

CHAPTER TWENTY

Bedell's Response

Following is the text of Clyde Bedell's response to Harold Sherman's charges in Pipeline To God. The underlines and capitalizations are those of Bedell. I show commentary in footnotes. Bedell's title of this response is:

A RESPONSE TO A THINLY DISGUISED ATTACK ON THE URANTIA BOOK

My name is Clyde Bedell. I have appointed myself to respond to a chapter in a low-priced paperback book that claims to tell the truth in a thinly disguised attack on the URANTIA Book.

In this discussion I speak for myself alone, I am not speaking for the URANTIA Foundation. They can respond to the Author as they see fit. I am responding as I feel under deep personal compulsion to respond, and I speak for myself alone. Embedding me in his fictions, the Author has made me an unwilling and unwitting supporter of his insupportable tale.

The "chapter" is an appalling mass of fiction, fleshed over a fragile skeleton of misshapen fact. You shall see ample evidence that this statement is accurate.

Throughout the paper I shall refer to the writer of that sorry chapter as "the Author."

My qualification for writing of the URANTIA Book and of the Forum that the Author pretends to know and take apart:

I joined Dr. Wm. S. Sadler's Sunday afternoon Forum in Chicago in September of 1924, and one week later had permission to bring along also the young woman I married in 1926. We have constantly been Forum members and/or Urantians and in close touch with Urantians and the Urantia movement for 52 years, ever since 1924!

To understand the Author's hostile attitude, you must first understand the background against which he worked out, and failed in, his own limited URANTIA experience.

When the Author came to Dr. Sadler and the Forum with a good introduction¹ he had been more than 20 years a psychic, a sensitive — experimenting, investigating, writing, earning money in things occult and psychic. He did not, however, reveal much, if any, of this to his new Forum acquaintances (1942).

He soon learned the Urantia Book denies that the spirits of the deceased return here after death. He learned that Dr. Sadler was not a psychic or sensitive, and indeed, was an authority on the frauds and the fakery practiced by many so-called mediums.

Either the Author (1) had to find a way to modify the URANTIA text (an impossibility) in order to liberalize its views on matters psychic; or (2) he had to renounce his psychic past and embrace the URANTIA beliefs; or (3) he had to part with the Urantia Forum and his Urantia associates as soon as he got all he could from them.

He tried the first alternative by inciting the interest of a group of eight or ten of the more aggressive males in the Forum to seek more participation with Dr. Sadler in determining the character of organizations projected to ultimately (1) protect the Urantia text and (2) propagate the Urantia message. (His ultimate aims were not then obvious.)

I wrote the four page letter (for the group) which was what the Author in his insupportable attack calls a petition and the “rebellion.”

The Forum at large was never in on it or phoned about it or asked to sign it. Only a small group and their wives knew of and signed the letter. The letter carried great praise and warm paragraphs of friendship for the Doctor. The only paragraphs of urgency or of preemptory character were inserted at the Author’s insistence. I still have a copy of that letter.

I do not remember withdrawing my name from this letter, but had the Doctor asked it, I would have done so gladly for I trusted him implicitly. So did the others involved. There was plenty of time for changes in the projected Foundation Charter. I did not change the Doctor’s mind about organization nor he mine. But the matter was settled through faith and love, not fear and threats. You will hear more of this later, but already note please, the Author writes fiction, not fact.

WHEN IT BECAME obvious the Author could not gain any dominance by changing the organization to get control of the papers, he still could have embraced the truth of the URANTIA Book and dropped the will-o’-the-wisp of his psychic interests — his second alternative.

This economic sacrifice of the moment he could not, or would not, make. That left him his third alternative: he could continue to learn all he could profitably use from the Great Book and then depart. His departure led in due time to his effort to discredit the Great Book.

Whether this was in his plan early, or came about as he realized the threat to his teachings inherent in the spread of the URANTIA Book, we cannot know. But he has attempted to discredit the URANTIA Book and the good man through whose leadership we have all had the great good fortune of possessing it.

The Author elected to remain a psychic. And in his paperback in which he attacks the URANTIA Book and the great old Doctor, he appeals to all readers for letters about their “psychic and spiritual experiences.” He writes of receiving “thousands” of such letters. Thus, he keeps his paperback journalistic pot of hash and re-hash boiling.

The Author would be singularly out-of-place as a Urantian it turns out, for URANTIANS eschew the Author’s beliefs in “possession,” “tramp spirits,” and “the Ouija Board as a means of making one’s mind receptive to attunement with the so-called dead.”² Nor do URANTIANS care for beliefs that call forth repeated warnings against “outside spirit influences,” “self-delusion,” and “self-induced hallucinations,” “dangerous channels,” and “all manner of influences of a discarnate nature.”³

THIS BRIEF response to the Author’s irresponsible chapter is no place for lengthy narration of the story of the Sadler Forum, its long history, its remarkably faithful members, its “casual” and its “loosehanging” characteristics, despite the tremendous gravity and importance of the Papers it was receiving and hearing read, week after week, for years.

But it must be emphasized that the Forum members all tended to become dedicated, devout believers in the mighty Christian Revelation that was unfolding before them — except the Author. He, apparently, had not the spiritual fortitude to give up his stake in spiritualism, matters occult and psychics, mediums, seances, et cetera — which were important to him economically. But none of us among whom he circulated knew that his choice was made, or being made, in favor of a psychic past (which we little suspected) over the URANTIA Revelation and its future.

THE URANTIA BOOK is a Christian Book from first to last⁴ — a Book of faith and love. It makes very clear where we go from here, and even on unto Paradise itself, and eternity. Urantians increasingly shed all fear of life and death — and know there is no reincarnation on this earth. Our Jesusonian Christian beliefs run so counter to many of the things the Author apparently excludes he could not announce that he was forced to his third alternative.

It should clarify matters somewhat, if we pause here to emphasize a crucial distinction between the Author and all other Forum members. The Author came, as stated above, with a good reputation and was accepted as any other new Forum member might be; as one who had heard enough of the URANTIA Revelation from friends and then in private interview with Dr. Sadler, to JOIN the FORUM because of a deep interest in the Revelation for itself. That is, in the expectation of religious and philosophical personal growth and for the gripping interest the papers held for us.

The Author gave none of us reason to believe he had joined for different reasons. However, his paperback, 30 years later, inadvertently proves that he was not a normal member but an “investigator,” a secret snooper — unknown to the rest of us — on an “assignment” in furtherance of his psychic explorations.

This admission surfaces when the Author writes two things: (1) “It would have been much more lucrative (Hollywood) than the gamble of this new creative assignment”; and (2) “We were totally unprepared for ... a period that would test our mental and physical endurance to the utmost.”

Thus, the Forum members, without knowing it, embraced as one of themselves, a snooper disguised as a normal, forthright member. This man, this Author, an admitted psychic and psychic investigator, was on “assignment.”

His machinations, his provocations of the Doctor, his sorties into “how, why, and what,” his questioning of the good faith of the Doctor were part — we now learn — of a self-assignment in continuation of his old practices and beliefs.

Now ponder the second quote. We all found the Forum a beautiful inspiration! I believe it is fair to say Forum members would all look back on their prolonged Forum period as one of the most engaging, fascinating, friendly, relaxing, enlightening periods of their lives. How can cosmology, philosophy, religion, in the most Christian frameworks as presented by brilliant, friendly, Celestial Beings, be anything but inspiring and peace-producing, for the internal man? But the Author, ONLY THE AUTHOR, (and his wife, he says), found their Forum experience a “period that tested their mental and physical endurance to the utmost.” How strange!

But then I suppose anyone living a pretense, travelling “under false color,” gets up-tight. The assignment wasn’t turning out favorably for the Author’s historical beliefs. Yet it was so fascinating as to hold him, he claims, for years. He was torn in two directions! At last he capitulated and returned to his old “haunts.” But he was mentally and physically exhausted!

ALL OTHER Forum members drew satisfying sustenance and spiritual gratification from the Papers.

I believe you need to fully understand this distinction and motivation or you cannot possibly evaluate the fabrications, misstatements, and fictions packed by the Author into a single chapter of 40 small pages.

I am going to enumerate some of these, without taking the time to fully elaborate the answers.

NO TWO PEOPLE can possibly recall or relate numerous incidents and experiences over a long period of years, some long past, precisely alike, let alone four, five, or six people. But what I write of these matters is the truth as accurately as I can recall it and set it down. And I have corroborated much of all I say by lengthy phone conversations with half-a-dozen old-timers who remember the major facts, and most of the minor ones, as I do. They can and will testify to my truth and the Author’s falsity. I am not a psychic and do not dredge up from my subconscious as TRUTH, IMAGININGS THAT REPRESENT MY DESIRES — the things I wish were true.

(1) NOW IF YOU wished to report honestly to an audience of unaware readers about a new Revelation and how it has fared in the world, to whom would you go for information? What people would you contact?

Suppose you wanted to truthfully report what the New URANTIA Revelation had achieved, what it is achieving, how it is being supported, how it is growing, the loyalty of old-time Forum members, how well the Book is selling in book stores, how URANTIA Societies and Study Groups are thriving, whether there has been gradual steady growth in readers, whether the longest-time readers still love and cherish the Book, and so on, to whom would you go for information? There is no question about it!

You would go to those who know the Book and its history and its current situation best. For instance, the Author mentions me (Floyd Winters:) several times in his paperback “story,” and he has examined at some length my CONCORDEX of the URANTIA Book. My name and address are in the CONCORDEX which is available in a great many book stores. He could easily have reached me, for whom he says in print he “has the deepest admiration.” (Did he believe such a compliment would buy my silence if I read his sorry critique?) I could have put him in touch with Urantia field representatives who know a great deal about the Urantia movement. (The one nearest me can list over 100 active Study Groups in our area.) I could have given him names, addresses, phone numbers of ten or more old-time Forum members to talk to, and any number of younger readers.

But he didn’t come to me or to anyone who knows ANY of the URANTIA story from continuous experience through the long years, or even the last decade. Remember, the Author wanted to discredit the URANTIA Revelation. His chapter conclusively proves he had no desire to report to you accurately. He had renounced the Revelation in order to continue his profitable psychic practices and writings. Now, years later, he tries to protect his livelihood by discrediting the URANTIA Revelation.

I call your attention to the disturbing truth that the Author constructs almost his entire chapter on (1) notes he and his wife hastily made of conversations on subjects about which they had sworn secrecy — conversations they heard as guests in the private home of a great deceased man who trusted them, (2) the testimony or stories of Forumites deceased, who cannot deny what the Author says, and (3) the testimony of two unique opponents of the Urantia Foundation: two of the only three people in the world the Foundation has found it necessary to sue because of copyright violations!

The secrecy was necessary to prevent “enemies of religion,” or the curious, from getting in the way of the serious responsibility of the Forum. All of us were conscious of the fact that the Revelation which was Christ Jesus⁵ was fought and endangered while He was still alive.

All of the Author’s effort is the more contemptible, in my opinion, because he knows that his typical reader will never have any way of hearing or seeing what I am now writing — the TRUTH.

(2) The Author states in caps that “for FIVE CONTINUOUS YEARS” (after the tense Sunday when he was publicly repulsed in the Forum meeting you will hear about), “we attended every Sunday Forum meeting without exception.”

The five old-timers I have talked to have no recollection of the Author’s attending the Forum at all after that Sunday, although he may have come for a short time. But they all were astonished at his claim of FIVE YEARS ATTENDANCE thereafter⁶.

If he had attended Forum meetings after the “confrontation,” it was of so little significance that no one noticed it or remembers it. This is a far cry from the tension he describes in his book.

(3) The Author says a “petition” to the Doctor (that is the “rebellion” of which he writes) was “based on some of the points I (the Author) had raised in my letter to the Doctor.”

That is not true. I wrote the letter which the Author calls a “petition,” and as mentioned above, I still have a copy. It had to do ONLY with projected organizations that would protect the Book’s copyright, when it would be published, and its distribution⁷.

It positively was not based on the points the Author raised in his registered letter quoted in his chapter regarding the URANTIA Book’s content: It did not even mention “psychic phenomena,” “the Doctor and higher intelligences,” “possible text alterations,” et cetera.

The letter written to the Doctor, which the Author calls a petition, bears no resemblance whatever to the registered letter of the Author, and the two mention NO SUBJECTS in common. The letters are so different in content that the misrepresentations must be deliberate⁸.

(4) While the Author has commercial motives unconcealed in all his writing — which apparently led to his decision to try to gain influence if not domination in the publication of the URANTIA Book, you should know that no one connected with the Forum, neither Dr. Sadler nor his family, nor any Urantians to my knowledge, have ever made any profit from the URANTIA Book or the URANTIA movement. (That includes my Concordex.)

Forum members gave, contributed, the money that set the 2,100 page URANTIA Book in type and paid for the original expensive copper printing plates. Members then subscribed for enough Books to insure success for the first printing. Even today, the frugal Foundation is largely supported by Urantian contributors, so the Book can continue to be sold at a price that makes it one of the greatest book bargains on earth. Implications to the contrary by the Author are shameless and without foundation.

(5) A summer recess followed the minuscule Author’s “rebellion.” At the first fall session the Author says he rose and accused the Doctor of making false charges against him and he proposed to answer them. He tells dramatically how two husky brothers seized him and asked if they should “throw him out.” He talks of “shouting,” and uproar. He says the Doctor’s “husky son entered the scene threatening violence.”

This is bald outright fiction, or “self-delusion” perhaps? We must not forget that he himself, a psychic, is subject to the psychic’s delusions.

I had written the letter that had indirectly, at least, led up to this denouncement. The Doctor was my dear friend. (By this time, perhaps, most of us involved had decided the Author’s motives were selfish.) Most of the Forum by now knew of the letter which had been signed by perhaps twelve or fifteen couples. (Only a few more than the small original group had been asked to sign it.⁹)

The Doctor was hurt by the letter. I regretted that¹⁰.

The room was tense, but there was no shouting, no uproar. We had made amends to the Doctor. The matter was closed¹¹.

When the Author startled the Forum meeting with his rude personal challenge to the Doctor, I, and I alone, walked to the front of the room, grasped the Author’s left arm firmly with both my hands and said in a voice almost everyone heard: “I believe you are welcome to remain in the Forum,” and exerting the necessary pressure, I ushered him back to his seat. He said no more¹².

Not one other person touched the Author. The Doctor’s son was standing in a wide doorway at the left rear of the room, concerned and silent, never moving. I am told this anew this week by a woman who sat six or eight feet from him and saw it all, including my lone handling of the Author. The several old-timers I have phoned since reading the Author’s fictionized chapter relate the story substantially as I tell it here, burned into my memory. Not one recalls the incidents as the Author fabricated them, dredged up perhaps from his subconscious in response to what he wished were true!

(6) The Author says the Doctor’s secretary suggested he write a paper on psychic phenomena and that the Doctor would submit it to the Revelators. If they accepted it for inclusion in the URANTIA Book, it would be included.

The Author says “this clearly revealed that humanly written insertions had been put in the manuscript.”

It reveals nothing of the kind. It simply reveals the Author’s reasoning is faulty or he is willing to practice rhetorical sleight of hand to mislead you. The secretary, a highly intelligent woman, knowing the sacred inviolability of the URANTIA text knew this was a certain way to get rid of the Author’s suggestion without argument.¹³

(7) The Author says the URANTIA Book added a “new life of Jesus, tying it in with the Christian religion . . .” after the Revelation was declared finished in 1934. This fiction, again, is given the lie by the Great Book in black and white.

(a) The URANTIA Book did not add a “new life of Jesus.” The last 700 pages, Part IV — the Life of Jesus — is the culminating part of the book for which the first 1,400 pages are the groundwork. The Life was expected¹⁴.

(b) Part III is clearly dated in the Book as finished in 1935 (p. 1,319).

(c) The Life of Jesus was not “tied into the Christian religion.” It originated the Christian religion, which was soon modified and corrupted after Jesus’s death, all of which you will understand from the URANTIA Book.

(8) The Author says the “JESUS Papers” were added “as an afterthought and in a book which had made no mention of Jesus as such.” Wrong again! To deceive? Or just to plain ignorance of the URANTIA Book¹⁵.

Page 1866 — Mistake not! there is in the teachings of Jesus an eternal nature which will not permit them forever to remain unfruitful in the hearts of thinking men. The kingdom as Jesus conceived it has to a large extent failed on earth; for the time being, an outward church has taken its place; but you should comprehend that this church is only the larval stage of the thwarted spiritual kingdom, which will carry it through this material age and over into a more spiritual dispensation where the Master’s teachings may enjoy a fuller opportunity for development. Thus does the so-called Christian church be-

come the cocoon in which the kingdom of Jesus' concept now slumbers. The kingdom of the divine brotherhood is still alive and will eventually and certainly come forth from this long submergence, just as surely as the butterfly eventually emerges as the beautiful unfolding of its less attractive creature of metamorphic development.

The URANTIA Book is a Christian document from first to last. The first 1,400 pages lead up to the life of Jesus in the last 700, logically planned that way. Christ Michael, one of the Creator Sons of the son of the Trinity, created our Local Universe — including 10,000,000 inhabited planets¹⁶.

He was not known as Jesus until he sojourned a lifetime on this planet, one of the seven self-bestowals, during which he finalized his official sovereignty over his own Local Universe under God the Father. He is mentioned often in the first three parts of the Book¹⁷.

If the Author's readers cannot trust his statements of fact, that ordinary honest checking would correct, how can any of his writings be taken seriously — without reservation?

(9) The Author says Dr. Sadler claimed to have been “taken out of his physical body . . . and transported to the Deane home in his spirit form.” This is precisely the kind of thing in which Dr. Sadler did not believe. Neither I nor anyone else I know who knew the Doctor intimately (I knew him from 1924 until his death a few years ago) will agree that the Doctor was not capable of making such a remark as a serious statement. Is it likely that this bitter hater of the Doctor and the URANTIA movement is right, and those who have lived with the Doctor and associated with him as friends of decades are wrong? I believe this must be a deliberate fabrication! Or is it possible that the Doctor in a jibe at the psychic's astral beliefs, said in derision that he — in “astral form” — heard the Author plotting? And the Author repeats it to you, his reader, as a serious remark?

(10) The Author says that “Floyd Winters” (that's what he calls me, the present writer) “confronted the Doctor with extensive almost word-for-word quotes from ‘A Democratic Manifesto’ . . .” Not true. I showed, as a matter of interest, one paragraph (as I remember it) to the Doctor. We discussed the possibility of finding other well expressed human concepts the Revelators might have used.

The URANTIA Book very early tells us that the mandate of the Revelators is to give preference wherever possible to “the highest existing human concepts” pertaining to the subjects presented. The Book tells us it uses more than one thousand such concepts representing the “most advanced planetary knowledge of spiritual values and universe meanings.”¹⁸

In a later paper a Midwayer tells us the sources of his material. He places first: “information from human sources”; second, superhuman memory sources of his own order of beings; finally, superplanetary sources.

The Author's antagonism leads him to attempt to deceive you. Every word of the Urantia Papers, even in the use of the “highest existing human concepts,” was placed in the URANTIA Papers by the Revelators. None was inserted by any human being whatsoever. I would stake my life on this¹⁹.

(11) The Author writes: “Would this prove to the Forum members that they themselves should not fear the Doctor or anything he or his higher powers could do to them . . . ?”

This is sheer — perhaps malicious — fabrication and has nothing whatever to do with truth or reality. Many others are alive who will so testify. The Doctor was a genial and kindly gentleman.

In 52 years close contact with the Doctor, the Forum, and Urantians, I never in my life heard of anyone fearing the Doctor or of any “higher power” the Doctor ever possessed, or said he possessed.

If one word had to be chosen to express the feelings of individuals who attended the Forum and knew the Doctor, I believe most often that word would be “affection.” A second would be “admiration.” Surely every one of us, and all through the years, respected him.

To speak of Forum members fearing this kind and much-loved man at any time is calumny — ridiculous and dishonest fiction. No wonder the Author has waited over 30 years to compound this unsavory “pottage.”

The Author has waited to publish this silly material until there are few Forumites alive who might see his self-serving story. If he chooses to contest the point, let him produce any genuine Forumite who feared the Doctor! I am certain all those alive will testify they loved, and never heard of anyone who ever feared the Doctor! (With the exception, perhaps, of the copyright violators noted above.)

(12) The Author says the Forum members were ordered by the Doctor to ostracize him. If so preposterous a suggestion had been made, I believe I would have remembered it. I don't. It would have been easy for the Doctor if he wished to achieve an equivalent end, to ask the Author to withdraw from the Forum. He didn't. The Doctor was short but he was not small.

(13) The Author charges the Doctor with profaning and altering the text, both directly and by implication. He is entirely off-base. The Doctor's judgment may have been imperfect as regards “organization charters” and their provisions — but when it comes to the sacredness and sanctity of the URANTIA text, the Doctor leaned over backwards in its protection. This is what led him to err — if he did — in trying to protect the text through life tenure of Foundation people he knew could be trusted.

The Doctor cannot be faulted even remotely for bad faith, commercialism, or faithlessness with regard to the URANTIA Papers text!

The Author's loose accusations stamp him as not only a worthless researcher, but also a careless writer. It is bad enough to be loose with the truth in matters of fact. It is far worse to misrepresent your fellow man! Particularly, the defenseless deceased!

Dr. Sadler was a great man — a giant — vouchsafed perhaps the XXXX and responsibility on this planet in many hundreds of years XXXX XXXX²⁰.

(14) The Author writes, speaking of Forum members: “They could”²¹ figured for his most gullible and uninformed readers. The Forum members were adults, intelligent. The thought would never occur to any of them that even a Judas would be struck dead.

(15) The Author states that the Doctor told signers of my letter to the Doctor they would be “ex-communicated,” “risk the loss of eternal life,” et cetera, unless they removed their names from the letter.

Here the Author writes juvenile nonsense. I cannot remember details of my conversation with the Doctor concerning this letter. What I know is that it was adult. We could not agree on organization points in question. But he reassured me as to the points raised. I think we felt truly hurt, but our friendship was not marred. There was no threat of any kind.

(16) The Author lays the suicide of an intelligent and admired Urantian to “approaching blindness and disillusionment.” It would be difficult for the Author to know if this man was disillusioned. Certainly not one of the rest of us were disillusioned. The Author’s bad taste reaches another new low in publicizing such an unwarranted personal assumption.

(17) In his next sentence, the Author states that a young man, son of a prominent Forumite committed suicide “due to unhappy home conditions.” If this careless and incredibly insensitive Author had obtained information from informed persons, he might have learned that the young fellow in question had a brain tumor and faced certain death. He was a brilliant youth and learned more about the brain tumor than most specialists²².

IF he committed suicide, which the Author does not know was the case, he chose not to wait. Here again the Author’s bad taste and reliance on rumor or petty gossip combine to discredit him.

(18) The Author says: “Many of the New Revelation followers have remained steadfastly faithful, held together more by fear than by love — fear that severance from the New Revelation (URANTIA) Society might mean loss of identity or existence in the hereafter.”

The Author proves that he knows neither the Urantia Book nor its believers. Urantians are people less afraid than almost any group you could name, and who are held together by a common belief. “Fear?” “Many?” I challenge him to name any Urantians, “steadfastly faithful” to our great and wondrous Revelation who are held to it, or together, by fear.

(19) The irresponsible Author says: “Now, thirty years later, as we view the unhappy aftermath . . .” I know of no Urantians of the Forum of 30 years ago (or any period) who are unhappy with their URANTIA Book or its teachings. And there are still quite a few of the old-time members around. The opposite is true.

The only unhappy ones I know of are the one Forumite and two outsiders who tried to violate the copyright — who tried to use the URANTIA Book’s rightfully protected text for their personal purposes — AND THE AUTHOR!

“Unhappy aftermath?” Perhaps it had been that for the Author who rejected the wonderful URANTIA Revelation for his psychic ragbag of mediums, astral projections, séances, Ouija Boards, automatic writing, psychic entanglements, and, as he puts it, “all manner of influences of a discarnate nature” with which his little paperback is peppered. For URANTIANS, old-timers and newcomers — I

speak from a wide acquaintanceship and from a full heart — the “aftermath” has been warmly rewarding in spiritual and intellectual satisfactions, and in priceless friendship and association.

(20) The Author calls the Foundations protection of the URANTIA text “fanatical religious procedure.”

The URANTIA writing is a unique, precisely worded, sublime work, representing information and instruction from celestial beings with enormous resources unavailable to us. OBVIOUSLY, alterations would corrupt and render valueless as Revelation, this great gift to the world. Giving its copyright up — so the text could be altered, savaged, shredded, piece-mealed — would nullify the purpose of the Revelation.

I note that the Author copyrights his cheap little paperbacks. As well he should. He has a commercial interest in them.

The purpose of the URANTIA Book is to help save this sick civilization²³. That is far more important than the Author’s commercial interest in the cheaply priced paperbacks which he protects. But he charges the Foundation with fanaticism. What is his copyright protection — economical fanaticism? Or just common sense? How blind, and juvenile, is Prejudice!

It would be the most stupid dereliction for the Foundation to permit the vultures and vandals of the publishing world, or even naive do-gooders, to use willy-nilly, parts and portions of the URANTIA text as they might choose in this savage world. (Which the URANTIA Book is here, in due time, to help save!)

Parts of the Book, out of context, and altered a little, could be used to serve very chilling ends. Slightly modified — as it would be, unprotected by copyright — the text could be made to appear to condone ABSOLUTELY ANYTHING, ANY VIEWPOINT²⁴.

If friends of the Book are permitted the privilege of quoting and excerpting freely without permission, then so must enemies of the Book have that privilege. For justice and the law are blind and cannot sort out friend or foe.

The Foundation would be derelict in its obligations to the Revelators, to Christ Michael — our Creator Father — and to all future generations, if it relaxed its mandate to protect the text of the URANTIA REVELATION in its entirety²⁵.

(21) The Author quotes some woman as saying Forum members referred to the Doctor among themselves as “the little Pope.” In 52 years, knowing as many Urantians as any other person on earth I suppose, I never ever head the Doctor referred to as “the Pope,” little or otherwise. The Author further says “all (Forum members) admitted their helplessness in speaking out against his rule, however, such a protest might be justified.”

I deny that utterly. I should know for as I stated above, I was a framer of that letter — the only protest I ever heard of to the Doctor — and that had only to do with the proposed Foundation’s frame of organization. The Doctor neither made nor imposed rules that cramped or distressed Forum members. He was never described in terms of derision. He was loved, not feared.

(22) The Author criticizes the URANTIA Book because, he says, “it presents no program for individual spiritual development.” If he means it presents no dozen or twenty dogmatic rules for such, he is correct. However, the entire Book is a titanic, and mighty stimulator and guide to spiritual growth. Only a mind corrupted and dimmed by superstition and cynicism could fail to see the entire life of Jesus as a mighty stimulus to an individual’s spiritual development. The entire URANTIA Book is no doubt the greatest reading program for individual spiritual development on earth today. The Book is its own proof of this truth.

(23) Even high school age readers like some semblance of consistency in people who try to advise them. Ponder the Author’s inconsistency. He says he read the URANTIA Papers four to five hours a day for almost three months, steadily. Then “for FIVE CONTINUOUS YEARS” (his caps) he claims he listened to them read every Sunday afternoon.

Why?

Because — like the rest of us — he appreciated the greatness of the URANTIA Revelation?

Because he was shaping his future on its teachings and its original Christianity?

Because he appreciated the true magnitude of what he was experiencing?

Not this man!

Not this juggler of truth!

He closes his frivolous attack on the magnificent 2,100 page Revelation by admitting he spent all his time — attending hundreds of meetings — read for hundreds of hours — because — but let him say it in his own words! After he discredits to the best of his ability all of this profound, unparalleled Revelation — he climaxes his attack and his story of assiduous attention and study by saying: “It is fair to concede that we found SOME of the material thought provoking!”

Dear God! How the majestic Celestial Revelatory Commission and the Angels of Progress and the Churches must rejoice on high! This spiritually shallow psychic finds that their fabulous Revelation that is to make vast changes on this earth contains some material he finds thought provoking!

What is your opinion of a man whose appraisal of an experience he deliberately chose and continued in, is so at variance with the high price he gladly paid for it, in time, voluntarily, week after week, year after year? IF HE SPEAKS THE TRUTH! But then he doesn’t speak the truth, so he leaves us only more confused by the hodgepodge of his deceptions.

(24) I have mentioned a number, but by no means all, of the gross inaccuracies, misstatements, and fictions in the Author’s 40-page chapter. I will “conclude” with a mention of the first and last paragraphs of the chapter.

The first paragraph begins: “While every incident and experience in this chapter is true, as reported . . .”

The paragraph has just as much meaning without those words. Perhaps they were added because the Author, knowing much of the chapter was untrue, wanted to reassure his readers. Thus, at the outset, he gives himself away. Most writers narrating something historical or experiential, do not begin by saying: “In this chapter, I am going to be honest.” In this response of mine, all I write is as true as I can make it. There is no part I can single out to designate as true.

The first paragraph ends as follows: “. . . illustrating as it does, the fallacy of accepting any so-called revelation . . . as the ‘infallible’ word of God.”

The last paragraph of the chapter, 40-pages later, concludes with this sentence: “For this reason, we suggest that you question any purported ‘revelation’ however impressive, whose mediums or sponsors declare it to be ‘the infallible word of God’ or his representatives.”

Neither the URANTIA Foundation nor any of its supporters has ever referred to the URANTIA Revelation as the “infallible word of God,” to my knowledge. No intelligent reader of the Book would ever use that phrase. The URANTIA Book makes clear that some celestial beings are fallible²⁶. The Book provides the source (authors) of all its 196 papers. Not one paper of the 196 claims to be the “infallible word of God.” The mischief-making Author again shows his abysmal ignorance of the Book he pretends to judge and to appraise for the public.

It is bad enough for a “reviewer” to be ignorant of a Book he reviews. It is unpardonable, I should say, to be spitefully ignorant.

LET US turn our attention now in another direction.

I ask how any sane or responsible person could write such a fairytale? I believe the Author has been, to use an old expression, “hoist by his own petard.” He is, I think, a victim of the “disease” which is his speciality. Let us see.

“Sensitives” and “psychics” and unwary patrons of these people must ever be on their guard, says the Author in this same little book which we are discussing, against mediums and dishonest psychics, many of whom are “fraudulent or self-deluded.” He himself, you remember, developed “duodenal ulcers” from “mental work” in ESP. He says many people “have been misguided and harmed by the effects of past-life readings,” and he tells of a remarkable medium with many practices “we consider fraudulent.” He warns against “false mediums,” “phony seances,” and “dishonest psychics,” ;and he says he has found many to have been fraudulent.”

He quotes a famed “spiritualist medium” who “faked spirit messages.” He says of psychics, “the temptation to fake or ‘embroider’ a little in the giving of impressions is always present.” He writes that through experimenting with the Ouija Board and automatic writing, “tramp spirits can enter in and take over,” and that “there are also other dangerous channels through which people can become ‘possessed’.” He warns of “alarmingly recurrent psychic entanglements.”²⁷

He tells of items becoming lodged in the mind, “put together and fabricated by the imaginative functioning of the subconscious.”

Can you begin to see of what this psychic Author is suspect!

TO CONTINUE with my answer to the question: “How could any responsible person fall into the error of writing such a fairytale? How could a man entangle himself in a sticky thicket of falsehoods which indict him with his own words?”

The above-mentioned quotes clearly indicate his intimate field is one in which fakery and trumpetry are common. But perhaps more important, are the following quotes.

The Author says that much of the material he is sent by readers, supposedly communicated from “loved ones,” “is recognizably the product of their imagination (*sic*), wishful thinking, the creative dramatization of the subconscious, or their fears or desires.” . . . “Self-delusion and self-induced hallucination can exist in some cases.”

Again, he writes, “Unhappily, many so-called psychics have simply activated their imagination and caused it to fabricate whatever they have sought to create . . . I have had to school myself to be able to detect when my imagination was trying to come into play. Even so, despite every effort, there are times when imagination breaks in and tries to embroider an impression (my underline).”

URANTIANS find all of this kind of matter wholly foreign to their experiences and their concepts associated with the URANTIA Book. I could add more to the above from the Author’s single small paperback we are discussing, including mentions of the “fears” and anxieties of people who read his books and other psychic matter. All this is strange to URANTIANS who get a profound peace and beautiful inspiration from their Book.

But — remember — the Author gave up the URANTIA Book because he could not embrace it (in 1942), and continued his career of engaging in psychic research and “exploring psychic phenomena” which he started “in the early 1920’s.”

WELL, THERE you have it. The Author has now been engaged in a sticky field, admittedly rampant with fraud and fakery, for 50 years! He had opportunity to embrace the URANTIA Book and its unequivocal truth — which would have led to his giving up occultism and psychic experimenting in which he made his living. Instead, he took the low road. To ease his distressed mind and to try to combat the economic threat of the URANTIA Book, it would seem he had to write this trashy chapter.

But — if you know the URANTIA Book — you know he was dead wrong. And his own words in his own little paperback seem to convict him beyond all doubt of having fallen victim to the infirmities of his occupational malaise.

Many of us who were old-time Forum members would agree that the URANTIA experience has been the greatest thing in our lives, I am sure.

My major disappointment in the entire Urantia matter is that I would have liked to see the URANTIA movement grow faster (but I am always disappointed in reasonable and gradual growth). As for its idealism — the decency, honor, integrity, loving kindness, friendship, of Urantians — this has never occurred to me to be wanting, or less than anyone should reasonably expect.

Yes, I have had disappointments. My greatest are that I have not lived up to my Urantian ideals, that I have not done more for the URANTIA Revelation, that I have wasted time and energy. My regrets center in me and on me, not on either the Forum of the Revelation — or our longtime leader, Dr. Sadler.

I glory in the URANTIA Book. And in Urantians. I know that this Book has, alone, taken people off drugs, patched up failing marriages, and worked miracles of human redemption. Within the past sixty days I have had a letter from a French-Canadian convict who was given a URANTIA Book and Concordex by a man departing prison. The man in prison now — 46 years of age — has been an “eight-time loser,” and not behind bars only 13 months since he was 15 years old. He asks me if there is any hope that a man like him might reach Havona. He is now avidly reading the Urantia Book eight hours a day. This man will quite surely have a changed life and will reach Havona.

Due to a few “thought-provoking” ideas? No, due to the fact a Celestial Commission on high has pipe-lined to the spiritually hungry on this small distressed planet, the very essence of SPIRITUAL POWER — the white light of SUPREME INTELLIGENCE — and the eternal water of LIFE AND LOVE, through the URANTIA Book — for those who have perception, and in turn, love for the Father.

I HAVE not begun to nail all the misstatements, untruths, and corruptions of fact the Author’s 40 small pages contain but I have gone far enough.

I have not written without some emotion. Detailing facts alone did not seem to satisfy the need this chapter evidenced. I live the URANTIA Book and I love God. I love many Urantians of all ages, and since religion without emotion and love without an expression of feeling are self-denials, I have permitted myself the luxury of writing as I have felt.

I have been indignant, scornful, contemptuous, and sorrowful by turns. I have expressed these feelings without bitterness, however. As he is an erring human being my heart goes out to him. As Urantians we forgave this Author once. Let us do so again. He was surely a better man than this some time in the past. We hope he may be again.

HIS ATTEMPT to discredit the URANTIA Book is like an angry child with a popgun trying to stop the greatest ship on earth from carrying the gift of eternal life to a needy civilization on another shore.

The Author quotes one of his friends as saying, “It is far, far better to hold one’s tongue than to babble meaninglessly in the market place.” This is advice he might well have heeded. He says himself, “In all truth, I must report that many psychics are not too well balanced, mentally and emotionally.”

Again, he say for himself and wife, a most terrible thing! “Looking back on the many psychic adventures we have had . . . which we hoped could bring us a sense of security, our quest, more often than not, ended in disillusionment and disappointment. We decided, at some point along the way, that it was unwise to place our faith in any human heart, however spiritual and principled he might appear to be (my underlines).”

I pity the Author. He has been diligent at his psychic specialty for some 50 years and he has faith in no human being! This incredible, pitiable admission — it seems to me — means living life under a curse!

He “babbles,” according to our Urantian experiences with him, “meaninglessly in the market place.” Many of his psychic fellows, he avers, “are not too well balanced.” He has no faith in any human being, and yet has the temerity to write religious and philosophical advice to the public. To me, such writing is the epitome of hollow fakery.

What God-loving Urantian who has found a beautiful fellowship among the readers of our Revelation would trade his own viewpoint and philosophy of life with that of this sorry and disillusioned vendor of spiritualism and the occult? He mentioned, “unhappy aftermath.” It turned out to be his.

Well, through the dark glasses of his 50 disillusioning years, it is small wonder he cannot see the soul-making, life-liberating, love-engendering, Urantian fellowship — which, in times of reflection and brotherly association, near bursts our hearts with gratitude and thanksgiving.

The URANTIA Book will be bringing delight and warm comfort to human souls, multiplying its readership, remaking individual lives, and the world — and being applauded, perhaps even on Paradise — for long centuries after the Author’s paperbacks — including his futile attack on the URANTIA Book — have become dust as did the lowliest artifacts of Tyre and Sydon.

AS A POSTLUDE, I will quote a final few words from the Author. They conclude a brief SPECIAL INTRODUCTION to his chapter of aberrations and conclude as follows:

“This chapter, describing our personal experiences, is characteristic of many, demonstrating as it does the opportunity that always exists for human editing, human error, and sometimes deliberate falsification (my underlines).”

The entire paperback is by the Author. But, like the hunter who manages to shoot himself instead of the deer he hunts, the Author especially signs his name to those words, making of them an unintended confession.

It is as though some wonderful irony, or compensatory fortuity, leads him to confess to his “editing of history,” his “human error, and . . . deliberate falsification.”

We can only add to those sober words of his, our “Amen,” in solemn agreement.

APPENDED NOTE

Sadler’s grandson, William Sadler III, was a student in college when he suffered strange symptoms of brief fainting spells and vision loss. He died on Christmas day in 1955. Coroner’s autopsy found traces of barbiturates in his blood, but the delay between his passing out in the apartment at 533 and his death in the hospital permitted heavier concentrations to dissipate. He had been drinking. The combination may have led to his death. When Dr. Sadler first examined the boy he decided to wait for four hours before they called an ambulance. We do not know the reason for Sadler’s delay. The Coroner could not assign the exact cause of death. He did not have a brain tumor, as was widely rumored. The rumor began with Sadler’s superficial diagnoses as to the cause of his grandson’s partial blindness. He may have had undiagnosed diabetes. Bedell, unaware of the Coroner’s autopsy report, was wrong here in his statements.

His father, Bill Sadler, Jr. was an unhappy person. He was a heavy smoker and drinker. He was raised in a professional household, which may have lacked warmth and tenderness. After his son’s death he left his wife Leone sitting in 533 and ran off with Florine Seres, a woman half his age. He died at the age of 56, in 1963, on the same day that President Kennedy was shot, and the same day that C. S. Lewis died.

Florine later published two of his books posthumously, *A Study of the Master Universe*, 1965, and *Appendices to a Study of the Master Universe*, 1975.

END NOTES

¹Bedell shows knowledge of the introduction by Josephine Davis.

²Note that Bedell’s concepts of spirit communications are linked to the “dead.” Thus he follows the pattern of failure exhibited by Sadler to properly understand spiritism.

³Here Bedell rejected the “old-fashioned” “fundamentalist” superstitions of contact from disembodied spirits. The Urantia Papers plainly derived from such contacts. He must defend that process.

⁴Christians would vigorously object to this classification. Theological, it is not correct. Bedell had in mind that the Papers continued the teachings of Jesus, devoid of apostolic theologies, hence was Jesusonian. Without the interpretations of the Christian generations the word “Jesusonian” would have been a better choice.

⁵Here Bedell displayed his lack of recognition of the design of The Urantia Papers, which never use the name “Christ” for Jesus, except in historical reference. By “Revelation which was Christ Jesus” Bedell followed the classification of the Papers in referring to the life and teachings of Jesus as the Fourth Epochal Revelation.

⁶Indeed, it would have been an exceptional and peculiar effrontery for Sherman to continue in the meetings after this episode. Most of the rest of the world would have been too embarrassed and chagrined to do so. Clearly, Sherman was lying to condition his reader to his argument.

⁷This is verified in the actual document. See preceding chapter.

⁸It is probable that Sherman attempted to elevate his status by bringing identity between the two documents. This would make him a more active player in generation of the "Petition," and hence in his position in the Forum. He was trying to convince his readers of his worthiness in the abortive enterprise.

⁹Discrepancies exist among the several numbers. According to the hand-written note at the bottom of the copy Barrie Bedell gave me the number was six or seven. This would agree with Bedell's "small number." When the others were asked to sign is unknown.

¹⁰Bedell's action was the result of at least ten years of frustration with Sadler's partial secrecy, and private plans, in the proposed organizations.

¹¹Sherman was obviously attempting to obtain control of an opportunity which had, by then, escaped him. The summer recess left time for everyone to cool their heels and their heads. Bedell, and the other Forumites, upon deeper reflection, regretted their action, especially as influenced by a newcomer, and what was becoming evident, an "outsider." Their later altered positions were due to independent assessment and not to mere psychological pressure from Sadler. Sherman classifies them all, including the sharply independent Bedell, as mere puppets without minds of their own.

¹²This description does not tally with Sherman's letter to Loose, although, after thirty years, we would not expect reliable memory.

¹³Bedell displays lack of knowledge of Christy's channeling, and how the later changes were introduced into the Revelation. None of the Forum members understood this. Sadler did not reveal the process to them.

¹⁴This remark contradicts Sadler's memory. He said the most surprising event was the appearance of the Jesus Papers, totally unexpected.

¹⁵If Sherman was honest he was at a handicap. In 1942 he had no written copies of the text, and had to go from memory. In his haste to determine the content of the Book he certainly missed many important teachings. Unfortunately, his actions betrayed his supposed sincerity. He easily could have obtained a published copy of the Papers and examined them for the Jesus teachings. He even could have used Bedell's Concordex, which he references! Obviously, he was not honest; his Chapter was a propaganda piece, and a sick excuse for his actions. The name "Jesus" appears often in the first three Parts. The latter part of the Jesus Papers also clearly indicates the role of Christianity in the future of our planet. Refer to Bedell's quote here from the Papers.

¹⁶Most Christians would take exception to Bedell's statement that The Urantia Papers are Christian from beginning to end. Tradition and convention prevent them from accepting the Papers as divine revelation. Many of the teachings, while superficially taught in the Bible, are beyond their conceptual range. I briefly reviewed some of those in Chapter 1.

¹⁷The name "Jesus" appears in 115 paragraphs in the first three Parts, compared to 2,449 paragraphs in Part IV.

¹⁸See page 16-17 in the Forward to The Urantia Papers.

¹⁹We now know that changes were incorporated into the Papers after they were completed and certified in 1935. Sadler made these changes under what he thought was midwayer instructions. Actually, the changes were introduced through Christy's channeling. Refer to later chapters.

²⁰My copy of Bedell's text is defective here.

²¹My text again is defective over two lines.

²²Refer to detailed note at end of this chapter.

²³This was a great error in Bedell's understanding of the purpose of The Urantia Papers. Sadler was clearly told that the Papers were not for this planetary age.

²⁴Bedell here, among most others, failed to recognize that protection through copyright law was very limited in life. What did he and those many others expect would happen when it would reach the end of its legal term? He also failed to recognize that perversions did not come through alteration of text, but rather through philosophical and theological interpretations that would influence the generations, including the large group of channelers who used The Urantia Papers as the justification for their deplorable activities.

²⁵Again Bedell failed to recognize that protection of text through commercial copyright law has strict legal limits.

²⁶You may note Job 4:18.

²⁷Here Sherman admitted to the fact that some individuals lose control of spirit entry into human mind. The "spirits" can come and go at will. This has driven some unstable personalities into mental institutions. At least Sherman recognized the dangers of spirit communications.