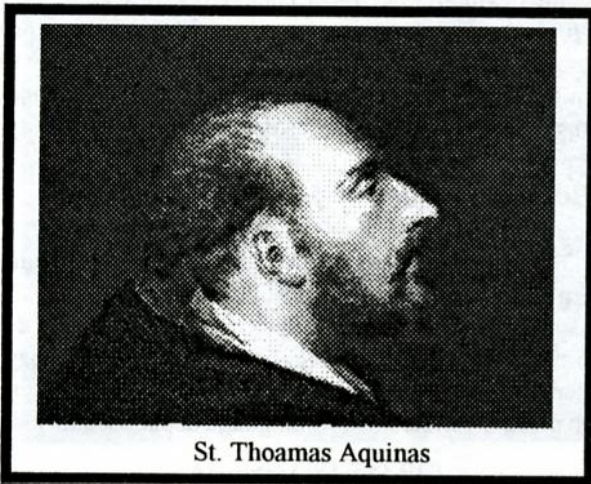
Aquinas' solution is to show how language about God can be used *analogically*. There are two types of analogy of which the first is *analogy of attribution*. Some examples will help explain this form of analogical language, but first a little background will help. At the time Aquinas was writing (13th century), doctors were not allowed to cut open human bodies. One of the few ways they could tell what was happening inside a human body was to examine the urine. Doctors were experts at the smell, taste, color, etc., of urine and they could determine, by these signs, whether urine was *healthy* or not. Taking another example:

- The bull is healthy
- The bull's bellow is healthy

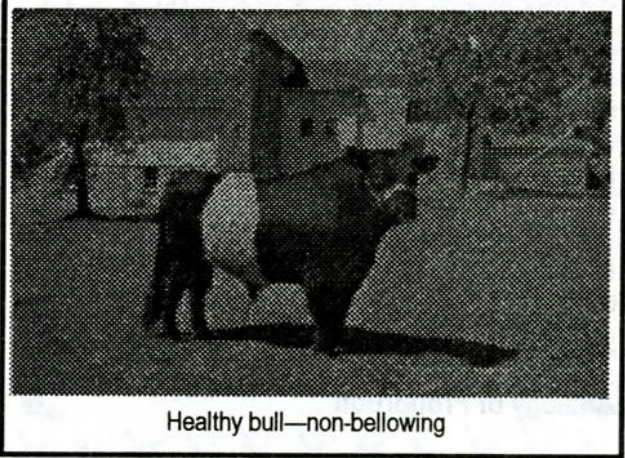
Again the bellow is linked to the bull because the bull produces the bellow, but the bellow is healthy because of its sound and this is different from the health of the bull. Now a further example

- God is good
- Ellie is good

Ellie is, per Aquinas, created by God. Just as the bull produced the urine and the bellow, so God produced Ellie—there is a causal connection between Ellie and God. It is therefore true that God is good because God



St. Thomas Aquinas



Healthy bull—non-bellowing

has what it takes to produce goodness in Ellie but this does not mean that the goodness of God is in any way similar to the goodness of Ellie. Brian Davis OP has an excellent example that illustrates this.

- The baker is good
- The bread is good

The bread is good because it is crusty and tasty and the baker has whatever it takes to bake this good bread but this does not mean that the baker is crusty and tasty! Similarly just because Ellie is morally good this does not mean that God is morally good. Indeed, Aquinas would consider the whole idea of God being morally good to be nonsense as this would imply that God was in time and had potential to act in one way rather than another (which is impossible if God is wholly simple, timeless and spaceless) and it also implies that there is a standard of goodness independent of God against which God can be judged.

Through analogy of attribution, statements about God such as God is good or God is wise, God is just or God is loving can be held to be true, *but we have almost no idea what it means for these statements to be true when applied to God*. It would be tempting to say we have no idea but this would not be the case—at least we know that they mean God has whatever it takes to produce goodness, wisdom, love or justice in human beings—so there is some content, albeit very little.

An obvious problem that arises if we talk of someone who is evil instead of someone who is good. Take the following:

- God is evil
- Peter Vardy is evil

The logical form of this is identical to all the previous statements and it would seem reasonable to hold that this is true as well. Why cannot it be said that God has whatever it takes to bring about evil in Peter

Vardy? Aquinas deals with this problem and his answer depends on how evil is defined. For Aquinas, evil is a privation or falling short of the good. Something is evil to the extent that it falls short of what it should be. Human beings, therefore, are evil to the extent that they fall short of what it is to be a human being. It is impossible for God to be evil since it is logically impossible for God to fall short of what it is to be God. Being timeless, spaceless, etc., God cannot be other than God is—so talk of God as being evil is nonsensical.

Analogy of Proportion

Analogy of Proportion is different from analogy of attribution and is based on the idea that each thing has its own genus or species. A thing is good in proportion to whatever it is to be that thing. Thus

- A good seagull
- A good flea
- A good black widow spider
- A good human being

All are different things. A thing is good to the extent that it is fully whatever it is to be that thing. On this view, to say that "God is perfectly good" is to say that God is perfectly whatever it is to be God. This must be necessarily true, since God cannot be other than what God is. Therefore God must be perfectly good. It is vitally important to recognize that this has nothing to do with the idea of God being morally good. Notice that we can say that God is good even though we may not know whatever it is to be fully God.

In the final analysis, analogy enables language drawn from our spatio-temporal universe to be applied to a timeless and spaceless God and for this language to be held to be true—but the content of this language is extremely limited.

*Man's mortal
sojourn on earth
acquired new mean-
ings consequent upon
the recognition of a
noble (and revealed)
destiny. (1860)*

*The kingdom of
heaven is your
personal experience
of realizing the
higher qualities of
spiritual living. (1860)*

Metaphor

Instead of talking about God analogically we can also talk of the timeless and spaceless God using metaphors. Metaphors that have been applied to God include:

- God is my rock
- God is a living fire
- God is our Father
- God is a shepherd
- God is a great king

No serious theologian would think that God is literally a rock, fire, male, etc. Metaphors can be used to refer to God without describing God, they can be helpful ways of talking about God which do not actually describe what God is. Metaphors can also have a truth value. Assume I say:

- Margaret Thatcher came into the conference hall all flags flying.
- Margaret Thatcher came into the conference hall with her tail between her legs.

No one thinks these statements are to be taken literally but they are each expressing opposite truth claims which may be accepted or rejected. Gerry Hughes SJ maintains that it is preferable to use metaphorical language about God as it is less likely to mislead and it does not even try to describe God. Instead metaphors express something of God's reality.

Univocal language

Blaise Pascal referred to the "God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not the God of the philosophers." In saying this he was expressing reservations about the timeless and spaceless God of traditional theology, derived from Aristotle, with the very limited content that can be understood in language about such a God.

One alternative is to maintain that language about God is univocal—in other words language about God is to be understood in broadly the same way as language about human beings. The problem with this is that God must then be in time and one would be thinking of a God in time (some Catholic liberation theologians take this view as well as many Anglicans, Methodists and Baptists).

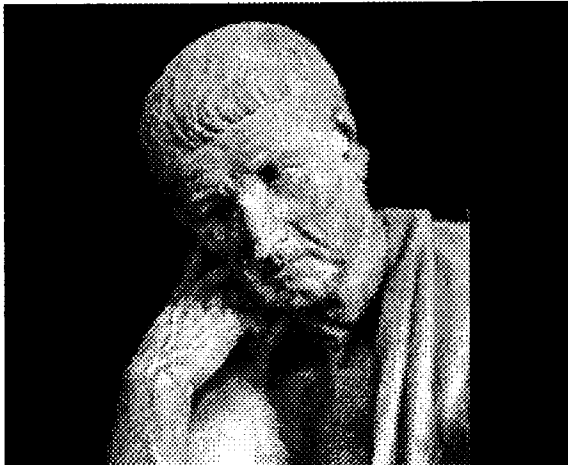
A God in time has advantages from the point of view of language about God, but there is a heavy price to pay as God then becomes subject to time and change and some would then maintain that such a God is too limited.

It can also lead to an anthropomorphic view of God as, if God is in time, God can also be in space. This then raises questions about where God is. *The timeless and spaceless view of God, however, maintains God's transcendence at the price of God being almost completely unknowable.*

[This article appeared in the Catechist Newsletter published by Brisbane Catholic Education.]

[Comments: Urantia Paper #2 "The Nature of God" informs us that, "the most enlightening and spiritually edifying of all revelations of the divine nature is to be found in the comprehension of the religious life of Jesus of Nazareth." (33) The book also says, "Although Jesus revealed the true nature of the heavenly Father in his earth life, he taught little about him. In fact, he taught only two things: that God in himself is spirit, and that, in all matters of relationship with his creatures, he is a Father."

The gospel of John (14:9) reports Jesus as saying words such as, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." and in 14:11, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me." Christianity generally has a firm belief in the divinity of Jesus, so combined with the evidence from John's gospel, it is difficult to conceive



Aristotle (384-322 BC)

Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it. (2090)

how the life of Jesus can be interpreted in any other way than as a revelation of the nature of God—which means that there are things we can know about God.

Thus it appears that the 13th century re-discovery of Aristotelian logic in the Western world, and its subsequent application to Christian theology, may have had enormous deleterious effects on the progressive spiritualization of Christians]

Why we need to know "The Earthly Life of Jesus and How He Lived It."

There surely is a very good reason. The book tells us that we disadvantaged Urantians cripple ourselves spiritually if we don't.

The preceding "Favorite Places" section, taken from *The Urantia Book*, informed us that "the dead truth of even the highest religious doctrines is powerless to transform human character or to control mortal behavior...The seed of theoretical truth is dead, the highest moral concepts without effect, unless and until the divine Spirit breathes upon the forms of truth and quickens the formulas of righteousness."

It would seem then, that we could know the "Foreword" backward, know the classifications of the whole hierarchy of the heavens, know all about Andon and Fonta, Adam and Eve, what the Melchizedeks, the Solitary and Mighty Messengers think about our past, present, and future, know all about our expected experiences in the morontia worlds, even know the historical components of the life of Jesus and have memorized his teachings, but this may still be without effect, "unless and until the divine Spirit breathes upon the forms of truth and quickens the formulas of righteousness."

That kind of puts us in the hot seat, does it not? So how do we get off it? The book has answers. First, the divine Spirit has to water our souls and breathe upon the forms of truth and the formulas of righteousness, and in doing so, 'conscious-izes' our minds and souls on the spiritual value of our assimilated knowledge. But then comes the crunch. Though we are temples of God because his divine spirit dwells in us, it is not enough. "The divine Spirit must dominate and control every phase of human experience."

There are measures to help us know about how we are progressing. One, of course, is the bearing of the fruits of the spirit in our lives. Another is contained within these words, "It is the presence of the divine Spirit, the water of life, that prevents the consuming thirst of mortal discontent and that indescribable hunger of the unspiritualized human mind." The book then tells us that spirit-motivated beings "never thirst," and that we can become, "all but independent of material environment as regards the joys of living and the satisfactions of earthly living." Is that really possible? A living example surely would be Mother Theresa, that wonderful Catholic nun who has worked for decades under appalling conditions yet, despite advanced age and broken health, still persists with her God-given work in looking after the homeless, impoverished dying from the streets of Calcutta in a loving attempt to provide them with a dignified exit from this life.

Not that we are all called upon to be "Mother Theresa's." But we are called upon to yield the fruits of the spirit. The book tells us that there are two powerful demonstrations that we are God-knowing. One of them is, "The fruits of the spirit showing forth in your daily routine life." (1733) It would surely be nice to have Mother Theresa-like credentials when we knock on the Pearly Gates and be greeted with a "well done my good

*From the life of the Master
you may each assimilate the
concept of God which repre-
sents the measure of your
capacity to perceive reali-
ties spiritual and divine,
truths real and eternal. (1856)*

*You learn about
God from Jesus by
observing the divin-
ity of his life, not by
depending on his
teachings. (1856)*

and faithful servant."

The second demonstration of our God-knowingness is, "The fact that your entire life plan furnishes proof that you have unreservedly risked everything you are and have on the adventure of survival after death..." That statement is confirmatory to the quote that, "The divine Spirit must dominate and control every phase of human experience." (381)

Before looking at what the book tells us about how we might achieve these goals, let's increase our awareness of what is meant by "there truly exists within you a conspiracy of spiritual forces, a confederation of divine powers, whose exclusive purpose is to effect your final deliverance from material bondage and finite handicaps." (381)

We Urantians have need to appreciate that we are disadvantaged compared with mortal ascenders from normal planets. We have been in quarantine since the Lucifer rebellion 200,000 years ago. We were scheduled to receive genetic upgrading from the offspring of Adam and Eve almost 38,000 years ago in an attempt to increase our capacity for spiritual receptivity. However, things did not turn out as intended and only a minor upgrading occurred. Unfortunately that still left us with a serious congenital deficiency in ability to communicate with our Thought Adjusters (a serious study of the Thought Adjuster Papers 107-111 will make us cognizant of the difficulties that all Urantians have in achieving effective communication with them).

The conspiracy of spiritual forces that works for our deliverance from material bondage appears to consist of the spirits of the Universal Father, the Creator Son, and the Universe Mother Spirit. The Thought Adjusters indwell the thinking centers of our minds, "as a very part of our mind and they ever work in

perfect harmony with the combined spirits of the Creator-Son and the Creative Spirit." (379/380) However, though we do not personally possess a segregated portion or entity of Creator Son or Mother Spirit, their dual spirit liaison hovers over the worlds, seeking to teach truth, spiritually enlighten the minds of men, and to inspire their souls. (379)

A legacy of Michael's bestowal on Urantia was the universal availability of Thought Adjusters to all Urantians having the potential to make a moral decision. A second legacy was the universal availability of his Spirit of Truth. The book informs us that the Spirit of Truth never creates a consciousness of himself, only a consciousness of Michael, the Son. (2061) It also informs us that, "Though the Spirit of Truth is poured out upon all flesh, this spirit of the son is *almost wholly limited in function and power by man's personal reception of that which constitutes the sum and substance of the mission of the bestowal Son.*" (379)

And presumably that is precisely why the books states quite explicitly that, "To follow Jesus means to personally share his religious faith and to enter into the spirit of the Master's life of unselfish service for man. One of the most important things in human living is to find out what Jesus believed, to discover his ideals, and to strive for the achievement of his exalted life purpose. Of all human knowledge, that which is of greatest value is to know the religious life of Jesus and how he lived it." (2090)

The unity of spiritual forces is shown by, "Although Divinity may be plural in manifestation, in human experience Deity is singular, always one...and regardless of plurality of origin, all spirit influences are one in function." (380) Certainly it may be difficult, perhaps impossible, to understand how the

The finite can never hope to comprehend the Infinite except as the Infinite is focalized in the time-space personality of the finite experience of the human life of Jesus of Nazareth. (1856)

Spiritual attainment is the true goal of living.

(1860)

Spirit of Truth and our Thought Adjusters interact in order to permit us to increase our receptiveness to the "conspiracy of spiritual forces" that seeks to enhance our spiritual capacity, the effectiveness of their interaction is illustrated by the experience of the apostles who, in four short weeks after the bestowal of the Spirit of Truth, made more individual spiritual progress than in their four years of personal and loving association with Jesus. (2061)

The evidence that the apostles had mentally assimilated Jesus' teaching during that four years with him is contained both in the text of the Ordination Sermon from *The Urantia Book* which is, to a large extent, a repetition of the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew's gospel. It is also evident from the reproduction in the book of so much of Jesus' spoken word originating from the gospel texts—and demonstrates that though the apostles had the knowledge of the Master's life and words, they had little comprehension of their spiritual value.

It can be instructive to place ourselves in the shoes of one of these fisherman-apostles and consider how we ourselves might have reacted to Jesus' teaching in the light of their cultural background and tribal history. Their original expectations for what Jesus was about and would do, and what the actual outcome of his mission would be, were at vastly different poles of reality.

The apostles had only a vague understanding of the actions and teachings of their Master prior to their personal experiences with the resurrected Jesus. Those appearances confirmed beyond all doubt that he really was the Son of God and, under direction from his Spirit of Truth, the apostles finally set to searching their memories for the spiritual truths and values contained in his teachings.

During subsequent years, the Spirit of Truth would

have been vividly real to them as the actual personal presence of Jesus. Perhaps the book's teachings about the importance for us of knowing the life and teachings of Jesus was influenced by what it actually did for the apostles during their subsequent earthly careers of dedicated service to their fellows.

We, too, can know the personal presence of Jesus, and when we also know his religious life and how he lived it, his Spirit of Truth will be enabled to translate our new knowledge into that which has spiritual value for our own progress, as well as value for use during our earthly careers in the service of the Master.

Some may object that Christians have had a workable knowledge of the life and teachings of Jesus for almost 2000 years—yet the effects of that knowledge in their lives is not impressive. However it is also factual that, throughout that period, the vast majority of Christians have been effectively ignorant of the real Jesus, and what he was about.

Two Urantia Book and gospel teachings that are of critical significance, but which did not achieve the necessary prominence for them to become a potent transforming force in Christianity, are the God-within-us concept (as opposed to God-out-there), and the knowledge that the life of Jesus was, in actuality, a revelation of the nature of the living God.

The fact that Jesus lived for us is infinitely more significant than the teaching that Christ died for us. Therein there is real power.

A URANTIA CULT?

by Dick Bain, GA, USA

Now that I have your attention.... I'm sure that those of us in the Urantia community would give a vehement NO to such an idea, but the problem is that there are others who are not students of *The Urantia Book* who would give a different answer. Suppose that the late Heaven's Gate group recently of San Diego had mentioned *The Urantia Book* on their web site or if the book had been found in their rented home after their mass suicide. Perhaps some investigative reporters would have done an in-depth investigation of the Urantia community. Would their exposé portray us as a dangerous or weird cult?

Cult used to be a pretty respectable term. My 1979 Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines cult as:
1. Formal religious veneration, worship. 2. A system of religious beliefs also: its body of adherents. 3. A

Religion—even the highest yet revealed in the universe of Nebadon—the earth life of Jesus of Nazareth. (1128)

religion regarded as unorthodox or spurious also its body of adherents. (Of special interest to us) 5.a. A great devotion to a person, idea or thing.

We would probably place our community in category #2 or #5a, but there are those who would place us in #3. Notice that there is no definition that fits the way "cult" is commonly used today. Today it has the connotation of a group that uses brain washing and mind control techniques to completely control its members.

On page 966, *The Urantia Book* uses "cult" in the older and more positive sense of the word when it advises that a cult needs to develop based on our highest and best religious ideals. There is no doubt that someone looking to condemn *The Urantia Book* would seize on this and use it to condemn the book and our community. But we would be amiss if we did not admit that there has been at least one group associated with our community that began to look like a cult?

Suppose that a decade or so ago, shortly before a certain group out in California disbanded, an investigative reporter heard rumors about this group. Then suppose the reporter had visited the group's headquarters and had observed the preparations for nuclear holocaust—the weapons, the fortifications, the stocks of food, as well as the fact that the group's leader was sequestered away in an upstairs command post.

Suppose the reporter found out that the leader was following orders supposedly channeled to him from high spiritual authorities? If this was all the reporter knew about the Urantia community and reported it as such, it certainly could have created a long lasting negative impression in the public mind about our community.

blood at a blood bank in the name of their group. They could as a group visit a nursing home on a regular basis to speak with folks who never get visitors. A group could volunteer to "adopt" a section of a local highway and periodically pick up trash to keep it clean. Unfortunately, not everyone will be pleased by such outreach efforts.

Undoubtedly there are some who will object to anything that brings our community or themselves to public attention. One objection that we may encounter is that some people may not wish to advertise the fact that they are part of the Urantia community perhaps out of fear of ridicule or criticism from family or church.

Some may even fear that we will be physically persecuted if we let ourselves be known. They may point to the persecution of the Christians by the Roman authorities. I do not believe that we live in a culture where this will be tolerated. But I do believe that if we do not do something to let people know our benign nature, an incident could occur that will force us to go on the defensive about our involvement in the Urantia community.

Shall we be closet members of this community or shall we risk some exposure for the good of all? Each person must sincerely search his or her own heart for the answer that is right for them.

There many worth while by-products of outreach as a group or as a community. As it stands, the Urantia community is hardly a community in the same sense that a church is a religious community. We have no sort of organization that we all feel we belong to that is comparable with the way that people belonging to a church identify with their organization. There are no

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 out-growths, 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)

doubt exceptions but, in my experience, study groups tend to be loosely organized and attendance is not always a major priority in the lives of its members. Working together on outreach projects would give groups a sense of purpose beyond study of the book. It could foster a sense of fellowship among those serving together in some noble cause. It could give us the feeling that we are in some sense applying the principles we learn in *The Urantia Book* to real life problems.

There is at least one other good reason to do outreach. When we are sequestered in our study groups, we only interact with each other. It is good to be with like minded people sometimes, but it is instructive to also interact with those who may disagree with us.

There are some very good and very spiritual people out in the world who would not be at all interested in *The Urantia Book*; we will encounter them as we reach out beyond the confines of our community. It is valuable to hear their insights and benefit from them. And who knows, if people we come in contact with hear a little about *The Urantia Book*, a few of these folks might get interested and want to read the book. I don't believe this should be our motivation for outreach, but it certainly is a possible good side effect of our outreach.

There are many good reasons to be of service to our fellow mortals. Service is just as much a catalyst for spiritual growth as are prayer and worship. And the willingness to serve is a sign that we have grown spiritually. If our service outreach can also enhance the image of our community, so much the better.

Jesus foresaw that a social organization, or church, would follow the progress of the true spiritual kingdom, and that is why he never opposed the apostles' practicing the rite of John's baptism. (1865)

But revelatory religion is excellent as well as genuine. The new loyalties of enlarged spiritual vision create new levels of love and devotion, of service and fellowship... (1101)

Intolerance

Ann Bendall, Nambour, Qld

Intolerance—lack of respect for practices and beliefs other than one's own—is one of the six *mental poisons* which “tremendously interfere with the spiritual progress of the evolving soul.”

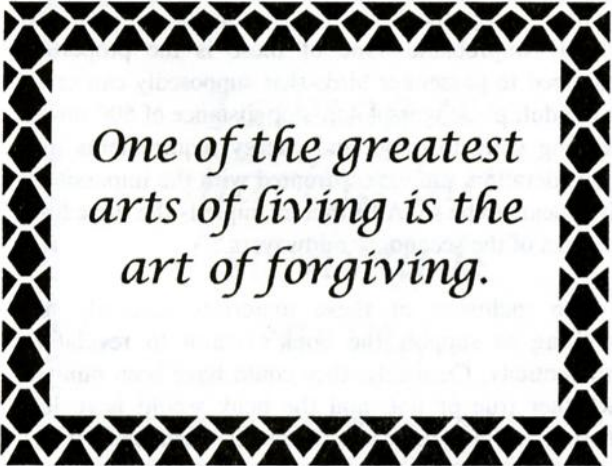
Jesus defined intolerance as “the mask covering up the entertainment of secret doubts as to the trueness of one's belief.” He then went on to state, “No man is at any time disturbed by his neighbor's attitude when he has perfect confidence in the truth of that which he wholeheartedly believes.... Sincere men are unafraid of the critical examination of their true convictions and noble ideals.” (1641)

Jesus never displayed intolerance to any person, but he was, “intolerant of sin. He was often mightily moved to resist that which was inimical to the welfare of his children on earth. But his indignation against sin never led to anger at the sinner.” (1103)

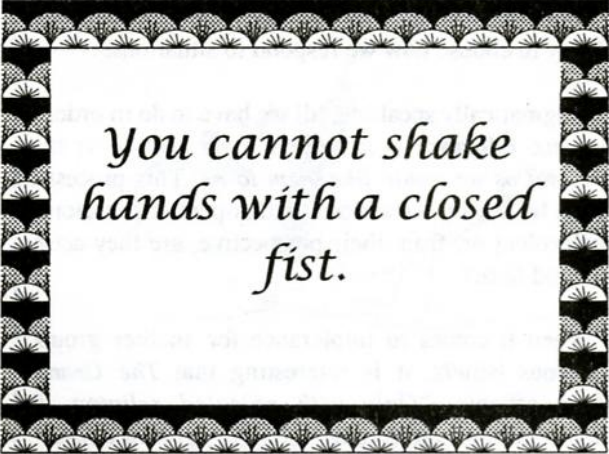
In a similar vein Jesus said, “Tell my children that I am ruthless with sin and intolerant of iniquity. I am indeed meek and humble in the presence of my Father, but I am equally and relentlessly inexorable where there is deliberate evil-doing and sinful rebellion against the will of my Father in heaven.” (1766)

The apostle John was “somewhat bigoted and inordinately intolerant....But he was not the only one of the twelve who was tainted with this kind of self-esteem and superiority consciousness.” (1955)

Obviously the flaws in this apostle's character were of concern for, in his final personal message to John, Jesus stated, “Give up your intolerance and learn to love men as I have loved you.” (2047) It is interesting that this same John, right up to the crucifixion, was vying for the place of honor in the kingdom, despite



One of the greatest arts of living is the art of forgiving.



You cannot shake hands with a closed fist.

being told by Jesus that this was a myth. But it is also interesting that John and his like-minded brother, James, chose the benign Alpheus twins to be apostles.

Intolerance seems to be part of the human condition, and displays itself either as intolerance for a group that holds differing beliefs from our own, or for individuals with whom we are in close association. We seem not to be able to allow other people to have beliefs, practices and habits different from our own.

Perhaps this is because, in attempting to live in harmony with others whilst retaining our preference to be *cognitive misers* (i.e. preferring not to have to think too deeply), we find it easier to live in the intellectual indolence of having close associates adopt our beliefs.

Few of us seem to be able to separate sin from sinner, and in our disapproval of the misbehavior of another, in effect we disapprove of that person and thus become isolated from them.

In one of his inspiring admonitions after his resurrection where he re-iterated his injunction to “love all men as I have loved you,” Jesus reminded his disciples that they were “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 also 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.” (2041)

The underlying, and often unconscious, beliefs that we hold about ourselves and human nature influence and ultimately determine our ability and willingness to risk, to trust, to love, and to forgive.

Through the grace of the Spirit of Truth we all have the ability to see clearly, without defensiveness and

without distortion. And we all have free will—the ability to choose how we respond to situations.

Pragmatically speaking, all we have to do in order to practice tolerance is to *accept other people as they are, not as we would like them to be*. This process is aided by asking ourselves, “Is this person consciously malevolent or, from their perspective, are they acting in good faith?”

When it comes to intolerance for another group’s religious beliefs, it is interesting that *The Urantia Book* affirms, “*Only with revealed religion did autocratic and intolerant theologic egotism appear.*” (1012)

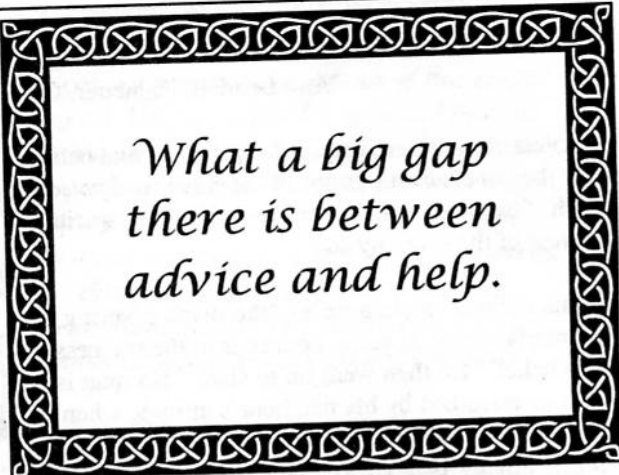
It appears that one of the risks with revealed religion is that it has the tendency to diminish the need for living faith:

“Faith never shuns the problem-solving duty of mortal living. Living faith does not foster bigotry, persecution, or intolerance.” (1114)

It also has the tendency to evoke the *chosen few* phenomenon. “Only when religion assumes that it is in some way superior to all others, and that it possesses exclusive authority over other religions, will such a religion presume to be intolerant of other religions or dare to persecute other religious believers.” (1486)

When we deliberate on our level of spiritual progress, perhaps an acid test is to ask ourselves: have we succeeded in eradicating those mental poisons of “fear, anger, jealousy, and intolerance.”

We do this through being in constant communication with our indwelling Adjuster who thereby enables us to undertake the effortful task of acquiring the conscience of a cosmic citizen:



“Only ethical consciousness can unmask the immorality of human intolerance and the sinfulness of fratricidal strife. Only a moral conscience can condemn the evils of national envy and racial jealousy. *Only moral beings will ever seek for that spiritual insight which is essential to living the golden rule.*” (597)

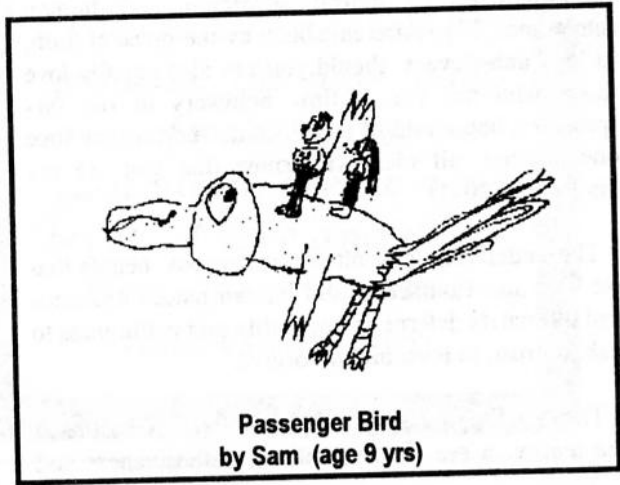
The Urantia Book—why is it so strange?

For a long time there has been a group of Urantia Book readers who have pondered on the problem of why the book has been written in such a strange manner.

One example is that it names itself the Fifth Epochal Revelation thereby raising the expectancies of the beginning reader. But then it presents a lot of out-of-date science material as if it were revelation, leaving it until page 1109 before informing us that the “laws of revelation hamper us greatly by their proscription of the impartation of unearned knowledge”—which signifies that its science content is pre-mid 1930’s.

Another curiosity is its inclusion of materials that appear to approach the impossible or at least the highly improbable. One of these is the properties ascribed to passenger birds that supposedly can carry two adult passengers a non-stop distance of 500 miles. Taking wing loadings and energy requirements into consideration, are we confronted with the impossible? It appears to be so. A further example is the incredible origins of the secondary midways.

The inclusion of these materials certainly did nothing to support the book’s claim to revelatory authenticity. Curiously, they could have been omitted whether true or not, and the book would have lost nothing of importance. However the sheer intellectual



brilliance demonstrated by the revelators in so many other parts of the book lead many of us to conclude that the "funny stuff" has been included for a good reason. What could that reason be?

Ann Bendall's article on intolerance contains some observations that may be relevant. Ann reminds us that the book affirms: "*Only with revealed religion did autocratic and intolerant theologic egotism appear.*" (1012) Ann also comments that one of the risks with a revealed religion is that it has the tendency to diminish the need for living faith as well as to foster the "chosen few" phenomenon.

Possibly Ann's observations may throw light on just why *The Urantia Book* has been written in such a strange manner. The expectations for the Fourth Epochal Revelation were not fulfilled as hoped for. This was largely because of the distortions that occurred to the concept of the kingdom of heaven as taught by Jesus during the early years of Christendom.

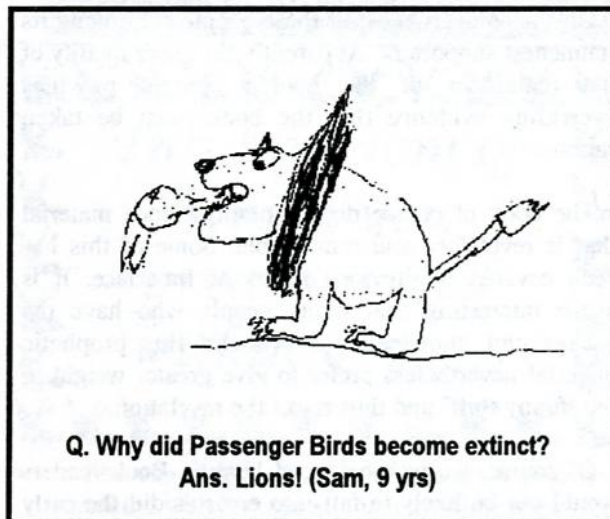
Jesus taught that the cardinal features of the gospel of the kingdom were:

- The pre-eminence of the individual.
- The will as the determining factor in man's experience.
- Spiritual fellowship with God, the Father
- The supreme satisfactions of the loving service of man.
- The transcendence of the spiritual over the material in human personality. (1863)

None of these features appear in the text of the Nicene Creed to which virtually all Christians subscribe as the encoding of their basic beliefs.

The major break with Jesus' teaching came when Paul adapted what he knew of them to the needs of interested Jews and later to the gentiles. First Jesus became the expected Messiah then Christ the Redeemer.

*Talking is
sharing but
listening is
caring*



In this transition Jesus' death as signifying salvation from sin became a principal teaching somewhat like a "strange attractor" of chaos theory. Additionally, both Jesus and God became located 'out-there-somewhere' and contactable only via the mediation of priest or long-dead saint, rather than being personally-available and indwelling, spirit forces .

In the light of what we humans did to the Fourth Epochal Revelation, is it not logical and natural that the revelators should take precautions to avoid a disaster to the Fifth?

It may be that they considered fundamentalism to be a major threat for it is the very hallmark of fundamentalism that, "*autocratic and intolerant theologic egotism appear.*" (1012)

It appears to be that fundamentalism invariably transforms its sources into sacred objects—the Bible, the Koran, the Book of Mormon, *The URANTIA Book*, etc,—with their content eventually becoming divine proclamations. One possible way to defeat such a fate for a new revelation could be to include unbelievable material that would permit critics, opponents, and skeptics to ridicule or vilify it.

Could this be a reason why the revelators for the Urantia Papers gave us so much outdated science and similar material as apparent revelation well before explaining the limitations imposed by the laws governing revelation?

It is interesting that The Urantia Book has a readership that includes a very significant proportion of people with either a science or professional background, or with other intellectual interests that permit them to recognize its outdated science and 'funny stuff'—yet they have not rejected the book on account of it!

On the contrary most of these people are among its staunchest supporters. Apparently the sheer quality of the remainder of the book's content provides overriding evidence that the book must be taken seriously.

The book of course does contain science material that is revelatory and remarkable. Some of this has been covered in previous issues of Innerface. It is again interesting that many people who have the background knowledge to evaluate this prophetic material nevertheless prefer to give greater weight to the 'funny stuff' and thus reject the revelation.

Of course, we well-balanced Urantia Book readers would not be likely to fall into error as did the early Christians. But if that is true why is it that for so long, in print, the book had to be referred to as "*The URANTIA Book*,"—if we are not inclined to treat it as sacred object?

And why do the vast majority of us believe that there was something very special, miraculous even, about the way we ourselves received the book? Likewise, how many of us have indulged in the game of guessing who might or might not be members of the Reserve Corps of Destiny—and even fantasized about our membership?

Is it possible that an updated version of the story of the Pharisee in the temple praying, "I thank you God that I am not like that publican over there..." could become a Urantia Book reader praying, "I thank you God that I am not like that Christian over there." But, of course, we are forgetting that Urantia Book readers don't pray—they communicate!

We owe thanks to Ann for reminding us about the "chosen people" syndrome. Jesus extolled the virtue of true humility. He even said, "the first shall be last and the last shall be first." (1804; Mark 10:31)

The book informs us that, "the ideas and ideals of Jesus, embodied in the teaching of the gospel of the kingdom nearly failed.... Then it says, "But doubt not, this same kingdom of heaven which the Master taught exists within the heart of the believer, will yet be proclaimed to the Christian church (who has that task?), even as to all other religions, races and nations on earth—even to every individual."

So what is it that is to be proclaimed? Here are a few of its components:

- The sense of guilt (not the consciousness of sin) comes either from interrupted spiritual

The religions of authority can only divide men and set them in conscientious array against each other; the religion of the spirit will progressively draw men together and cause them to become understandingly sympathetic with one another. (1732)

communion or from the lowering of one's moral ideals...Jesus swept away all of the ceremonials of sacrifice and atonement. He destroyed the basis of all this fictitious guilt and sense of isolation in the universe by declaring that man is a child of God.

- The creature-Creator relationship is placed on a child-parent basis. God becomes a loving Father to his mortal sons and daughters. All ceremonials not a legitimate part of such an intimate family relationship are forever abrogated.
- God the Father deals with man, his child, on the basis, not of actual virtue or worthiness, but in recognition of the child's motivation—the creature purpose and intent. The relationship is one of parent-child relationship and is actuated by divine love.
- True worship springs from the practice of the presence of God which eventuates in the emergence of the brotherhood of man.
- All non-self desires do actually have their origin in the leadings of the indwelling spirit of God. The impulse stemming from the indwelling spirit forces are realized in human consciousness as the urge to be altruistic, fellow-creature minded.
- Always must the desire to do the Father's will be supreme in the soul and dominant over the mind of an ascending child of God.
- The will of God is to know him and to want to be like him.
- The only rewards held out to God's children are, in this world, spiritual joy and divine communion, and in the next—eternal life and progress in the divine spirit realities of the Father.

- The will of God is the way of God.
- The choosing of the Father's will is the spiritual finding of the spirit Father. Its choosing is not so much a negation of creature will as the affirmation that, "It is my will that your will be done."
- If your own mind does not serve you well, you can exchange it for the mind of Jesus who always serves you well.
- Christianity has dared to lower its ideals before the challenge of human greed and lust for power, but the religion of Jesus stands as the unsullied and transcendent spiritual summons, calling to the best that is in man to rise above the legacies of animal evolution and, by grace, attain the moral heights of true human destiny.
- Jesus saw God as being holy, just, and great, as well as being true, beautiful, and good. All these attributes of divinity he focused in his mind as "the will of the Father in heaven."
- In the face of all the natural difficulties and temporal contradictions of mortal existence, Jesus experienced the tranquillity of supreme and unquestioned trust in God and felt the tremendous thrill of living, by faith, in the very presence of the heavenly Father.
- Jesus said: "Love one another as I have loved you."

More on the gospel of the kingdom

Stated in its simplest form the gospel of the kingdom is the recognition that the God-spirit dwells within us to lead us to want be like him.

The effective technique in all forms and phases of teaching is not, 'Go do this and do that,' but rather, 'Come with us while we show and share with you the better way. (1557)



- The actual life of Jesus of Nazareth provides mankind with its highest understanding of the true nature of God.
- [There is no perfect statement of that life and teachings (not even in the Urantia Book), if only because all things touched by human hand become corrupted. But through faith in the leading of the God-spirit within, all sincere men are enabled to recognize the perfect patterns—whether they be through Jesus or from some other source.]
- There must come a revival of the actual teachings of Jesus; such a statement as will undo the work of his early followers that created a sociophilosophical system around the fact of Jesus sojourn on earth.
- The new kingdom must be created around the gospel of the kingdom that blends man's highest moral ideas and spiritual ideals into his sublime hope for eternal life.
- The present Christian church is the larval stage of the thwarted kingdom that will carry the church through the material age and over into a more spiritual dispensation.
- Jesus way—It's not what you can get but what you can give.
- If your God loves only Christians, or Mahommedans, or Buddhists, or Taoists or whatever, then there must be a greater God who loves all of his earthly children. The God of Jesus of Nazareth is that God.
- The early evolutionary mind gives origin to a feeling of social duty and moral obligation derived chiefly from emotional fear. The more positive urge of social service and the idealism of altruism are derived from the direct impulse of the divine spirit entering the human mind.

- Primitive man regards as neighbor only those very close to him. Jesus enlarged the neighbor scope to embrace the whole of humanity, even that we should love our enemies. There is something inside every normal human being that tells them that this teaching is moral—right.

- All men recognize the morality of the universal human urge to be unselfish and altruistic. The religionist correctly ascribes it to the leadings of the indwelling God-spirit.

- Individual happiness is achieved only when the ego desire of self and the altruistic urge of the higher self—the indwelling spirit of God—are coordinated and reconciled by the unified will of the integrating and supervising personality.

- The pursuit of the ideal—the striving to be Godlike—is a continuous effort before death and after. The life after death is no different in the essentials than the mortal existence. Everything we do in this life which is good contributes directly to the enhancement of the future life.

- Real religion does not foster moral indolence and spiritual laziness by encouraging the vain hope of having all the virtues of a noble character bestowed upon one as a result of passing through

the portals of natural death.

- True religion does not belittle man's efforts to progress during the mortal lease on life. Every mortal gain is a direct contribution to the enrichment of the first stages of the immortal survival experience.

- Mankind is ennobled and mightily energized on learning that the higher urges of the soul emanate from the spiritual forces that indwell the mortal mind.

- In the spiritual domain, mankind does have free will. Mortal man is neither a helpless slave of the inflexible sovereignty of God nor the victim of the hopeless fatality of a mechanistic cosmic determinism. Man is most truly the architect of his own eternal destiny.

- It lifts man out of and beyond himself when he once fully realizes that there lives and strives within him something which is eternal and divine. And so it is that a living faith in the superhuman origin of our ideals validates our belief that we are sons and daughters of God and makes real our altruistic convictions, the feelings of the brotherhood of man.

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