



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

On the Birth of Love

In physical life the senses tell of the existence of things; mind discovers the reality of meanings; but the spiritual experience reveals to the individual the true values of life. These high levels of human living are attained in the supreme love of God and in the unselfish love of man. If you love your fellow men, you must have discovered their values. Jesus loved men so much because he placed such a high value upon them. You can best discover values in your associates by discovering their motivation. If some one irritates you, causes feelings of resentment, you should sympathetically seek to discern his viewpoint, his reasons for such objectionable conduct. If once you understand your neighbor, you will become tolerant, and this tolerance will grow into friendship and ripen into love.

In the mind's eye conjure up a picture of one of your primitive ancestors of cave-dwelling times—a short, misshapen, filthy, snarling hulk of a man standing, legs spread, club upraised, breathing hate and animosity as he looks fiercely just ahead. Such a picture hardly depicts the divine dignity of man. But allow us to enlarge the picture. In front of this animated human crouches a saber-toothed tiger. Behind him, a woman and two children. Immediately you recognize that such a picture stands for the beginnings of much that is fine and noble in the human race, but the man is the same in both pictures. Only in the second sketch you are favored with a widened horizon. You therein discern the motivation of this evolving mortal. His attitude becomes praiseworthy because you understand him. If you could only fathom the motives of your associates, how much better you would understand them. If you could

In this issue...

Favorite Places: On the Birth of Love.....	1
God-Playing—An Avocation.....	2
The Importance of Symbols—Use and Misuse	3
On Copyright and Plagiarism.....	4
The Urantia Papers: The Revelators' Unenviable Task.....	6
A Crime Against Humanity?.....	10
The Urantia Book's message has failed? Or has it?.....	13
The Cross as a Symbol.....	14
The Sower.....	15
The Urantia Papers—: A New Presentation of Part 4?.....	16

Suggested annual donation - \$10

Donations and submissions should be addressed to:

USA & Canada:

David Biggs, P.O. Box 1091, Flint MI 48501, U.S.A.

Internet: elsner@tir.com

Australia, New Zealand, & Europe:

Ken Glasziou, 2/9 Fig St., Maleny 4552, Australia

Internet: kglaszio@ozemail.com.au

Web: www.ozemail.com.au/~kglaszio

*The true church—
the Jesus brotherhood—
is invisible, spiritual,
and is characterized by
unity—not necessarily by
uniformity. (2085)*

only know your fellows, you would eventually fall in love with them.

You cannot truly love your fellows by a mere act of the will. Love is only born of thoroughgoing understanding of your neighbor's motives and sentiments. It is not so important to love all men today as it is that each day you learn to love one more human being. If each day or each week you achieve an understanding of one more of your fellows, and if this is the limit of your ability, then you are certainly socializing and truly spiritualizing your personality. Love is infectious, and when human devotion is intelligent and wise, love is more catching than hate. But only genuine and unselfish love is truly contagious. If each mortal could only become a focus of dynamic affection, this benign virus of love would soon pervade the sentimental emotion-stream of humanity to such an extent that all civilization would be encompassed by love, and that would be the realization of the brotherhood of man. (1098)

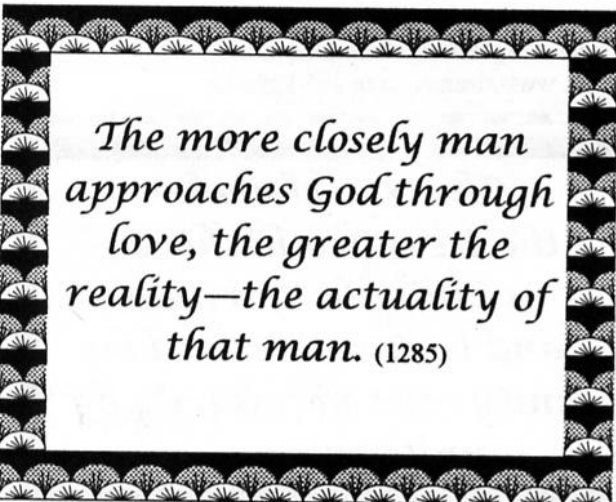
God-playing—an Avocation

God-playing is a much cherished but largely unrecognized occupation among us humans.

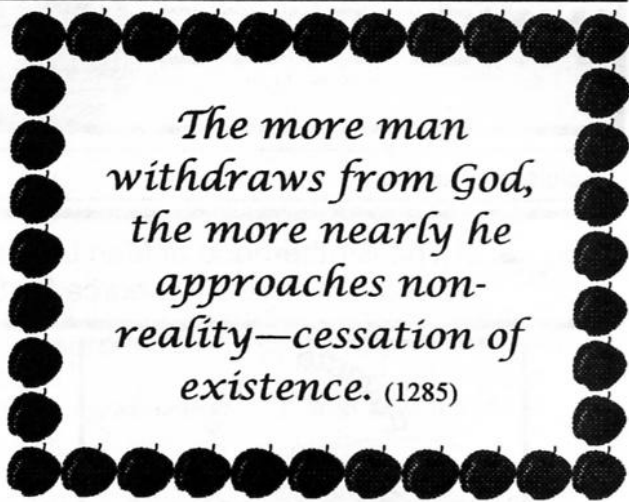
In the Urantia Book account of relationships between Jesus' and those who were originally John's disciples, we can sense that tensions existed relevant to status and priority.

A major source of contention was about who was qualified—privileged—to baptize. To have this authority was to possess a God-like authority to appear to forgive sin and to confer salvation. It made its possessor, special.

Probably Jesus' disciples felt themselves as being at a level above John's. Maybe, it was in compensation, John's disciples were granted the sole right to baptize



The more closely man approaches God through love, the greater the reality—the actuality of that man. (1285)



The more man withdraws from God, the more nearly he approaches non-reality—cessation of existence. (1285)

new converts.

The exact wording of their baptismal ceremony is lost to us, but it is unlikely to have been very different from that of their dead leader.

John, the Baptist called upon the Jews to, "Repent and be baptized." Since large crowds flocked to John for baptism, the ceremony was probably very short and terse, something similar to, "Do you renounce the devil and all his works and do you repent of all your sins?"—followed by an "I do" response. Newcomers were then likely to have received a welcome into the kingdom.

Is it not a fact that we humans love to think of ourselves as being special—chosen ones? If it were not so, lots less of us would aspire to become priests, ministers, doctors, missionaries, nurses, faith healers, alternative medicine practitioners, or whatever occupation it is that permits us to become recipients of the everlasting gratitude of those upon whom we distribute our largess, in other words to become God-players.

The now commonly seen desire to save something from some threat or other, be it a threatened species of plant or animal, the environment, the children, the planet, or to have some some worthy cause for which one is prepared to die even, may really be a species of self-glorification tainted with the God-playing syndrome.

While, on the surface, God-playing endeavors may appear to both ourselves and others to be self-sacrificial and service orientated, the real truth is that deep down, our true motives tend to become contaminated by pride and self-glorification and hence graduate to God-playing.

God-playing and the pride associated with it is

an ongoing trap. For once our motives become polluted and, in reality, we commence to value the glory of men, then that glory is its own reward. As such, our efforts have no spiritual value.

“Seek not, then, for false peace and transient joy but rather for the assurance of faith and the sureties of divine sonship which yield composure, contentment, and supreme joy in the spirit.” (1674)

The Importance of Symbols— Their Use and Misuse.

“A long, long time ago, a man called Moses made an announcement to the members of his nation. Moses said, ‘Jehovah has said that henceforth we are to worship Him without the use of hand made idol images. From now on, nothing in between—just you and God.’

“I can almost hear the reaction of the children of Israel: ‘This new law will never work! Any fool knows you need an idol-image to make contact with Jehovah. One needs the other, and we need both. Moses! we warn you, a lot of innocent people are going to be led astray if you do away with these beautiful images. God uses such means.’ (from E. Jabay, “The Kingdom of Self”)

In the Urantia Book we can read Jesus words, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” Symbolism has been used extensively in the Urantia movement as a means to power. But symbols could have no power over us if we listened to Moses’ injunction. It is not yet out of date.

We humans have two extreme “ways” to proclaim or demonstrate our faith and allegiance to whatever it is we might value. One “way” is that, having selected the cause of the moment for which we are prepared to

*The purpose of life is to
avoid death.*

(a skeptic)

*The purpose of fighting
for a cause is to avoid
simply serving a cause.*

(another skeptic)

*When man consecrates
his will to the doing of
the Father’s will, when
man gives God all that
he has, then does God
make that man more
than he is. (1285)*

offer this allegiance, we henceforth devote a major part of our energies in doing battle for that cause.

An automatic result is that we find ourselves against all those whose opinion, relative to “the cause,” differs from our own.

In our genetic background we have an animal “tooth and claw” heritage, only barely below a superficial surface barrier erected upon the scaffolding of “civilized” customs.

This barrier is readily broken, and in fact most “causes” tend to enlist the the skills of those who have developed expertise in stirring our animal instincts in order to break down the barriers.

Human song, poetry, literature, rhetoric, etc., is littered with symbolism and exhortations that operate to arouse us to fight, even die, for the coming battles. We have a thousand and one battle hymns to unify us under God as we join battle with the enemy. And we have another thousand and one flags and symbols to identify us, friend from enemy, and to unify us in proclaiming our cause.

But the net result is always the same. Nobody really wins. Over time, both sides lose.

There is another way—the one at the other extremity. It is the way of Jesus. Jesus never went into battle for a cause. He was never personally against anyone. He did not fight for the rights of the slaves, the oppressed, a race or a nation, nor the down-trodden or the abused.

Jesus simply sought to do God’s will through service. He served and loved both friend and enemy.

On Copyright and Plagiarism

This article appeared in Innerface three years ago. It is re-printed because of the importance of views and concepts expressed therein:—

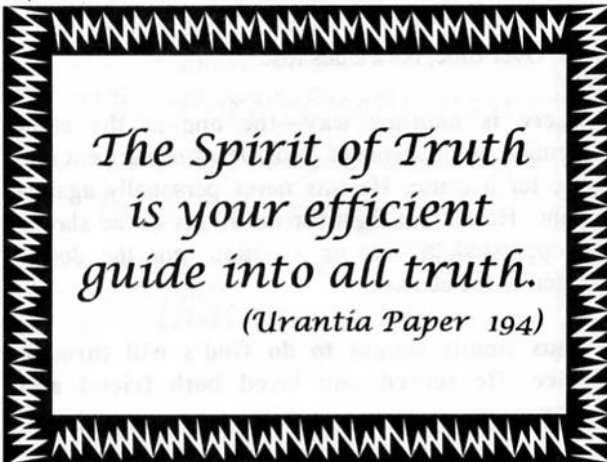
At the conclusion of the Foreword to The Urantia Book, the Revelators tell us that more than 1000 of the highest human concepts have been collated in producing the first part of the book and, for Part 4, thought gems and superior concepts have been assembled from more than 2000 human beings who lived on Earth from the days of Jesus down to the time of editing these revelations—more correctly restatements.

Nowhere in the book have these humans been named in order to acknowledge their contributions and, in many instances, what are known to have been quotations derived directly from human sources have not been identified with quotation marks. The author of a recently published critique of The Urantia Book names this as shameless plagiarism.

An interesting article on the pro's and con's of private and public ownership of knowledge has appeared on the Internet Information Highway and has been summarized by Urantia Book reader, Dr Matt Neibaur. The Internet article was entitled Speculations on the History of Ownership of Oral, Typographic, and Electronic Knowledge by Doug Brent who suggests as follows:

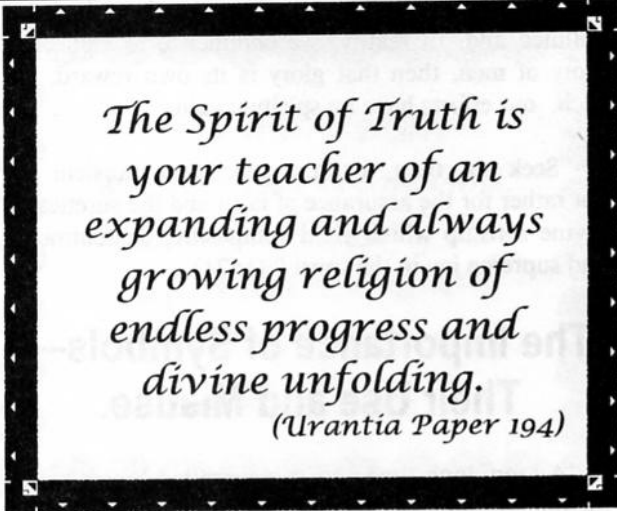
Ownership of Oral Knowledge

In primary oral culture that has never known literacy, knowledge is not owned; rather it is performed. Without print, knowledge must be stored, not as an abstract set of ideas, but as a set of concepts embedded deeply in the language and culture of the



*The Spirit of Truth
is your efficient
guide into all truth.*

(Urantia Paper 194)



*The Spirit of Truth is
your teacher of an
expanding and always
growing religion of
endless progress and
divine unfolding.*

(Urantia Paper 194)

people. Strictly procedural knowledge—how to build a boat, how to fight a war—is passed on directly from craftsman to craftsman through the process of apprenticeship. However, the more abstract knowledge of the tribe—not just their history but also their values, their concepts of justice and social order—is contained in the epic formula, recurrent themes, and mythic patterns and plots out of which the story-tellers of the tribe weave their narratives. This knowledge exists in a pre-existing network of interconnected, extraordinarily complex, and non-linear ways, all of which is known, at least in outline, to the storyteller's audience even before he begins. In such cultures, knowledge was held as common property, entrusted to tellers of tales who were maintained by the tribe, not for their individual contribution to the growth of ideas, but for their ongoing duty to keep knowledge alive by performing it. Thus there was no such thing as ownership of knowledge—or, more aptly, there was no such thing as private ownership of knowledge.

Ownership of Knowledge in Literate Societies

With the introduction of writing, all of this changed. According to Ong (1982) and his anthropological school of communications history, writing had a number of profound effects, including the development of the self-conscious, rational self and the power of abstraction, and, as a further consequence, the entire Western system of logic. It also had the important result of separating text from performer and knowledge from knower, thereby creating a fossilized text that can achieve an independent existence quite apart from its knower.

If knowledge can be separated from knower, it can be owned by individuals. In an oral society, plagiarism is unthinkable, simply because the survival of the

culture depends on plagiarism. As the manuscript society came into existence, it became common to attribute written tales to their sources in prior texts. Appropriating another's ideas, once an essential means of keeping the ideas alive, now became the act of a plagiarist, a plunderer of what rightly belonged to another. Typography made the written word a commodity. The communal oral world split into privately claimed freeholdings.

Copyright was originally created more as a means of breaking the stationer's monopoly on texts rather than as a means of protecting authors' rights. But by the 18th century, copyright had become firmly established, not only as a means to ensure that an author would be paid for his ideas, but also to ensure that he would have the right to protect their integrity by granting him the sole authority to correct, amend, or retract them.

The modern abhorrence of plagiarism does not mean that one should not use another's ideas. The practice of bringing ideas forward and integrating them into later works is fundamental to the modern belief that knowledge is cumulative and improvable. However, a crucial difference from the oral tradition is that, as knowledge diffuses through knowledge networks of research disciplines, it leaves behind the tracks of its passage in the form of citations.

The effects of printed text is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, the explicit pointers to earlier text reinforce the fact that knowledge is built communally through the interaction of thousands of individuals. On the other hand, the fact that each idea can, theoretically, be labeled with the name of its contributor has created the romantic myth of the individual creative genius—in the arts as the figure of the brooding artist creating in solitude, in the sciences as the individual inventor, the Nobel prize winner who

*The practice of the
"alter ego" technique is
a simple and pragmatic
way to maintaining
"unbroken communion."*

(see p.997)

sees what no one has seen before.

It has long been observed that the myth of the individual discoverer of knowledge is exactly that—a myth. The sociologists of science support the conception of knowledge as communal rather than as individual. For example, Diana Crane's seminal study, *Invisible Colleges* (1972), documents the extent to which ideas are nourished and developed through networks of interaction among scientists who may come from many different disciplines but who form a powerful social group around a common problem. Yet the print technology through which this communally developed knowledge is typically delivered continually enforces the opposite message—that knowledge is individually discovered and owned.

Commentary

Matt Neibaur adds as follows:

"I believe that the Revelators adhered to the view of community knowledge-ownership. Knowledge that benefits the community—mankind—is to be owned by the community for the common good. Jesus, in discussing wealth, made the following recommendations:

"If you chance to secure wealth by flights of genius, if your riches are derived from rewards of inventive endowment, do not lay claim to an unfair portion of such rewards. The genius owes something to both his ancestors and his progeny; likewise is he under obligation to the race, nation, and circumstances of his inventive discoveries; he should also remember that it was as man among men that he labored and wrought out his inventions." (1464)

"If the inventive genius owes something to the

*The Spirit of Truth
attains maximum
effectiveness with those
who remember to
maintain unbroken
communion with their
Makers.*

(Urantia Paper 194)

about one in every ten thousand persons on the planet could ever have even seen or heard of the book—and probably less than one in a million is likely to have any comprehension of what it is about. Furthermore the older generations of Christians have their feet of clay buried in concrete, refusing to give an inch to new knowledge and concepts, with the result that each succeeding generation is increasingly religionless. That automatically means no realistic purpose to life, no reason for ethics or morals, and nothing to which to dedicate self but self itself—a sure recipe for social chaos and ultimate anarchy.

A point to be considered is that we may be answerable at some future time in our universe careers for having presented The Urantia Book to the world essentially as a divinely-dictated revelation, despite the contrary written exhortations of the revelators themselves. This action effectively gives The Urantia Book a “banned reading” status for most of the rank and file of the Christian world. One reason this is so may be found in Revelations 22:18,19. Look it up!

It is a sad truth that the Urantia Papers never ever had need for the protection of copyright, nor did they ever have any need for the status of “divinely-dictated revelation” to be plastered upon them. The truths in these Papers are magnificently self-authenticating for those with “eyes to see and ears to hear.” They can stand on their own feet and by their own merit. How long will it take for that truth to be understood?

The restrictions imposed upon the revelators by the rules for revelation included that they must not provide us with unearned knowledge, nor are they permitted to anticipate the scientific discoveries that

 * *Ganid, I have absolute confidence in* *
 * *my heavenly Father's overcare; I am* *
 * *consecrated to doing the will of my* *
 * *Father in heaven. I do not believe* *
 * *that real harm can befall me; I do* *
 * *not believe that my life work can* *
 * *really be jeopardized by anything* *
 * *my enemies might wish to visit upon* *
 * *me. And surely we have no violence* *
 * *to fear from our friends—this all-* *
 * *powerful truth I insist on believing* *
 * *with a whole-hearted trust in spite* *
 * *of all appearances to the contrary.* *
 * *Jesus (1469)* *

The partially evolved mental mechanism of mortal man is not over-endowed with consistency and wisdom! Man's conceit often outruns his reason and eludes his logic. (2079)

they expect us to make over the next 1000 years. (1109) At first glance these impositions do not appear all that intimidating. But some realistic thinking on the problem will soon reveal the depth of the difficulties so created.

Imagine that you have been placed in a time machine and the date wound back to the end of the 19th century. You find yourself scheduled to give a talk to a group of erudite citizens, your topic is the “clockwork nature of the universe” and you are familiar with the recent 20th century advances in quantum physics that demonstrate conclusively that the universe is not a clockwork-like machine after all, and that the fundamentals of cause and effect thinking have gone down the drain forever.

You have the same prohibitions as the revelators of the Urantia Papers, you cannot provide people with unearned knowledge. So how could you even hint that the materialistic thinking of this 19th century audience could be wrong—except that you unintentionally provide them with unearned knowledge? Remember you are from the future; your audience will assume your every word has authority.

If we really did have to perform a task similar to that given to the revelators of The Urantia Book, I'm one hundred percent sure we would finish up doing what they have done. That is, we would use the best available current concepts (1930's concepts for the revelators) that permit us to reveal, with minimal distortion, whatever it is we were commissioned to reveal. And we would be forced to accept the absolute inevitability that in a book as extensive and detailed as The Urantia Book, the inclusion of error would be unavoidable.

Try it and see for yourself. Bill Sadler used an analogy about explaining the workings of the New

York stock exchange to a group of Bantu warriors—with nothing you say being interpretable by them as fibs, lies, falsehood, deceit, or being misleading! What a task!

Why is it that the laws of revelation should be so weighted against the revelators revealing anything?

The clue might be found in what the book says about our free will:

“No other being, force, creator, or agency in all the wide universe of universes can interfere to any degree with the absolute sovereignty of the mortal free will, as it operates within the realms of choice, **regarding the eternal destiny of the personality of the choosing mortal.** As pertains to eternal survival, **God has decreed the sovereignty of the material and mortal will, and that decree is absolute.**” (71)

There are several similar statements about the absolute sovereignty of human free will. **So what is free will?**

The Urantia Book tells us that our universe careers will finally be rewarded by our attaining of the presence of the Universal Father and then being ushered into the Corps of Finality—**provided we make a freewill decision of total commitment to the “doing of God’s will.”**

Alternatively, if we finally reject making the commitment to doing God’s will, we will become **as if we had never been.** (37)

How does this situation measure up against the reward and punishment methodology that we commonly use to train animals and even our offspring? Is there a real difference?

*Eye for eye, tooth for
tooth, hand for hand,
foot for foot,
Burning for burning,
wound for wound, stripe
for stripe.*

Exodus 21: 24,25.

*The quality of mercy is not strain'd;
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes:
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The throned monarch better than his crown;
And earthly power doth then show likest
God's
When mercy seasons justice.*

Shakespeare, “Merchant of Venice.”

Let’s consider the animal situation. As an example, we’ll use a horse that habitually tries to bite anyone either grooming it or trying to place a saddle upon its back. We take the horse to a professional trainer and watch to see what happens. This one starts by grooming the animal, at the same time keeping a keen professional eye on the animal’s head. By instinct almost, this trainer knows when the horse is going to try to bite him—and he is ready for it. Even before the horse’s teeth touch his arm, he has given it a sharp tap on the nose, and instantly resumed the grooming as if nothing had happened. A couple of sessions of instantaneous punishment or reward like this, and the horse gives up biting, at least until it inadvertently discovers that a new rider or groom is not familiar with the game.

Used correctly and intelligently, this reward and punishment scenario can achieve marvels with both animals and children, even with adults. How is our entry to or rejection from the Corps of Finality any different? Are we not given a choice between two alternatives, one of which offers a reward while the other brings a punishment? And in this case, the reward and the punishment are extreme, the reward being life, the punishment, a death sentence.

Although not immediately evident, there may be a subtle difference between a true freewill choosing to do the will of God and a choice that is made between alternatives that have the reward or punishment feedback incentive .

What if we decide that we will always seek to do the will of God totally unconditionally—that is, totally independently of whether there is a desirable reward for making the commitment or some form of punishment if we do not?

Surely this totally unconditional commitment can be made, at least if we have attained a state of mind whereby the doing the will of God becomes natural to

us regardless of the need for reward.

And because it is made completely independently of either the hope of reward or the threat of punishment, would that not be an authentic freewill decision ?

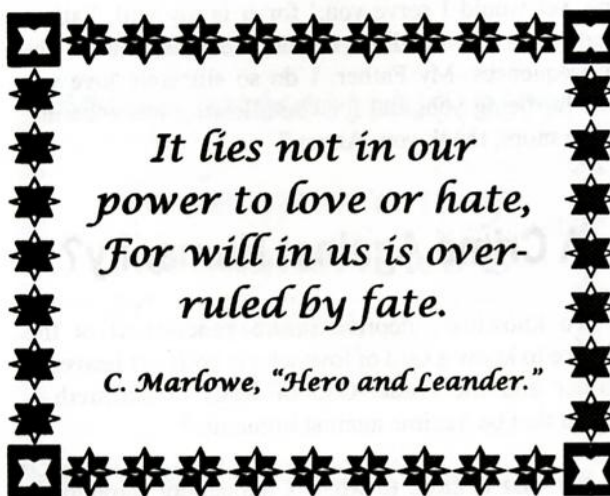
Now comes the crunch. Rightly or wrongly, it seems to me that uncertainty is an essential component of any environment in which authentic freewill decisions can find expression.

To start with, for a free will decision to be made, events cannot be predetermined. The Urantia Book cites a number of conditions that introduce varying degrees of unpredictability into whatever will be. And now modern physics has supplied clear-cut empirical evidence that we do not live in a clockwork universe but one in which probability, that is uncertainty, is the norm.

Besides the clockwork universe concept, now thoroughly discredited, there is another kind of "certainty complex" that can run our lives and take away from our making of free will decisions. This was illustrated for me by a friend who had the task of training air traffic controllers in an Islamic country.

He was trying, but failing, to introduce a panic stations frame of mind into his trainees if two incoming commercial airliners, laden with passengers, were inadvertently put upon a collision course. Then one day it happened, everyone went about their duties quietly and efficiently with no signs of panic or unusual hurry. The collision was avoided, though it may not have been so if it had not been noticed until about 30 seconds later.

Discussing this situation with his trainees he discovered that its foundation was a deep trust in whatever happens does so because it is the will of



*It lies not in our
 power to love or hate,
 For will in us is over-
 ruled by fate.*

C. Marlowe, "Hero and Leander."

*The patient dies while the physician
 sleeps;
 The orphan pines while the oppressor
 feeds;
 Justice is feasting while the widow
 weeps;
 Avarice is sporting while infection
 breeds.*

 Shakespeare, "The Rape of Lucrece."

Allah. Hence if Allah willed the crash, they could not prevent it, and if Allah did not will a crash, it would not happen.

For me, Jesus' complete trust in God, as illustrated by his statement to the Indian boy, "Ganid, I have absolute confidence in my heavenly Father's overcare; I am consecrated to doing the will of my Father in heaven. I do not believe that real harm can befall me..." was of a totally different order of certainty. Jesus had faith in God's overcare but not on the basis of whether whatever happens is predetermined by God's will. On the contrary, The Urantia Papers are quite adamant that it is our free will decisions that are essential for the spiritualization of our being.

Given a celestial revelation, at our present state of evolutionary advancement it is inevitable that a high proportion of Urantian mortals will turn it into a set of hard and fast rules and regulations to obey. By doing so, the book tells us we become obedient servants, and not freewill sons of God.

So, if in our minds we are certain that God exists and we are also certain that the doing of God's will is essential for our survival, then our choice is likely to be to comply to the letter, or to reject, a set of rules that substitute as God's will for us. And our compliance will be made in the shadow of the threat of punishment or the hope of reward.

It is my conclusion that we can be truly free of the reward or punishment incentive, and so in a position to choose the will of the God unconditionally, only if there is room for uncertainty both about God's existence and the consequences thereof.

If this suggestion is correct, then the revelators could not provide us with a totally self-authenticating revelation. They had to leave room for doubt or else

they would violate God's decree regarding the absolute sovereignty of the mortal free will. So is this the reason that The Urantia Book is fraught with difficulties and "strangeness"?

Quotations from the book that are in accord with these thoughts are:

"But for you, my children, and for all others who would follow you into this kingdom, there is set a severe test. Faith alone will pass you through its portals...." (1569)

Here a reminder of Brian Appleyard's telling remark is warranted, "If we had reason for faith, it would not be faith at all, it would be logic. Faith can only be unreasonable."

So if the Urantia Papers were errorless, as well as containing prophetic materials, we would be forced to accept it as having divine authority—thus leaving no room for faith. **But only faith can pass us through its portals!**

Then we have:

"The existence of God can never be proved by scientific experiment or by pure reason...." (24)

"Revelation is validated only by human experience..." (1106)

"The proof of revelation is this same fact of human experience..." (1105)

"The fact of religion consists wholly in the religious experience of the rational and average human being." (1105)

My last supporting quote says:

"But long before reaching Havona, these ascendant



*The reason birds can fly
and we can't is simply
that they have perfect
faith, for to have faith
is to have wings.*

J.M. Barrie, "The Little White Bird."

children of time have learned to feast upon uncertainty, to fatten upon disappointment, to enthuse over apparent defeat, to invigorate in the presence of difficulties, to exhibit indomitable courage in the face of immensity, and to exercise unconquerable faith when confronted with the challenge of the inexplicable. Long since, the battle cry of these pilgrims became: "In liaison with God, nothing—absolutely nothing—is impossible." (291)

It certainly seems that mortal life is meant to be charged with uncertainty. Thus am I able to say:

"Thank you Father, for the errors and the 'funny' stuff in The Urantia Book, thank you for those hilarious bits about Adamson and Ratta and their invisible children; thank you for those incredible, impossible, long-ranging passenger birds that carry two people 500 miles non-stop—and talk; thank you for the forty days to Pentecost conundrum; and thank you for the beauty and the grandeur of those Urantia Papers that reflect a level of genius that is light years beyond the talents of mere men. But above all else, I give you thanks Father, for the life of Jesus as it reveals you to me. And lastly, I give thanks for those precious words of Job saying, 'even though you slay me, yet would I serve you,' for it is my will, Father, that your will be done in me, no matter what the consequences. My Father, I do so sincerely love you just for being you, and for you allowing me to be me. Once more, thank you. Amen."

A Crime Against Humanity?

To knowingly deprive future generations of the chance to know a God of love who is both our heavenly Father and the Father-God of Jesus of Nazareth—would that be a crime against humanity?

For that is close to what is happening throughout

*You must go
forward from where
you find yourselves.*

(2084)

the world's communities of Christians, virtually all of which are, in terms of congregation numbers, on a downhill slide terminating in a bottomless pit.

What are the reasons for this slide? One certainly is an out-of-date theology that is incompatible with what our children are taught during their school years—thus open to ridicule. And kids just hate being ridiculed!

A major stumbling block is the concept that Jesus died for our sins. This theme runs so strongly through a large proportion of the popular hymns of all denominations to the point that it amounts to brain washing.

Probably very few Christians ever give a thought to the implications this theme has for the actual nature of God. What kind of father would only forgive the sins of his family of children if they crucified his favorite son?

At the basis of this doctrine we find Paul and St Augustine, both of whom deduced that mankind is plagued by congenital sin, that God chooses who will and who will not be saved even before they are born, and that God has pre-knowledge of who will accept or reject grace when it is offered. For congenital sin, they placed the blame on Adam and his fall.

Hence if we follow the "saved by the blood of Christ" theme to its origins, to be consistent we have to subscribe to a belief in Adam and Eve as the first man and woman, and their fall from grace, an event that is supposed to have occurred just a few thousands of years ago!

It is a fact that most practicing Christians know almost nothing about these doctrines. However, they do love the "saved by the blood of Christ" bit, as they feel it digs them out of some rather deep holes.

It is also a fact that many Christian priests and

*To be ignorant of
one's ignorance is
the malady of the
ignorant.*

A.B. Alcott

*Against a foe I can
defend myself—but
Heaven protect me
from a blundering
friend.*

D.W. Thompson

ministers no longer hold rigidly to such doctrines but go along with them for the sake of peace among their congregations.

These are the doctrines that are so open to attack by those materialist-minded school teachers so keen to demonstrate to their students the modernity and superiority of their thinking.

Adam and Eve means Genesis, and a creation story that is not only highly vulnerable but virtually indefensible. So while parents are brain washed on salvation through the blood of Christ, their children are being brain washed that religion is unscientific.

Both concepts are naive, they have no depth of background knowledge, and display both mental laziness and an appalling ignorance of reality.

But to try to challenge either party to serious thought and discussion means to come up against deeply held prejudice likely to turn discussion into senseless ranting upon highly emotive issues.

And so the ongoing decline and fall of Christianity perpetuates the decline and fall that started with the civilizations of Rome, the Roman Empire, the Holy Roman Empire, and now Western civilization.

Can we lay the blame for this crime anywhere? I think the answer is no, for both the thinking and the knowledge of most Christians is too shallow to hold them responsible, and those who are knowledgeable are only banging their heads against a brick wall if they try to change what is.

So where are we Urantians? How is it that nearly fifty years after publication of the Urantia Papers, our new revelation can be sure of only a few thousand more or less dedicated readers? More importantly, why?

The answer appears to lie squarely with those who were there at the origins of the revelatory saga, and who, despite the protests of their celestial guides, turned the papers into something they were never meant to be—a “by proxy,” divinely-dictated revelation, a new God’s Bible. Take a look at Clyde Bedell’s Concordex and see the thinking of the early Urantia movement accurately reflected. Here we have a God-given revelation with all the answers, the advertising says, a book to revolutionize the world.

And of course it is and will, but how long will it be before we realize that the way by which its magnificent message has been broadcast to the world at large has failed dismally. Surely experience has now confirmed that the message cannot be sold to Christianity, and probably not to any other religion, if presented as another God-authenticated revelation?

Meredith Sprunger is by far our best qualified observer in this area, and states: “More than forty years experience in interfacing with the **most progressive segment of mainline Christianity** has taught me that anything purporting to be a new revelation is not within the boundaries of current theological-institutional respectability.” (Christian Fellowship Journal 8 (1) 23, 1998)

To even think that the revelators were unaware that such would be the case is to cast aspersions indicating naivete on their part. Yet the Papers leave no doubt that their content is meant to upgrade all religion! We are expected to find a way.

“The religious challenge of this age is to those farseeing and forward-looking men and women of spiritual insight who will dare to construct a new and appealing philosophy of living out of the enlarged and exquisitely integrated modern concepts of cosmic truth, universe beauty, and divine goodness.” (43)

*The greatest
pronouncement Jesus
ever made was:
“The kingdom of God
is within you.”*

(2084)

*The second greatest
pronouncement Jesus
ever made was:
“His Father is a living
and loving spirit.”*

(2084)

In this section, we are told to take the message of the Papers and present it an acceptable way to all manner of men.

A disquieting fact is that many Urantia Book readers convey an antagonistic attitude to Christianity and the churches, along with a “don’t care” attitude that Christians are not accepting The Urantia Book.

But Paper 196 says: “What a transcendent service if, through this revelation, the Son of Man should be recovered from the tomb of traditional theology and be presented as the living Jesus to the church that bears his name, and to all other religions.” **Obviously the revelators do care.**

When a commercial firm goes bankrupt it either disappears or else someone else comes along, dismisses the old management, and starts anew. And if they fail, the cycle might restart until someone gets it right, and the firm prospers. Otherwise death is assured.

So what new tack can we try with our precious Urantia Book?

Can we get away from a fundamentalist-style of thinking and simply market this book as an interesting and meaningful work on religion and theology?

To succeed, we would need to forget about celestial authorship and simply admit that the true origins of the text are unknown (which is the truth). As pointed out by Meredith Sprunger, **the origin and authorship of a book is not a philosophical criterion of truth.** Regardless of whether supermortals or human beings wrote the Urantia Book, it must still be evaluated by its truth content and not by authorship. (CFJ, 8 (1) 6)

Probably the names of authors would best be omitted from a table of contents, and perhaps could be added at the end of each Paper as, “attributed to a...” But if the strange names of authors might be a

hindrance to acceptance, then they should be omitted.

We must remember how Jesus told his opponents that it was not important that they believe in him but it was important that they believe in the Father-God about whom he taught.

We would then have to stand back, see what happens, and modify approaches accordingly. The aim of a new approach would be to get the book read because of the merit of its outstanding concepts and ideas, then leave it to new readers and the Spirit of Truth to figure what it means to themselves and for themselves.

Maybe the book needs a different name, perhaps "The Urantian Papers" or perhaps a neutral name like "A Philosophy of Religion."

Thought also needs to be given to making Part 4 available as a "Life of Jesus" without the revelatory overtones. It could start at Section 1 of Paper 121 but be modified to substitute "Jesus: for "Michael" where appropriate.

If we could get Christians to be comfortable with having the Papers on their bookshelves, and particularly for clergy and academics to do so, a new start might be just around the corner.

The Urantia Book's message has failed—or has it?

To justify significant change, we must first admit to ourselves that our present approach has failed. Jim Mills, who was a prominent oldie from Forum days, warned me of this prior to his death a few years ago. In his retiring years, Jim studied philosophy, graduated while in his eighties, and taught at the Pensacola Campus of the University of Florida. He was dedicated to getting The Urantia Book accepted for study at tertiary level. But his efforts were in vain.

*The race is not to the
swift nor the battle
to the strong.*

Ecclesiastes IX, 2

*Be not discouraged;
human evolution is still
in progress, and the
revelation of God to the
world, in and through
Jesus, shall not fail.*

(2097)

This was back in 1987, even before the present mess-up had made things so much worse. Jim said straight out that in his opinion The Urantia Book had already failed and that at some time in the future, the revelators would have to make another try. However, **the book itself states the revelation will succeed**, so surely it is too early to give up yet. Paper 195 says, "...the truths of Jesus gospel will persist gloriously to illuminate a new and better way."

I'm told I'm getting old and repetitive and many readers are fed up with me plugging this theme. So perhaps in future I'll stick with the science content of the book.

But before giving up, there are two things of which I am sure. One is that Christianity as a whole is frightened of anything claiming to be a new revelation. How much this fear is due to the last few verses of the Bible, I have no way of knowing. The Bible ends with, "I, John, solemnly warn everyone who hears the prophetic words of this book: if anyone adds anything to them, **God will add to his punishment the plagues described in this book.** And if anyone takes anything away, God will take away from him his share of the fruit of the tree of life and of the Holy City...." Scary stuff!

My second point of sureness is that reform of Christianity was the major hope of the revelators for the success of their revelation. I believe they were well aware that Christianity would not easily embrace a new revelation, and that those who do accept it would need to find the way to introducing it to the flock. They tell us:

"Paganized and socialized Christianity stands in need of new contact with the uncompromised

teachings of Jesus; it languishes for lack of a new vision of the Master's life on earth. A new and fuller revelation of the religion of Jesus is destined to conquer an empire of materialistic secularism and to overthrow a world sway of mechanistic naturalism." (2082)

So please, let us not be as the majority of the current crop of Christians with feet set in concrete. Let us face reality. For in consideration of the degenerate state of Western society and for the sake of the new generations growing up without God and without meaning in their lives, **would it not be a crime against humanity to fail to do so?**

KTG

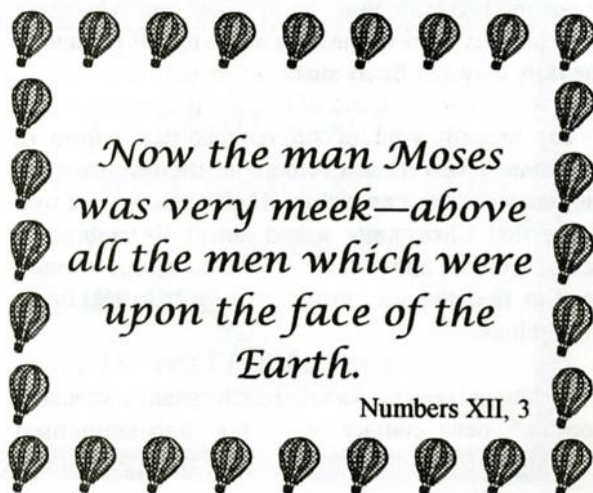
[Whereas it is my opinion that the Urantia Papers must be presented so as they can be read for merit alone and without reference to authorship, others may suggest a different approach. The Spiritual Fellowship Journal (4109 Plaza Dr., Fort Wayne, IN 46806) is now set up to facilitate all aspects of religious expression associated with the teachings of The Urantia Book. Interface also is keen to publish anything that might help a change in direction.

Please be aware that it would be possible to publish a slightly modified version of the Urantia Papers without infringing copyright. KTG]

The Cross as a Symbol

Ann Bendall, Nambour, Qld., Australia

Jesus on the cross, his head bowed, blood dripping from his head with its crown of thorns, his feet and hands with nails piercing them, and from his side where the soldier thrust his sword. This was an image of my daily life as a child, and despite intense training on the atonement philosophy, the sight of this gentle man being so inhumanely murdered negated the value



*Once to every man and
nation comes the
moment to decide,
In the strife of Truth
and Falsehood, for the
good or evil side.*

J.R. Lowell

of the rationale presented to somehow make it seem necessary or worthwhile.

"The fact of the cross became the very center of subsequent Christianity; but it is not the central truth of the religion which may be derived from the life and teachings of Jesus of Nazareth." (1615)

A number of churches of the 1990's are downplaying the cross, and instead of a life-like cross only a small one in a non-focal position can be found. They are preaching the living Christ, the way, the truth, and the light. Perhaps the cross now symbolizes mankind's inhumanity, or embarrassment at the atonement doctrine.

It appears that no other planet has the local nickname that ours does—Urantia is known throughout the universes as the world of the cross—and therefore assume that this indicates that no other Bestowal Son in our Superuniverse has been crucified.

My humiliation at our planet's claim to fame is tempered by the fact that, in the local universe, Jesus "made the cross an eternal symbol of the triumph of love over hate and the victory of truth over evil when he prayed, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."

That devotion of love was contagious throughout a vast universe. and the disciples caught it from their Master. The very first teacher of his gospel who was called upon to lay down his life in his service said, as they stoned him to death, "Lay not this sin to their charge." (2018)

We are also advised that, "On millions of inhabited worlds, tens of millions of evolving creatures who may have been tempted to give up the moral struggle and abandon the good fight of faith, have taken one more look at Jesus on the cross and then have forged on

ahead, inspired by God's laying down his incarnate life in devotion to the unselfish service of man." (2018)

The symbolism of the cross appears important, if repetition is any indicator. The revelators rarely repeat themselves and yet in pages 2018 to 2019, there is a continual emphasis on the truth of the cross, and we are advised that, "In your well-meant efforts to escape the superstitious errors of the false interpretation of the meaning of the death on the cross, you should be careful not to make the great mistake of failing to perceive the true significance and the genuine import of the Master's death." (2016)

The cross: "that high symbol of sacred service, the devotion of one's life to the welfare and salvation of one's fellows. The cross...does stand forever, on earth and throughout a vast universe, as a sacred symbol of the good bestowing themselves upon the evil and thereby saving them by this very devotion of love. The cross does stand as the token of the highest form of unselfish service, the supreme devotion of the full bestowal of a righteous life in the service of wholehearted ministry, even in death, the death of the cross. And the very sight of this great symbol of the bestowal life of Jesus truly inspires all of us to want to go and do likewise." (2019)

Most Urantia Book readers would deem themselves to fall within the category of "thinkers" and to those who do is given this additional advice in, "When thinking men and women look upon Jesus as he offers up his life on the cross, they will hardly again permit themselves to complain at even the severest hardships of life, much less at petty harassments and their many purely fictitious grievances. His life was so glorious and his death so triumphant that we are all enticed to a willingness to share both." (2019)

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆
 ☆ *The spacious firmament* ☆
 ☆ *on high,* ☆
 ☆ *With all the blue* ☆
 ☆ *ethereal sky,* ☆
 ☆ *And spangled heavens, a* ☆
 ☆ *shining frame,* ☆
 ☆ *Their great Original* ☆
 ☆ *proclaim.* ☆
 ☆ *Addison "Ode."* ☆
 ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆

We know that the death on the cross was not to effect man's reconciliation to God but to stimulate man's realization of the Father's eternal love and the Son's unending mercy, and to broadcast these universal truths to a whole universe.
 (2019)

The Sower

Jesus opted to teach in parables, "to the end that our friends and those who so desire to know the truth may find that for which they seek, while our enemies and those who love not the truth may hear without understanding." (1680)

The first of his parables was that of:

"A sower went forth to sow, and it came to pass as he sowed that some seed fell by the wayside to be trodden underfoot and devoured by the birds of heaven. Other seed fell in rocky places where there was little earth, up because there was no depth to the soil, but as soon as the sun shone, it withered because it had no root whereby to secure moisture. Other seed fell among the thorns, and as the thorns grew up, it was choked so that it yielded no grain. Still other seed fell upon good ground and, growing, yielded, some thirtyfold, some sixtyfold, and some a hundredfold." (1688)

And this parable was one of the few where he actually interpreted its meaning as being, "First, it was a review of his own ministry up to that time and a forecast of what lay ahead of him for the remainder of his life on earth. And second, it was also a hint as to what the apostles and other messengers of the kingdom might expect in their ministry from generation to generation as time passed." (1693)

Following his explanation, Jesus added, "the last of the parable of the sower...The kingdom of heaven is also like a man who cast good seed upon the earth; and while he slept by night and went about his business by day, the seed sprang up and grew, and although he knew not how it came about, the plant

came to fruit. And then when the grain was ripe, he put forth the sickle, and the harvest was finished." (1693) I wonder if this addition could be interpreted as representative of Urantia finally reaching the age of light and life?

C.A.B.

The Urantia Book: A New Presentation of Part 4?

In the hope of influencing the thinking of mainstream Christians through ideas and concepts to be found in The Urantia Book's "Life of Jesus," experience has, by now, indicated that this effect is only likely to be achieved if that "Life" is presented in a different form.

Previous articles in this issue have discussed aspects of this matter, drawing attention to the antipathy of Christians to revelatory claims of any kind. So what are the possibilities for getting the text of Part 4 read widely if a different presentation is used, and what are the possible gains?

Part 4 could be truthfully presented as "author(s) unknown." Starting from Paper 121 or perhaps 122, only those changes likely to distract readers or to be indicative of a revelatory source would need modification or deletion so as to be generally

acceptable to mainstream Christians. The narrative of Jesus' life and teachings would require only sufficient textual alterations to avoid copyright conflicts. Theological issues in the original text would scarcely need touching as virtually all such issues have already been discussed extensively in the Christian literature.

At least initially, it is more important that the influence of the text of the Urantia Papers should be to assist mainstream Christianity to evolve a revised form of religion that would be acceptable to and inspiring for the new generations, rather than have the aim of bringing new readers to the Papers themselves.

Currently, a high proportion of secondary school graduates receive an education that promotes a materialistic, religionless outlook on life and living. But within the next 10 to 20 years, the discoveries of the quantum physicists that conclusively rule out the deterministic, "clockwork universe" will become more widely known, and the fall of determinism will leave room for free will, for belief in God, and for a resurgence of religion.

As it now stands, The Urantia Book is unlikely to contribute significantly to a religious renaissance. A revised and modified "Life of Jesus" could change that outlook, and eventually bring respectability to the study of the Fifth Epochal Revelation in the academic world and among church people.

K.T.G.

Boml-Innerface
P.O. Box 1091
Flint, MI 48501

RETURN SERVICE
requested

INNERFACE INTERNATIONAL
A Journal for Students of
The URANTIA Papers

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Flint, MI
Permit #132

601 renewal date: Oct-28-96
Tom and Carol Kendall
1400 W. Salvington Pl.
Wheeling, IL 60090