

PROGRESSIST

Dedicated to Progressive Mortals Everywhere
From Mark Kurtz, Goshen, Indiana; USA

"This magnificent and universal injunction to strive for the attainment of the perfection of divinity is the first duty, and should be the highest ambition, of all the struggling creature creation of the God of perfection. This possibility of the attainment of divine perfection is the final and certain destiny of all man's eternal spiritual **progress**." *The Urantia Book, (22:1)*

April 2009

Number. 3; Vol. 2, No. 1

Progress = Movement, Change

Who among us has given careful thought about *content* of beliefs and the meanings thereof? The details formulate our core of convictions. Have we taken from the "silver platter" or have we meditated or pondered the meanings and worth of these religious details we profess to embrace? Heady questions for people riding an easy train in life. Are we able to truthfully conclude that people never chose to take the easy way out of life's persistent questions, those philosophic or theological predicaments?

Paper 155 beginning on page 1725 narrates the significant difficulties of Jesus' early evangelists as they attempted to teach the people of Chorazin and Caesarea-Philippi. This follows Paper 154 where is narrated a profound break with the religious authorities and the weak of heart. Jesus and the twelve Apostles, plus a few tried and true believing evangelists were chased out of the region. Jesus did not want a clash with the Temple authorities at that time, so they fled.

As they broke for lunch on their way to Phoenicia, Thomas, an intelligent and deep thinking man, asked these questions: ***Master, I should really like to know just what is wrong with the religion of our enemies at Jerusalem. What is the real difference between their religion and ours? Why is it we are at such diversity of belief when we all profess to serve the same God?*** (1728:2)

There followed one of the most remarkable addresses which his apostles ever listened to throughout all the years of association with him. The reader is invited to carefully listen to a restatement of the Master's two discourses this day on June 9, AD 29, found in Paper 155, Fleeing Through Northern Galilee, pages 1728-1733.

These two sermons speak of bravery and courage, two very necessary characteristics for spiritual growth ennobled many times in *The Urantia Book*. The importance of personal, living human experience with the Father is *significantly emphasized* throughout.

In the above mentioned book section, find these modern, restated words of Jesus, ***And for a long time there will live on earth those timid, fearful, and hesitant individuals who will prefer thus to secure their religious consolations, even***

though, in so casting their lot with the religions of authority, they compromise the sovereignty of personality, debase the dignity of self-respect, and utterly surrender the right to participate in that most thrilling and inspiring of all possible human experiences: the personal quest for truth, the exhilaration of facing the perils of intellectual discovery, the determination to explore the realities of personal religious experience, the supreme satisfaction of experiencing the personal triumph of the actual realization of the victory of spiritual faith over intellectual doubt as it is honestly won in the supreme adventure of all human existence--man seeking God, for himself and as himself, and finding him. (1729:5) The Master repeatedly asked his followers to follow the spiritual, living way rather than stagnant understandings of the past, those ways of tradition that do not satisfy the soul.

Reading this section arrests our attention and helps us see significant reasons to pause and think, to reflect meaningfully and honestly on our personal motives for why we adopt religion details. Jesus gives grand example of his personal religion----relating directly and intimately with the Father and doing so with the best of courage and bravery.

Note the following comments of Rick Warren as he poetically describes his insights and understanding of mortal progress through a magnificent Cosmos of adventure and spiritual growth.

Truth, Beauty, Goodness and You

By Rick Warren, Fort Worth, Texas

Divinity is creature comprehensible as truth, beauty, and goodness... (3:4)

You want to know God? Then understand this truth-beauty-goodness trio. The authors say this many ways, indeed there are over 80 paragraphs wherein these three words are associated in the revelation. If you truly want to know and be like God, then you will delve into his being for God is living value, perfection personified. As you discover and integrate Father's truth, beauty and goodness you become these living values. They act in and through you. Genuine

value is the substance of the Spirit realm wherein personality and divine affection interact to create the divine family of personalities, including you.

The whole revelation has over three thousand sentences with the words truth, beauty, goodness or one of their relatives. About two thirds concern truth. Why does truth have the greater role of the three in the text? And how best to approach comprehension of this primeval three-fold concept that defines God's original, infinite, eternal and personal values for time-bound, space-stuck humans?

Father God wants to give you the universe as a gift, wrapped in the finest cloth imaginable. It has living truth, boundless beauty and eternal goodness at its center-- Father and the Paradise home. You will get there, but first you have to pass a quick test on this whirling soul nursery. It is a test to see if you will develop the values required for the Paradise challenge. The material universe is strewn with floating islands in space whereon God's children are born, learn and progress to the next worlds. They all circle Paradise and they all, sooner or later, come to know Father's truth, beauty and goodness.

Please don't let the universe-as-a-gift metaphor mislead you, because it is going to be tough, all the way to Paradise. It will demand the full measure of you in every manner imaginable, and more. But you wouldn't have it any other way. If attaining absolute perfection and Paradise were simple and easy, the challenge would not be appealing, glorious, admirable or worthy of pursuit.

To finite man truth, beauty, and goodness embrace the full revelation of divinity reality... (648:2)

What a grand adventure you are on! You are born on this tiny blob of cooling star matter on the fringe of one remote galaxy spinning through space with the rest of the stellar aggregations. On it you will begin a new path to God, one never tread before or after you. And you do all this by living a life loyal to Father's grand scheme, one experience at a time. That is your reality.

God requires of you eventual perfection in truth, beauty and goodness. But our loving Father allows ample time and provides wise teachers to help you learn and use each in perfection as the Paradise journey unfolds. Some think the journey home could take twenty billion Urantia years! Others speculate there is a time condensation as one approaches Paradise, therefore is the time factor incalculable. Whichever it is, fix your attitude now, put your sights on Paradise, your journey has begun. One step, then another, then Paradise! Beyond Paradise lies an even grander scheme, in which you will also have a role. See where perfection leads?

To become perfect in all ways is much more than planet-born creatures can imagine at first. But it is attainable in time and through exertion of freewill

choice in seeking your divine leading. If you hold fast to the goal, maintain faith and trust in the Father of everything, your true needs will be met at each decision point. For the cosmos is one vast school where God's creative power and desire to bestow freewill manifests in YOU! But God provides you teachers, just as God provided a world for you to take origin, a life of learning, and a way to escape permanent death. Goodness is the fuel that propels all souls homeward, truth is the light that shows the way, and beauty ever inspires creativity of being and acting.

You are one soul, one pilgrim wandering an infinite Universe in the great quest for perfect love and divine understanding. You travel alongside trillions and trillions of siblings also seeking the center of all things and beings, where the great Father holds a place for everyone who succeeds in this quest. The children born of Paradise parents are born divine, and they pour out into space/time to greet us. They show us the way to Father's house and prepare us to be perfect in his sight. And we want to do all this because to know and love God is to succumb to his all encompassing love, charm, will and wisdom.

On the myriad soul nurseries of all the galaxies swinging through black space, the inhabitants capable of reflection must surely ask of themselves and their co-inhabitants: What is this life and who created it? Revealed truth, both personal and epochal, shows the true light in the form of a personal God, a loving Father of all. Our God is a creator and provider of the universal purpose, as well as love in the manifold forms of truth, goodness and beauty.

God designed the universe with you in mind as co-creator, God needs your experience. Father delegates free will to its farthest stretch when granting it to terrestrial creatures like you. All that is expected in return is that you sometime become a member, perfect in all ways, of the never ending, ever expanding cosmic family. And that you assist in the most stupendous of all projects: building this innumerable family of perfect children across time and space, even to supreme, ultimate and absolute limits.

The sincere pursuit of goodness, beauty, and truth leads to God. (2078:3)

Truth, beauty and goodness come from a great and mysterious Being-over-all, the one called God. But God is one who 'gives and craves affection'. Father personally and touchingly loves even the very least of his God-knowing progeny---you. How great is a Father who gives this personal love and still operates the lathes of the heavens?!

For a moment, imagine yourself on Paradise where you are finally to be received by our Father into eternity, on the day you meet God. Father notes where you originated as you gaze into his face, awe and love struck. You reflect on your path to God on Paradise from Urantia. You see the ghosts of the scaffolding of tremendous learning and teaching behind you. You

look forward to service in eternity tirelessly helping Father with many a grand and stupendous project. And then you return to the moment of moments in your never-ending career. It is upon you, that Spirit finality you reached by living truth, doing good and creating beauty all the way Home. All of which culminates in your graduation from time into eternity. Congratulations Agondonter.

Every self conscious creature wants to know the truth of Father God at some point, and some do succeed, even on a world like ours where the signposts have been rearranged by disloyal ones. Real revelation says to know God one has to know and be living truth, goodness and beauty. God is all three alive and in all their glory. The best way to understand others is to understand what motivates them. Father's motivation, attitude and goal for you are truth, goodness and beauty.

Perfect love is the Father's universal attitude toward you while beauty is the inevitable expression of both truth and goodness. Apparently God's goodness is primal, omnipresent and ever expanding in the lives of his trillions of children scattered across the universe expanse. Goodness germinates, takes root and flowers in the wake of the spread of Father's good seed. God populates the Universe with a personal love---truth, goodness and beauty actualized. Benevolence and mercy are Father's nature and attitude in dealing with your ignorance and short-comings. The road to Paradise is paved with good intentions, until perfection of intentions and actions are attained by road's end

What diverse expressions truth, beauty and goodness must take in such a vast universe as we inhabit! Humankind is quickly shedding fear and awakening to the facts of science. At the same time, humans more than ever suspect the truth of the existence of a great God, for no creation such as yourself and the cosmos could come from a random and purposeless universe.

Life is personal in that it has material, intellectual/emotional and spiritual dimensions derived from a personal God. At the center of all beings and things is the spirit Person of God, leading the way. And God must be a person, for is the creator of personality not a person? Indeed, God is the First Person. But what is God like?

The world's accumulations of revelation and its relentless scientific searching are bringing global civilization together for a long-needed debate on the nature of Truth, with a capital T. Only inner religious experience can confirm the existence of God, therefore, among religionists, there can be but one debate. What is God's Truth? If God is absolute Truth, then all other truth is related to God. Father God is the standard of Truth in the Universe of universes. [To those who have not encountered God, do not lose hope; only seek with absolute sincerity and you will have your answers.]

On any level of existence God cannot exceed the conceptual capacity of the beings who live on such a level. Mortal man must, through the recognition of truth, the appreciation of beauty, and the worship of goodness, evolve the recognition of a God of love and then progress through ascending deity levels to the comprehension of the Supreme. Deity, having been thus grasped as unified in power, can then be personalized in spirit to creature understanding and attainment.... (p641:5)

(Ed: Rick is a long time reader of *The Urantia Book*; he is not the famous pastor and author of the same name.) Copyright 2009 by Richard E. Warren.

Gems From Jesus

My Children, if there exists a true and living connection between the child and the Father, the child is certain to progress continuously toward the Father's ideals. True, the child may at first make slow progress, but the progress is none the less sure. The important thing is not the rapidity of your progress, but rather its certainty. Your actual achievement is not so important as the fact that the direction of progress is Godward. What you are becoming day by day is of infinitely more importance than what you are today. (1653:1)

In entering Sidon, Jesus and his associates passed over a bridge, the first one many of them had ever seen. As they walked over this bridge, Jesus, among other things, said: "This world is only a bridge; you may pass over it, but you should not think to build a dwelling place upon it". (1735:5)

I am the living bridge from one world to another. (1965:18)

More From the Authors On Progress

Mechanical inventions and the dissemination of knowledge are modifying civilization; certain economic adjustments and social changes are imperative if cultural disaster is to be avoided. This new and oncoming social order will not settle down complacently for a millennium. The human race must become reconciled to a procession of changes, adjustments, and readjustments. Mankind is on the march toward a new and unrevealed planetary destiny. (1086:4)

Mortals in all stages of spirituality and on all worlds may find in the personal life of Jesus that which will strengthen and inspire them as they progress from the lowest spirit levels up to the highest divine values, from the beginning to the end of all personal religious experience. (2092:2)

Be not discouraged; human evolution is still in progress, and the revelation of God to the world, in and through Jesus, shall not fail. (2097:1)

Pressure From Above

Consider the long history of mankind and his earthly experiences. The reader is invited to reflect on personal knowledge about human and environmental changes including biological, natural, religious, and geographical with changes in the land and oceans over long periods.

What mankind perceives of his environment and his place in a huge Creation, plus his concept of a Supreme Being, is a major factor in his beliefs and behavior. We have seen progress in relating to persons as government changed from tribal dictatorships of chiefs and shamans and moved to group decision and on to representative government. There are thousands of examples of changes since this old sphere began rotating on its axis.

Did man initiate changes by and through his inherent powers? *The Urantia Book* authors tell us man cannot live by bread alone and has needed help from “above” and that this help has been present since the beginning.

We continue to need help. They tell us man cannot perceive of his Creator without revelation and that his religion would always be backward and evolutionary without revelatory guidance. Consider the word “transformation” and its meaning in the following excerpt:

The brotherhood of man is, after all, predicated on the recognition of the fatherhood of God. The quickest way to realize the brotherhood of man on Urantia is to effect the spiritual transformation of present-day humanity. The only technique for accelerating the natural trend of social evolution is that of applying spiritual pressure from above, thus augmenting moral insight while enhancing the soul capacity of every mortal to understand and love every other mortal. Mutual understanding and fraternal love are transcendent civilizers and mighty factors in the world-wide realization of the brotherhood of man. (598:2)

Our planetary history includes many varying doctrine within many religions on Urantia. What sort of pressure from above does man need to sort through these authority guides for relating to God through religion? The first two sentences of the Forward offer huge clues for why the book was offered to Urantians. We have argued, debated, discussed and even threaten and killed one another because of our concepts from religion. The right pressure through kind and gentle revelation is needed and appreciated by those who desire a greater understanding and a meaningful, joyful relationship with the One First Source and Center of all life, our Father God as he is so magnificently described in *The Urantia Book*. The book is kind and significant pressure we could use in our daily lives. It is a friendly resource, indeed.

Why Progressist?

Again, for the benefit of newer readers, Progressist is issued to help new readers or persons who have heard of the book, but have not yet decided to discover its teachings, to think about and decide to investigate this new phenomenon containing Cosmic and spiritual values. We know of no event in which human beings perceived of or conceived such a book or at any time requested such a volume.

So then, what is the book?

Pages 1006 and 1007, plus other parts that you will discover, significantly address this question and will likely inspire many more questions. That’s good!

The Progressist publisher believes the book to be a profound epochal and significant addition to human development and spiritual growth and therefore offers this media for gentle persuasion. No other resource contains such wide ranging commentary of Cosmic and divine planning revelation, which orients mortal consideration for the afterlife as it relates to God. Much more could be said; rather however, personal discovery is preferred.

No one is expected to become a classic philosopher to read or understand all the teachings. Jesus personally related to each individual at their level of understanding. His kindness and friendship spoke volumes to people who recognized his goodness and who wanted to know him better. Wanting to know more of goodness and truth is a major factor for personal growth in relating to God. Each person is indwelt by an actual Spirit Fragment from the Father and this is a significant source for impelling curious ones to greater discoveries. The UB authors know of this fragment Helper and have given us a great volume to absorb. We are not helpless.

Each person’s experience is unique. No person is granted approval from God to impose religion or models of relating to God. Human history is full of many such attempts. Each reader has a divine right to an ever-widening and experience in relating to God without limits imposed by others. Enjoy reading!

A periodic Progressist schedule is not planned, but rather a more relaxed manner is desired. Please inform the publisher if you would prefer not receive Progressist.

All quotations from *The Urantia Book* are by permission and policy of the publisher, Urantia Foundation, 533 West Diversey Parkway, Chicago, IL 60614. Quotations are referenced with page number and paragraph as in the following examples: (22:1), (945:7-946:0).

Subscription requests and article submissions for publication should be issued to Progressist at uranbkmichian@bnin.net. The editor reserves discretion for publication. The maximum article length is 2,000 words. Submitted material remains the expressed opinion of the author and not of Urantia Foundation or the Progressist publisher.