



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 Goal of Mortal Living

The great goal of human existence is to attune to the divinity of the indwelling Adjuster; the great achievement of mortal life is the attainment of a true and understanding consecration to the eternal aims of the divine spirit who waits and works within your mind. But a devoted and determined effort to realize eternal destiny is wholly compatible with a light-hearted and joyous life and with a successful and honorable career on earth. Co-operation with the Thought Adjuster does not entail self-torture, mock piety, or hypocritical and ostentatious self-abasement; the ideal life is one of loving service rather than an existence of fearful apprehension.

Confusion, being puzzled, even sometimes discouraged and distracted, does not necessarily signify resistance to the leadings of the indwelling Adjuster. Such attitudes may sometimes connote lack of active co-operation with the divine Monitor and may, therefore, somewhat delay spiritual progress, but such intellectual emotional difficulties do not in the least interfere with the certain survival of the God-knowing soul. Ignorance alone can never prevent survival; neither can confusional doubts nor fearful uncertainty. **Only conscious resistance to the Adjuster's leading can prevent the survival of the evolving immortal soul.**

You must not regard co-operation with your Adjuster as a particularly conscious process, for it is not; but your motives and your decisions, your faithful determinations and your supreme desires, do constitute real and effective co-operation. You

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Logic can never succeed in harmonizing the findings of science and insights of religion unless both the scientific and the religious aspects of personality are truth dominated, sincerely desirous of following the truth wherever it may lead—regardless of the conclusions which it may reach. (1138)

can consciously augment Adjuster harmony by:

1. Choosing to respond to divine leading; sincerely basing the human life on the highest consciousness of truth, beauty, and goodness, and then coordinating these qualities of divinity through wisdom, worship, faith, and love.
2. Loving God and desiring to be like him—genuine recognition of the divine fatherhood and loving worship of the heavenly Parent.
3. Loving man and sincerely desiring to serve him—wholehearted recognition of the brotherhood of man coupled with an intelligent and wise affection for each of your fellow mortals.
4. Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship—honest recognition of your progressive obligations to the Supreme Being, awareness of the interdependence of evolutionary man and evolving Deity. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty. (1206/7)

The “Alter Ego” and the Indwelling Spirit

“The great challenge to modern man is to achieve better communication with the divine Spirit of God that dwells within the human mind.”

Our “alter ego”—its beginnings

When first learning to make use of language, many children are prone to think out loud, to express their thoughts in words, even if no one is present to hear them. And with the child's dawn of creative imagination it evinces a tendency to converse with imaginary companions. (996)

*Like leaves on trees the race of
man is found,
Now green in youth, now
with'ring on the ground,
Another race the following
Spring supplies,
They fall successive, and
successive rise.*

Homer

*Intelligence is
quickness to
apprehend as distinct
from ability, which is
capacity to act wisely
on the thing
apprehended.*

A.N. Whitehead

In this way a budding ego seeks to hold communion with a fictitious alter ego. By this technique the child early learns to convert its monologue conversations into pseudo dialogues in which this alter ego makes replies to the child's original thoughts and wishes. Very much of adult thinking is mentally carried on in this same conversational form.

A primitive form of prayer was much like the semi-magical recitations of our earlier ancestors—which were prayers not actually addressed to anyone in particular. Such techniques of praying tended to evolve into a dialogue type of communication parallel with the emergence of the alter ego concept.

As it was conceived by successive generations of praying mortals, the alter ego evolved up through ghosts, fetishes, and spirits to polytheistic gods, and eventually to the One God, a divine being embodying the highest ideals and the loftiest aspirations of the praying ego.

And thus did prayer function as a most potent agency for the conservation of the highest values and ideals of those who pray.

Enlightened prayer has its greatest potential for advancing the spirituality of humanity when it recognizes not only an external God but also an internal divine Presence functional in the individual.

Certainly when we pray, we should be striving to grasp the concept of the Universal Father on Paradise. But for the individual to also grasp the reality of the indwelling Father-Spirit on a personal basis, experience indicates that the most effective weaponry is by reverting to the

concept of a nearby alter ego, just as the child mind is prone to do.

Having grasped its value in our minds, experience has also demonstrated the extraordinary rapidity with which this alter ego concept can advance us from a commencing point as mere fiction to the reality of experiencing God's indwelling Presence—a real, genuine, and divine Presence with whom we are in a personal relationship, yet who remains the very essence of the living God, the Universal Father.

And so childhood instinctive behavior can naturally evolve from a game played out in childhood imagination to actual dialogue between the mature mortal mind and indwelling Divinity.

The role of prayer

The simple prayer of faith evidences a mighty evolution in human experience whereby the ancient conversations with the symbolism of the alter ego of primitive religion become exalted to the level of communion with the spirit of the Infinite—and to bona fide consciousness of the reality of the eternal God and Paradise Father of all intelligent creation.

Prayer ever has been and ever will be a twofold human experience: a psychological procedure intertwined with a spiritual technique. These two functions of prayer can never be fully separated. But prayer must never be so prostituted as to become a substitute for action. All ethical prayer is a stimulus to action and a guide to the progressive striving for idealistic goals of transcendent attainment.

When the prayer seeks nothing for the one who prays nor anything for his fellows, then such

*Who is the richer,
he who has much
and wants more,
or he who has
little and wants
less?*

*Art is the imposing of
a pattern on
experience, and our
aesthetic enjoyment is
recognition of the
pattern.*
A. N. Whitehead

attitudes of the soul tend to the levels of true worship.

Aside from all that is transcendent in the experience of praying, ethical prayer is an effective way to equip the self for higher attainment. Prayer can induce us to look in two ways for help—to the subconscious reservoir of prior mortal experience and for inspiration and guidance to the superconscious borders of contact with the indwelling Spirit of the Father. (from 996/997)

The Indwelling Father-Spirit—what are its functions? (1203)

The devotion of the indwelling Spirit to the individual is touchingly sublime, divinely Father-like. Indirectly and unrecognized it is constantly communicating with its human subject.

The Paradise Father has apparently reserved this form of personal contact with his individual creatures as an exclusive Creator prerogative.

While passive regarding purely temporal welfare, the Father-Spirit is divinely active concerning all the affairs of our eternal future.

When indwelling human minds, the Spirit-within brings with it a model career, the ideal life, as determined and foreordained by that Spirit itself.

But our indwelling spirit forces never try to control our thinking, but rather to spiritualize it, to eternalize it.

As personal creatures, we have mind and will.

The Spirit-within is prepersonal and has premind and prewill. If we so fully conform to the mind of the Spirit that we see eye to eye, then our minds become as one, and we receive the reinforcement of the divine mind.

The great goal of our human existence is to attune to the divinity of the indwelling Spirit. The great achievement of our mortal life is the attainment of a true and understanding consecration to the eternal aims of the divine spirit who waits and works within our mind. And our ideal life is one of loving service to our fellow travelers.

Co-operation with our Father-Spirit is not a particularly conscious process; but our motives and our decisions, our faithful determinations and our supreme desires, do constitute real and effective co-operation. We can consciously augment harmony by:

- Choosing to respond to divine leading; sincerely basing the human life on the highest consciousness of truth, beauty, and goodness, and then coordinating these qualities of divinity through wisdom, worship, faith, and love.
- Loving God and desiring to be like him—genuine recognition of the divine fatherhood and loving worship of the heavenly Parent.
- Loving our fellows and sincerely desiring to serve them—wholehearted recognition of the unity of mankind coupled with an intelligent and wise affection for each of our fellow mortals.
- Joyful acceptance of cosmic citizenship—honest recognition of our progressive obligations to God and to all our fellow citizens. This is the birth of cosmic morality and the dawning realization of universal duty.

*Die when I may, I want it
said of me by those who
know me best, that I have
always plucked a thistle
and planted a flower
where I thought a flower
would grow.*

Abraham Lincoln

*You would attain to
the divine
perfection,
And yet not turn
your back upon the
world.*

Michael Angelo

We should not confuse and confound the mission and influence of our indwelling God-Spirit with what is commonly called conscience. Conscience is a human and purely psychic reaction. While it is not to be despised, it is hardly the voice of God to the soul. Conscience rightly admonishes us to do right; but the Spirit-within endeavors to tell us what truly is right.

The motivation of faith makes experiential the full realization of our personal relationship with God, but action, completion of decisions, is essential. Faith transmutes potentials to actuals in the spiritual world, but potentials become actuals in the finite realms only by and through the realization of our choice-experience. Our choosing to do the will of God joins spiritual faith to material decisions, thus supplying a divine and spiritual fulcrum for the more effective functioning of our God-hunger. (1211)

Mind and Soul

Mind is about all we have of universe reality that is subject to our will—and our soul faithfully replicates and portrays the harvest of the temporal decisions that the mortal self makes. But it is not so much what mind comprehends as what mind desires to comprehend that ensures soul growth; it is not so much what mind is like as what mind is striving to be like that constitutes spirit identification. And it is not so much that we are conscious of God as that we yearn for God that results in universe ascension. What we are today is not so important as what we are becoming day by day and in eternity.

Mind is the cosmic instrument on which our human will can play the discords of destruction, or upon which this same human will can bring

forth the exquisite melodies of God identification and consequent eternal survival. The God-Spirit bestowed upon us is impervious to evil and incapable of sin. (1217)

But these mortal minds of ours can be twisted, distorted, and rendered evil and ugly by the sinful machinations of a perverse and self-seeking human will. Contrary-wise, this very same mind can be made noble, beautiful, true, and good—thus reflecting a spirit-illuminated will provided only that our choice is both to seek to be God-knowing and always to attempt to do God's will.

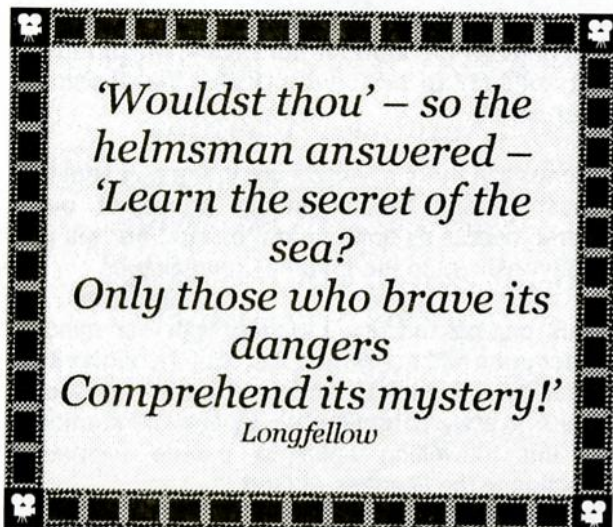
Factors in the evolutionary creation of an immortal soul are:

- The human mind and all cosmic influences antecedent thereto and impinging thereon.
- The divine spirit indwelling this human mind and all potentials inherent in such a fragment of absolute spirituality, together with all associated spiritual influences and factors in human life.
- The relationship between material mind and divine spirit, which connotes a value and carries a meaning not found in either of the contributing factors to such an association.
- The reality of this unique relationship is neither material nor spiritual. It is the soul.

The potential for such soul evolution is inherent in the two universal urges of mind:

- the impulse of the finite mind of the creature to know God and attain the divinity of the Creator.
- the impulse of the infinite mind of the Creator to know man and attain the experience of the creature.

This supernal transaction of evolving the



*Art is long, and Time is
fleeting,
And our hearts, though
stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums,
are beating
Funeral marches to the
grave.*

Henry Longfellow

immortal soul is made possible because the mortal mind is first personal and second because it is in contact with superhuman realities. (1218)

Therefore it possesses an endowment of divine ministry that ensures the evolution of a moral nature capable of making moral decisions. Thus mortal mind can effect a bona fide creative contact with spiritual ministries and with the indwelling Father-Spirit—and a soul is born.

Evolution of the soul

- The soul is super-material but sub-spiritual.
- In one sense, it is a storehouse that contains everything of spiritual value emanating from our earthly lives.
- It interacts both with our mortal mind and with our indwelling God-Spirit.
- The more spiritual our minds become, the more closely our soul approaches the divine Spirit-within to the degree that, with the consent of the human mind, the soul gains the authority to commit our eternal future to the quest of finding the Universal Father, seeking to be like him, and to the doing of his will.

Our soul is thus the primordial embryo of what we will become during the next phase of our eternal career.

How then do we make the most of our opportunities for divine guidance in the development of our souls?

Perhaps for most of us, our progress will be at a maximum if we initiate an evolutionary role for our own alter ego. We start by making it our personal habit to maintain continuous but silent contact between our finite mind and our alter

ego—which, at this learning stage, is a stand-in for the God-Spirit within.

Success or failure is in direct proportion to how much of our waking time we succeed in spending in a relationship by which our every thought, every word, and every moment of the day is shared in dialogue with our pseudo spirit companion.

However to provide tentative answers to serious questions, we must draw upon our prior knowledge of the Father as it was revealed to us in the life of Jesus of Nazareth.

Then, in any situation in which we find ourselves, our decision making may be guided by a single potent question, "What would Jesus do?" And over time, what commenced as a one-sided and completely human relationship will gradually progress to a state in which our forthcoming decisions approach ever closer to bearing the essence of divinity .

For that process to be successful, we must have thoroughly familiarized ourselves with Jesus' life and teachings—to the point of actually "knowing" the mind of Jesus.

There is a good reason why we should seek to know the mind of Jesus rather than his actions or his teachings. No two events are ever identical. Every event is enmeshed with circumstances unknowable to us such that it will never recur in exactly the same way again.

If we interpret Jesus' life and sayings as the basis of a set of rules to follow, then we know that we do not yet know the mind of Jesus—which after all is a revelation of the mind of God. But despair not for Jesus' Spirit of Truth, acting through the Father-Spirit, is available to help us. We need only to ask.

*Out of the crooked
timber of humanity
no straight thing
can ever be made.*

Immanuel Kant

Let me remind you of the old maxim: people under suspicion are better moving than at rest, since at rest they may be sitting in the balance without knowing it, being weighed together with their sins.
Franz Kafka

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.

And the everlasting truth is: If your own mind does not serve you well, you can always exchange it for the mind of Jesus of Nazareth, who forever serves you well.

On doing the will of God—How?

Did you know that it is possible for the human soul to make a final decision to fuse with your indwelling Father-Spirit? And you can do it NOW. (1219)

So what is needed for us to make this decision and for it to be valid? Whether or not we qualify is dependent on the state of our mind—which must grant authority to our soul to make the decision on our behalf.

The reason that our minds are in the box seat is because during the beginning phase of our universe career as finite mortal beings, our will is actually resident in the material mind circuits.

Thus our personality, together with our mind, can act upon will to grant to the soul the authority to offer our will back to whence it came—to God. Thereby are we committed to a permanent union with our indwelling spirit to pursue ultimate perfection in the likeness of God.

But how can we be sure in our own minds that we are serious? Saying so does not make it so. What can such a commitment mean to a finite, material creature?

The Papers describe the meaning of doing the will of God in these terms:

- The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God... Sharing is Godlike—divine.
- The imitation of God is the key to perfection; the doing of his will is the secret of survival and of perfection in survival.
- Peace in this life, survival in death, perfection in the next life, service in eternity—all these are achieved (in spirit) NOW when the creature personality consents—chooses—to subject the creature will to the Father's will.
- This choosing of the Father's will is the spiritual finding of the spirit Father by mortal man.
- This choosing does not so much consist in the negation of creature will—"Not my will but yours be done"—as it consists in the creature's positive affirmation: "It is my will that your will be done."

Try as we may, we cannot get specific instructions or a set of rules that define exactly what "doing the will of God" really is. Perhaps it is best described in the answer Jesus once gave to a young inquirer:

"This was a conference which lasted well into the night, in the course of which the young man requested Jesus to tell him the difference between the will of God and that human mind act of choosing which is also called will. In substance

*O chestnut tree, great
rooted blossomer,
Are you the leaf, the
blossom or the bole?
O body swayed to music; O
brightening glance,
How can we know the
dancer from the dance?*
W.B. Yeats

*To see a World in a grain
of sand,
And a Heaven in a wild
flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm
of your hand,
And Eternity in an hour.*
William Blake

Jesus said: The will of God is the way of God, partnership with the choice of God in the face of any potential alternative. To do the will of God, therefore, is the progressive experience of becoming more and more like God, and God is the source and destiny of all that is good and beautiful and true."

To be committed to doing the will of God we need to be also committed to becoming more and more like God, to be seeking a perfection that is God-like. And the reason that specific rules cannot be laid down is because every situation in which we find ourselves is unique to that moment and will never occur again in exactly the same way. Hence "the will of God" is the "way of God" appears to be about as definite as it can get.

Presumably this is also why the Papers inform us: "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."

And in the first paragraph of "The Nature of God," in Paper 2:

"The nature of God can best be understood by the revelation of the Father which Michael of Nebadon unfolded in his manifold teachings and in his superb mortal life in the flesh."

So in a nut shell, doing the will of God means, with Jesus as our model, always to be trying to become more and more God-like. And the real meaning and purpose of each life on Urantia all boils down to that.

The Big Bang On or Off?

Currently, advances in particle physics essential for further development of theory about the beginnings of our universe have slowed down to a crawl. The reason—the Higgs particle is still missing.

The Higgs particle is required in the standard model of quantum theory because it mediates the transformation of energy to mass during the birth of new, fundamental particles. But none of our present crop of super-colliders were able to generate the collisional energy necessary to produce the Higgs. So an urgent task of redesign and rebuilding is now in process but it may take several years before we can know whether the Higgs really exists.

One result of this slow-down is that the brakes have been taken off for the publication of speculative theoretical papers that otherwise would have gone unpublished unless supporting evidence was available. Another result is that some popular science journals that previously contained much hard science, now print what was formerly unprintable.

The Big Bang cosmologist though, due to the high productivity of space-based telescopes and the revamping of the Hubble, is not short on hard data. Rather they are short of adequate theoretical back-up to interpret their data.

One of the basic assumptions in conventional cosmology has been that at the very largest scale, the universe is smooth and homogeneous.

That is now known to be wrong. Our universe is

*If we didn't live
venturously, plucking the
wild goat by the beard;
and trembling over
precipices, we should never
be depressed, I've no
doubt; but already should
be faded, fatalistic and
aged.*
Virginia Woolf

clumpy. It has vast superclusters of galaxies, the largest of which border upon being a billion light years long and about 300 million light-years wide.

That brings up the problem of how these massive bodies got to be where they are. Our universe is thought to be about 15 billion years old plus or minus five billion years. But many measurements of the speed at which galaxies move have shown that these seldom exceed 1000 km/second—about 600 miles per second or 1/300th of the speed of light. Hence in a 20 billion year old universe, a galaxy could only have moved about 66 million light years. So how can the current distribution of these superclusters be explained?

Another problem is the fluctuations observed in the background radiation that indicates there must be at least 10 times more dark matter than visible matter in the universe. But to date there is no hard evidence to account for the discrepancy.

A further difficulty is with lambda, the cosmological constant that describes the acceleration of the expanding universe. Theory predicts a value that is 10^{120} times larger than the measured value of 1/107. To cope with this huge anomaly, lambda has been allocated a fudge factor based upon an undiscovered mechanism that makes the vacuum energy fit the observations.

And now we have an even bigger problem—with the fine structure constant, termed "alpha." Four years ago, using the Keck telescope in Hawaii, John Webb and team observed changes in the absorption spectra of elements such as iron, silicon, chromium, and zinc as light from far distant quasars passed through dust clouds

*Two things fill the mind with
ever new and increasing
wonder and awe, the more
often and the more seriously
reflection concentrates upon
them: the starry heaven
above me and the moral law
within me.*
Immanuel Kant

containing those elements.

The implications of this observation were so enormous that four years have now passed in confirming them. Well-known theoretical physicist, John Barrow, joined the group and now, after checks for systematic error due to the telescope plus measurements from more than 100 quasars, states that "there would need to be an unimaginable sequence of coincidences to get such a consistent error," hence he concludes that the results are pretty much undeniably correct. One more check is now in progress—a repeat with an entirely different type of telescope situated in Chile.

A consequence of the Webb result is a shift in the fine structure constant, known as "alpha," that dictates how photons will be absorbed by electrons in a cloud containing metal atoms. The results from the Webb team make "alpha" slightly smaller than its present value. But since "alpha" is a conglomerate of four other constants ($2\pi e^2/hc^2$), it has wide ranging effects, including the strength of the weak force that affects how radioactive beta decay occurs—and so also how our sun burns.

However all these effects have been previously checked and rechecked many times over and have always been found to be consistent with the current value of "alpha." The vacuum energy effect is particularly important since the cosmological constant, "lambda," is extremely sensitive to changes in "alpha." If "alpha's" value is changed to be consistent with the value from the Webb observations it would make the physicist's theoretical early universe expand in a ridiculously fast way.

As well as bringing problems for certain aspects of the Big Bang picture, a varying "alpha" also brings advantages. One of these concerns the "horizon" problem. Measurement shows that far-flung, opposite sides of the universe are all at much the same temperature. This implies that at

*No coward soul is mine,
No trembler in the world's
storm-troubled sphere:
I see Heaven's glories shine,
And faith shines equal, arming
me from fear.*
Emily Bronte

*But he that dares
not grasp the thorn
should never crave
the rose.*
Ann Bronte

some earlier time these parts were sufficiently close to one another for energy to pass between them. But the models of the early universe do not allow this to occur.

A varying "alpha" could eliminate that difficulty and could also resolve the helium problem in the early universe. When the Universe cooled after the Big Bang, a time came when there was no longer enough energy for the weak nuclear force to transform neutrons and protons into one another. This also set a ceiling on the number of helium nuclei that could be formed—but unless the strength of the weak force has changed, the amount of helium present just after the Big Bang was vastly more than such theories predict. If "alpha" changed so would the relative abundance of helium and hydrogen.

So it is an ill wind that brings nobody no good. The critical test will be the observations currently being made in Chile.

The Urantia Papers on the Will of God?

In the universes God the Father is, in potential, the overcontroller of matter, mind, and spirit. Only by means of his far-flung personality circuit does God deal directly with the personalities of his vast creation of will creatures, but he is contactable (outside of Paradise) only in the presences of his fragmented entities, the will of God abroad in the universes.

Facing the world of personality, God is discovered to be a loving person; facing the spiritual world, he is a personal love; in religious experience he is both. Love identifies the volitional will of God. The goodness of God rests at the bottom of the divine free will-ness—the universal tendency to love, show mercy, manifest patience, and minister forgiveness.

The will of God is divine truth, living love; therefore are the perfecting creations of the evolutionary universes characterized by goodness—nearness to divinity;

Sooner or later we all become aware that all creature growth is proportional to Father identification. We arrive at the understanding that living the will of God is the eternal passport to the endless possibility of infinity itself.

Mortals will sometime realize that success in the quest of the Infinite is directly proportional to the achievement of Fatherlikeness, and that in this universe age the realities of the Father are revealed within the qualities of divinity. And these qualities of divinity are personally appropriated by universe creatures in the experience of living divinely, and to live divinely means actually to live the will of God.

Every mortal who is consciously or unconsciously following the leading of the indwelling Spirit of God is living in accordance with the will of God. Consciousness of this Spirit indwelling is consciousness of God's presence.

The doing of the will of God is nothing more or less than an exhibition of creature willingness to share the inner life with God—with the very God who has made such a creature life of inner meaning-value possible. Sharing is Godlike—divine.

Jesus said: The will of God is the way of God, partnership with the choice of God in the face of any potential alternative. To do the will of God, therefore, is the progressive experience of becoming more and more like God, and God is the source and destiny of all that is good and beautiful and true.



To do the will of God, therefore, is the progressive experience of becoming more and more like God, and God is the source and destiny of all that is good and beautiful and true.

"Fail not to remember that the will of God can be done in any earthly occupation. Some callings are not holy and others secular. All things are sacred in the lives of those who are spirit led—that is, subordinated to truth, ennobled by love, dominated by mercy, and restrained by fairness—justice. The spirit which my Father and I shall send into the world is not only the Spirit of Truth but also the spirit of idealistic beauty.

"When God's will is your law, you are noble slave subjects; but when you believe in this new gospel of divine sonship, my Father's will becomes your will, and you are elevated to the high position of the free children of God, liberated sons of the kingdom." (Jesus)

The kingdom of God in this world is the supreme desire to do the will of God, the unselfish love of man which yields the good fruits of improved ethical and moral conduct.

Though we cannot see God, we can know him. And by daily living the will of the Father in heaven, we can reveal him to our fellow men.

In the coming kingdom, be not mindful of those things which foster your anxiety but rather at all times concern yourselves only with doing the will of the Father who is in heaven. (1525)

The human 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."

All Urantia is Waiting!! Upon Whom? For What?

"All Urantia is waiting for the proclamation of the ennobling message of Michael, unencumbered by the accumulated doctrines and dogmas of nineteen centuries of contact with the religions of evolutionary origin. The hour is striking for presenting to Buddhism, to Christianity, to Hinduism, even to the peoples of all faiths, not the gospel about Jesus, but the living, spiritual reality of the gospel of Jesus." (1041)

"Is it I Lord? Are you really waiting upon such as me? Is that really why I have the Urantia Book. And surely it cannot be true that we Urantia Book readers are expected to carry your message to intolerant, unreceptive, backward people whose minds are closed to any message but their own?"

But what of all those exciting concepts about us book readers? Are we not a very special emergency group chosen to be transferred to some new planet when these 'other people' have made this one uninhabitable? Or are we not a special gene pool chosen to be the survivors of an atomic holocaust to found a new and superior race? And are we not all elite members of the Reserve Corps of Destiny?

And what of all those UFO's specially prepared for us? Was that just a rumor? Is our destiny simply to be here, living a mundane life in your image to demonstrate goodness to people who wont listen? Surely there must be something better for special people like us to do?

Unfortunately or fortunately, depending on your self esteem, the answer is, "Precisely my son! You can find it in the book if you take the trouble to look"

*It is easier to fight
for one's principles
than to live up to
them.*
Alfred Adler

*The bud may have
a bitter taste,
But sweet will be
the flower.*

William Cowper

It will be interesting to watch developments in countries such as in the South Americas among those who have only recently been able to read the book in their own language. Will they make the same mistakes? Or will they be better suited for the task set for us? The book says:

"The living Jesus is the only hope of a possible unification of Christianity. The true church—the Jesus brotherhood—is invisible, spiritual, and is characterized by unity, not necessarily by uniformity."

For goodness sake—how is the Urantia movement ever going to demonstrate unity to a disunited Christian church. Maybe we are an improvement—we only persecute and sue those who do not obey. We do not burn them at the stake. Not yet anyhow. But what if it was legal??

It's time for a mood change: "Jesus never faltered in his faith. He was immune to disappointment and impervious to persecution. He was untouched by apparent failure." So let's be positive and discover our real task.

"Your mission to the world is founded on the fact that I lived a God-revealing life among you; on the truth that you and all other men are the sons of God; and it shall consist in the life which you will live among men—the actual and living experience of loving men and serving them, even as I have loved and served you. Let faith reveal your light to the world; let the revelation of truth open the eyes blinded by tradition; let your loving service effectually destroy the prejudice engendered by ignorance. By so drawing close to your fellow men in understanding sympathy and with unselfish devotion, you will lead them into a saving knowledge of the Father's love." (2043)

The detail of Jesus' God-revealing life is supplied in Part 4. The revelators tell us it is important—in fact there is nothing in this whole

world of more value. "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)

How can we make a start on this mission that has been allocated to us. We cannot take over the Christian churches, we cannot sack their clergy, and telling them where they are wrong will only breed defensiveness and retaliation. There are some timely warnings in the book about past happenings that still apply to day.

One was the failure of the Melchizedek missionaries. "Melchizedek had warned his followers to teach about the one God, the Father and Maker of all, and to preach only the gospel of divine favor through faith alone. But it has often been the error of the teachers of new truth to attempt too much, to attempt to supplant slow evolution by sudden revolution." (1043)

Another concerned the incredible Ikhnaton of Egyptian history: "The weakness of Ikhnaton's doctrine lay in the fact that he proposed such an advanced religion that only the educated Egyptians could fully comprehend his teachings." (1048)

The religion of The Urantia Book is by far the most advanced that has ever been available to us. It is far too advanced for the vast majority of people on Earth. So what can we do? First recognize the Melchizedek missionaries' mistake—they tried for too much, too quickly. Then recognize Ikhnaton's mistake—and keep it simple.

And even the most solid of things and the most real, the best-loved and the well-known, are only hand-shadows on the wall. Empty space and points of light.

Jeanette Winterson

*They say my verse is sad:
no wonder;
Its narrow measure
spans
Tears of eternity, and
sorrow,
Not mine, but man's.*
A.E. Housman

To commence our mission, besides our actual life in the imitation of Jesus that we ourselves **must** lead, two things only are essential. The first is to help people understand that the Spirit of the Father really does indwell us as our helper and guide—and seeks a personal relationship with each individual. The second is that the external expression of our religious belief must come through our service to the eternal (rather than immediate) welfare of our brothers and sisters.

But how? For the first thirty five years of his life, Jesus solved this problem, not through organized group service, or by addressing crowds, but by serving "as he passed by." Once when asked why he had not become a public teacher, he responded that he was on his way to Rome and that was enough for the day. "My tomorrow is wholly in the hands of my Father in heaven," he said. Only after he became aware of his divinity did Jesus embark upon a teaching mission to the multitudes.

If we are to follow Jesus then, for the main part, our service must be quietly inconspicuous, on a personal and individual basis, and wholly in the hands of our indwelling Father-Spirit.

Nor is it essential that we should be seeking to promote The Urantia Book. The simple message that God is our Father, that we are all his children, and that God is to be found within ourselves is all that is really necessary.

There are many verses in the New Testament that tell of God's indwelling. A few are appended.

"Surely you know that you are God's temple, and that God's Spirit dwells within you." (1 Cor. 3: 16)

"If we love one another, God dwells in us and his love is perfected in us." (1 John 4:12)

"But you live not in the flesh but in the spirit if it so be that God dwells in you." (Romans 8: 9)

What can one believe?

According to a National Science Foundation's biennial report (2002), 30% of adult Americans believe that UFO's are the space vehicles of aliens from other planets; 32% believe in lucky numbers; 40% believe that astrology is an established science; 60% believe in extrasensory perception; 70% believe that magnetic therapy is scientific; and 88% accept the validity of alternative medicine.

However, lack of education cannot be blamed for this regrettable state of affairs since those having more advanced education showed no greater ability to discriminate between confirmable knowledge and that without evidential support. For example, 60% of the general adult population believe in extrasensory perception compared to 65% of high school graduates, while those with a belief in alternative medicine ranked 88% for the general population, 89% for high school graduates, and 92% for college graduates.

In an attempt to comprehend the kind of logic used by the general public in forming their opinions, a survey was made on the understanding of the scientific method defined in terms of comprehension of probability, experimental methodology, and hypothesis testing. From this survey it was determined that less than 30% of the general population have any real comprehension of the scientific method and only 53% of those with a reasonably high level of science education (9 or more high school and college science/math courses) passed this comprehension test.

So what is this scientific method? Ideally, it can be subdivided into consecutive phases. The first is to clearly define the nature of the problem to be investigated. Then follows the collecting of

*There may always
be another reality
to make fiction of
the truth we think
we've arrived at.*

Christopher Fry

*Where are no whole
truths; all truths are
half-truths. It is trying
to treat them as whole
truths that plays the
devil.*

A.N.Whitehead

available data that bears upon the problem. Next comes the task of formulating various hypotheses that could offer a solution to the problem. The simplest of these hypotheses is then put to the test with experiments designed to verify its truth. If the hypothesis fails the test, it is either modified and re-tested or some other hypothesis is tested. If and when the experimentalists are satisfied they have a solution, they may publish it in an appropriate journal, preferably one having a panel of expert referees. By this means it is exposed to the criticism of the science community. Final confirmation of a theory only comes when the work is repeated and found correct by independent laboratories.

Probability enters the picture in several ways. Many trials are designed in such a way that the results can be analyzed by rigorous statistical procedures. But often we may be confronted with alternative theories that also provide a reasonable fit to the available evidence.

An example was Newton's law of gravity and Einstein's general relativity. For a number of years there was no experimental evidence that could be used to decide between them. For many people, it remained true that Newton's laws were both simpler and sufficiently accurate for all practical purposes. But for others, the sheer beauty of general relativity won their vote as being closer to the truth.

However, with the passage of time, relativity was able to make many quite astounding even unbelievable predictions such as that gravity slows down clocks or the faster you can propel a javelin the shorter it gets—and these principles could be tested experimentally. One of these tests showed that the rates at which two neutron stars spiral towards one another is given by Einstein's theory with an extraordinary accuracy of better than one part in 10^{14} (or one hundred million million). Today, Einstein's general relativity

has passed all its testing and is accepted as the most accurate theory known to man. But despite that accuracy, it remains incompatible with quantum physics. One or the other will eventually need to be modified.

In summary, the key components of the scientific method are that its concepts are supported by valid, repeatable experimental testing of all the evidence directly pertaining to the theory. No theory can be accepted as being scientifically 'proven' unless it passes this test of validation by properly designed trials that are reproducible by independent workers.

That word 'proven' does require qualification. For properly educated scientists, mathematicians, and logicians, it is accepted that nothing can be absolutely proven and that all theories need a subjective probability estimate of their truth assigned to them, expressible either as a percentage figure or as ranging between 0 and 1.

There are many human problems for which the scientific method is inapplicable. As a help in deciding applicability, the concept of the Black Box may be useful. This arose in world war 1 when a method was required to help solve the problem of how secret enemy equipment actually worked when it was also known that any attempt to open it and peer inside might trigger an explosion.

The only way to discover how such a device might work is to find out what input signals it could accept then to examine how varying these signals changed the output of the device. From the data so accumulated, experts then attempt to provide a mechanism that would explain how the device actually operated.

The answer to this problem is important. It is that for all such devices for which a simplest operating mechanism can be devised, there is an infinity of more complex mechanisms that would

*Reason has moons, but
moons not hers
Lie mirror'd on her sea,
Confounding her
astronomers,
But, O! delighting me.
Ralph Hodgson*

*Reason is itself a
matter of faith. It is an
act of faith to assert
that our thoughts have
any relation to reality
at all.
G.K. Chesterton*

give the same results. Thus there is no single, unique solution to these Black Box problems.

This Black Box concept immediately defines a whole range of interesting and important human problems for which the scientific method has little or no applicability. One of these is, "Does God exist?" There is no way by which a laboratory test or an experiment can be devised that will effectively test this hypothesis and be repeatable in the hands of others—God's existence is a Black Box problem that cannot be opened for experimentation.

Miracles come into a similar category, "Are they possible?" Within the applicability of its methodology, science cannot give a definitive answer. Any answer given can only be a subjective opinion. However, to a statement such as, "The universe came into being between 6 and 10,000 years ago," because of the overwhelming scientific evidence to the contrary, the opinion of all real scientists would have to be, "No." For true science, the statement is simply irrational.

The Black Box concept can also help when considering what cannot be answered with any high degree of certainty. The Big Bang is an example of such a Black Box situation. No matter how ingenious our physicists are in inventing ways and means by which such an event might become a feasible proposition, there is no way of opening the Box and demonstrating what actually did happen. For such problems we can erect hypotheses about how they could have occurred, but we will never be able to state scientifically, that this is how they did happen.

For very many reasons, including that all occasions of experience are unique in some way, the only thing we can be absolutely certain about is that nothing can be verified with total certainty. But relative certainty is possible—and often pragmatically useful.

Occam's Razor applied to Religion.

Briefly stated as a problem solving procedure, the Occam's razor principle is to first eliminate all unnecessary hypotheses, concepts, data, etc, and choose the simplest among the remaining hypotheses for further exploration.

So as to lessen our possible confusion concerning the foundation of our religious beliefs, many may find it useful to utilize the Occam's razor principle to help to establish a minimal system of essential basic axioms for a belief system.

In considering the beginning of all things we have only two basic propositions, one that thought of some kind was involved, or "all that is" arose spontaneously from nothingness. Choosing this latter hypothesis would automatically generate other difficult problems. For example, we are thinking, conscious beings. How did those properties arise from nothingness?

However, if we allow thought to be involved in the generation of "all that is," we have a built-in explanation for our own thinking and consciousness. And so, following the Occam's razor principles we choose the simpler of the two. One way of stating our choice is:

God is the one self-caused fact existent in the whole of reality, hence must be the source and substance of all that is.

Obviously if this God is the source of all that is, then God preceded all that is, including time. That conclusion gives us an escape hatch from all those now inapplicable time-related questions like "Who made God?" For before there was time, there is only the infinite, eternal "now"—and that question is irrelevant.

The way to get things done is not to mind who gets the credit of doing them.

Benjamin Jowett

In the mortal state nothing can be absolutely proved, both science and religion are predicated on assumptions.

(1139)

In order to keep our theology simple we have need of one more axiom, and propose this:

"God is perfect goodness."

Given God's perfect goodness, the next most important question every individual must ask is, "what does God require of me?" And the simplest possible answer is that God would want me to be like him—good. Why? Well, if God did not want that of me, then I could make life miserable for others. Hence there would have to be another God whose goodness is superior to a God who does not require that I should aspire to being good.

If I have the choice of wanting to be like God or not to be like him, then obviously I have free will. What would a world be like in which all us were created perfectly good—and could be nothing else but perfectly good? Unfortunately the answer to that question is that if we had no free will to choose goodness, we would be automata, pre-programmed to respond in fixed ways with no chance of doing otherwise.

A God who loves us—as we would expect from one who is perfectly good—must grant us free will, else there must be a more perfect God who would do so.

To complete our simplest of all theologies we have a couple of nagging loose ends that need answers. One—is there life after death? Surely a God who is perfectly good must have had a purpose for creating earthly children capable of self-awareness, consciousness, abstract thought, spontaneous worship, etc. And that purpose must provide for life beyond physical death. For if not, since our axiomatic God is perfect goodness, there would be a more perfect God who would so do.

Another loose end needing repairs in order to construct our simplest theology—what would God require from us in order for us to earn the continuation of life beyond the grave? Well,

certainly the desire to eventually attain God-like goodness. Possibly nothing else.

And our final loose end—where do we find God? For that our simplest answer must be that was, is, and ever will be. He is the God who is absolute goodness, a God who requires of his created beings only that they dedicate themselves to the pursuit of his divine goodness. The purpose? That ultimately they may receive God's gift of eternal life whereby they may seek to complete their task and finally to bask in his Presence.

And because we know that our God is perfectly good, we also know that the eternal life that is on offer is one we will eternally relish.

Become more God-like? How?

The following suggestion comes from Islamic Sufi literature in which it is known by the term, "our God-ideal." It states: "The reality of God is beyond human comprehension. It is also a mystery to our thinking. However, it remains factual that to develop our relationship with God,

we must have some kind imagery, some kind of mind-picture of God, who he is and what he is.

"One such image is the 'God-ideal'—which is the most uplifting, most inspiring picture of God that we can conjure up in our minds that accords with our current understanding of God and his creation.

"Of course this 'God-ideal' is not the reality of God, but merely the product of human imagining. It is different for each individual—an image that will evolve and grow, bringing us nearer to God as our understanding evolves and grows."

While it is a valuable concept to help each individual evolve and grow spiritually, for those who indulge in some appropriate group activity, this Sufi ideal may have additional potential. For example, if group members wrote down and read out their own concept of an "ideal God," and this same group activity was repeated at appropriate intervals, each member would gain some measure of their own growth in understanding of God, and at the same time receive the stimulus of interaction with other like-minded individuals.

It may be worth a try?

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