

Problems of the Lucifer Rebellion



Illustration from John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. by Gustave Doré

To my mind, this is one of the most important papers in the book. It unravels the subtleties of the rebellion that are still with us today, and it fully explains the merciful time lag between iniquity and its just consequences.

[The Urantia Book, paper 54:](#)

54:0.1 (613.1) EVOLUTIONARY man finds it difficult fully to comprehend the significance and to grasp the meanings of evil, error, sin, and iniquity. Man is slow to perceive that contrastive perfection and imperfection produce potential evil; that conflicting truth and falsehood create confusing error; that the divine endowment of freewill choice eventuates in the divergent realms of sin and righteousness; that the persistent pursuit of divinity leads to the kingdom of God as

contrasted with its continuous rejection, which leads to the domains of iniquity.

54:0.2 (613.2) The Gods neither create evil nor permit sin and rebellion. Potential evil is time-existent in a universe embracing differential levels of perfection meanings and values. Sin is potential in all realms where imperfect beings are endowed with the ability to choose between good and evil. The very conflicting presence of truth and untruth, fact and falsehood, constitutes the potentiality of error. The deliberate choice of evil constitutes sin; the willful rejection of truth is error; the persistent pursuit of sin and error is iniquity.

1. True and False Liberty

54:1.1 (613.3) Of all the perplexing problems growing out of the Lucifer rebellion, none has occasioned more difficulty than the failure of immature evolutionary mortals to distinguish between true and false liberty.

54:1.2 (613.4) True liberty is the quest of the ages and the reward of evolutionary progress. False liberty is the subtle deception of the error of time and the evil of space. Enduring liberty is predicated on the reality of justice–intelligence, maturity, fraternity, and equity.

54:1.3 (613.5) Liberty is a self-destroying technique of cosmic existence when its motivation is unintelligent, unconditioned, and uncontrolled. True liberty is progressively related to reality and is ever regardful of social equity, cosmic fairness, universe fraternity, and divine obligations.

54:1.4 (613.6) Liberty is suicidal when divorced from material justice, intellectual fairness, social forbearance, moral duty, and spiritual values. Liberty is nonexistent apart from cosmic reality, and all personality reality is proportional to its divinity relationships.

54:1.5 (613.7) Unbridled self-will and unregulated self-expression equal unmitigated selfishness, the acme of ungodliness. Liberty without the associated and ever-increasing conquest of self is a figment of egoistic mortal imagination. Self-motivated liberty is a conceptual illusion, a cruel deception. License masquerading in the garments of liberty is the forerunner of abject bondage.

54:1.6 (614.1) True liberty is the associate of genuine self-respect; false liberty is the consort of self-admiration. True liberty is the fruit of self-control; false liberty, the assumption of self-assertion. Self-control leads to altruistic service; self-admiration tends towards the exploitation of others for the selfish aggrandizement of such a mistaken individual as is willing to sacrifice righteous attainment for the sake of possessing unjust power over his fellow beings.

54:1.7 (614.2) Even wisdom is divine and safe only when it is cosmic in scope and spiritual in motivation.

54:1.8 (614.3) There is no error greater than that species of self-deception which leads intelligent beings to crave the exercise of power over other beings for the purpose of depriving these persons of their natural liberties. The golden rule of human fairness cries out against all such fraud, unfairness, selfishness, and unrighteousness. Only true and genuine liberty is compatible with the reign of love and the ministry of mercy.

54:1.9 (614.4) How dare the self-willed creature encroach upon the rights of his fellows in the name of personal liberty when the Supreme Rulers of the universe stand back in merciful respect for these prerogatives of will and potentials of personality! No being, in the exercise of his supposed personal liberty, has a right to deprive any other being of those privileges of existence conferred by the Creators and duly respected by all their loyal associates, subordinates, and subjects.

54:1.10 (614.5) Evolutionary man may have to contend for his material liberties with tyrants and oppressors on a world of sin and iniquity or during the early times of a primitive evolving sphere, but not so on the morontia worlds or on the spirit spheres. War is the heritage of early evolutionary man, but on worlds of normal advancing civilization physical combat as a technique of adjusting racial misunderstandings has long since fallen into disrepute.

2. The Theft of Liberty

54:2.1 (614.6) With the Son and in the Spirit did God project eternal Havona, and ever since has there obtained the eternal pattern of co-ordinate participation in creation-sharing. This pattern of sharing is the master design for every one of the Sons and Daughters of God who go out into space to engage in the attempt to duplicate in time the central universe of eternal perfection.

54:2.2 (614.7) Every creature of every evolving universe who aspires to do the Father's will is destined to become the partner of the time-space Creators in this magnificent adventure of experiential perfection attainment. Were this not true, the Father would have hardly endowed such creatures with creative free will, neither would he indwell them, actually go into partnership with them by means of his own spirit.

54:2.3 (614.8) Lucifer's folly was the attempt to do the nondoable, to short-circuit time in an experiential universe. Lucifer's crime was the attempted creative disenfranchisement of every personality in Satania, the unrecognized abridgment of the creature's personal participation-freewill participation-in the long evolutionary struggle to attain the status of light and life both individually and collectively. In so doing this onetime Sovereign of your system set the temporal purpose of his own will directly athwart the eternal purpose of God's will as it is revealed in the bestowal of

free will upon all personal creatures. The Lucifer rebellion thus threatened the maximum possible infringement of the freewill choice of the ascenders and servers of the system of Satania—a threat forevermore to deprive every one of these beings of the thrilling experience of contributing something personal and unique to the slowly erecting monument to experiential wisdom which will sometime exist as the perfected system of Satania. Thus does the Lucifer manifesto, masquerading in the habiliments of liberty, stand forth in the clear light of reason as a monumental threat to consummate the theft of personal liberty and to do it on a scale that has been approached only twice in all the history of Nebadon.

54:2.4 (615.1) In short, what God had given men and angels Lucifer would have taken away from them, that is, the divine privilege of participating in the creation of their own destinies and of the destiny of this local system of inhabited worlds.

54:2.5 (615.2) No being in all the universe has the rightful liberty to deprive any other being of true liberty, the right to love and be loved, the privilege of worshiping God and of serving his fellows.

3. The Time Lag of Justice

54:3.1 (615.3) The moral will creatures of the evolutionary worlds are always bothered with the unthinking question as to why the all-wise Creators permit evil and sin. They fail to comprehend that both are inevitable if the creature is to be truly free. The free will of evolving man or exquisite angel is not a mere philosophic concept, a symbolic ideal. Man's ability to choose good or evil is a universe reality. This liberty to choose for oneself is an endowment of the Supreme Rulers, and they will not permit any being or group of beings to deprive a single personality in the wide universe of this divinely bestowed liberty—not even to satisfy such misguided

and ignorant beings in the enjoyment of this misnamed personal liberty.

54:3.2 (615.4) Although conscious and wholehearted identification with evil (sin) is the equivalent of nonexistence (annihilation), there must always intervene between the time of such personal identification with sin and the execution of the penalty—the automatic result of such a willful embrace of evil—a period of time of sufficient length to allow for such an adjudication of such an individual's universe status as will prove entirely satisfactory to all related universe personalities, and which will be so fair and just as to win the approval of the sinner himself.

54:3.3 (615.5) But if this universe rebel against the reality of truth and goodness refuses to approve the verdict, and if the guilty one knows in his heart the justice of his condemnation but refuses to make such confession, then must the execution of sentence be delayed in accordance with the discretion of the Ancients of Days. And the Ancients of Days refuse to annihilate any being until all moral values and all spiritual realities are extinct, both in the evildoer and in all related supporters and possible sympathizers.

4. The Mercy Time Lag

54:4.1 (615.6) Another problem somewhat difficult of explanation in the constellation of Norlatiadek pertains to the reasons for permitting Lucifer, Satan, and the fallen princes to work mischief so long before being apprehended, interned, and adjudicated.

54:4.2 (616.1) Parents, those who have borne and reared children, are better able to understand why Michael, a Creator-father, might be slow to condemn and destroy his own Sons. Jesus' story of the prodigal son well illustrates how a loving father can long wait for the repentance of an erring child.

54:4.3 (616.2) The very fact that an evil-doing creature can actually choose to do wrong—commit sin—establishes the fact of free-willness and fully justifies any length delay in the execution of justice provided the extended mercy might conduce to repentance and rehabilitation.

54:4.4 (616.3) Most of the liberties which Lucifer sought he already had; others he was to receive in the future. All these precious endowments were lost by giving way to impatience and yielding to a desire to possess what one craves now and to possess it in defiance of all obligation to respect the rights and liberties of all other beings composing the universe of universes. Ethical obligations are innate, divine, and universal.

54:4.5 (616.4) There are many reasons known to us why the Supreme Rulers did not immediately destroy or intern the leaders of the Lucifer rebellion. There are no doubt still other and possibly better reasons unknown to us. The mercy features of this delay in the execution of justice were extended personally by Michael of Nebadon. Except for the affection of this Creator-father for his erring Sons, the supreme justice of the superuniverse would have acted. If such an episode as the Lucifer rebellion had occurred in Nebadon while Michael was incarnated on Urantia, the instigators of such evil might have been instantly and absolutely annihilated.

54:4.6 (616.5) Supreme justice can act instantly when not restrained by divine mercy. But the ministry of mercy to the children of time and space always provides for this time lag, this saving interval between seedtime and harvest. If the seed sowing is good, this interval provides for the testing and upbuilding of character; if the seed sowing is evil, this merciful delay provides time for repentance and rectification. This time delay in the adjudication and execution of evildoers is inherent in the mercy ministry of the seven superuniverses. This restraint of justice by mercy proves that God is love, and that such a God of love dominates the universes and in

mercy controls the fate and judgment of all his creatures.

54:4.7 (616.6) The mercy delays of time are by the mandate of the free will of the Creators. There is good to be derived in the universe from this technique of patience in dealing with sinful rebels. While it is all too true that good cannot come of evil to the one who contemplates and performs evil, it is equally true that all things (including evil, potential and manifest) work together for good to all beings who know God, love to do his will, and are ascending Paradiseward according to his eternal plan and divine purpose.

54:4.8 (616.7) But these mercy delays are not interminable. Notwithstanding the long delay (as time is reckoned on Urantia) in adjudicating the Lucifer rebellion, we may record that, during the time of effecting this revelation, the first hearing in the pending case of Gabriel vs. Lucifer was held on Uversa, and soon thereafter there issued the mandate of the Ancients of Days directing that Satan be henceforth confined to the prison world with Lucifer. This ends the ability of Satan to pay further visits to any of the fallen worlds of Satania. Justice in a mercy-dominated universe may be slow, but it is certain.

5. The Wisdom of Delay

54:5.1 (617.1) Of the many reasons known to me as to why Lucifer and his confederates were not sooner interned or adjudicated, I am permitted to recite the following:

54:5.2 (617.2) 1. Mercy requires that every wrongdoer have sufficient time in which to formulate a deliberate and fully chosen attitude regarding his evil thoughts and sinful acts.

54:5.3 (617.3) 2. Supreme justice is dominated by a Father's love; therefore will justice never destroy that which mercy can save. Time to accept salvation is vouchsafed every evildoer.

54:5.4 (617.4) 3. No affectionate father is ever precipitate in visiting punishment upon an erring member of his family. Patience cannot function independently of time.

54:5.5 (617.5) 4. While wrongdoing is always deleterious to a family, wisdom and love admonish the upright children to bear with an erring brother during the time granted by the affectionate father in which the sinner may see the error of his way and embrace salvation.

54:5.6 (617.6) 5. Regardless of Michael's attitude toward Lucifer, notwithstanding his being Lucifer's Creator-father, it was not in the province of the Creator Son to exercise summary jurisdiction over the apostate System Sovereign because he had not then completed his bestowal career, thereby attaining unqualified sovereignty of Nebadon.

54:5.7 (617.7) 6. The Ancients of Days could have immediately annihilated these rebels, but they seldom execute wrongdoers without a full hearing. In this instance they refused to overrule the Michael decisions.

54:5.8 (617.8) 7. It is evident that Immanuel counseled Michael to remain aloof from the rebels and allow rebellion to pursue a natural course of self-obliteration. And the wisdom of the Union of Days is the time reflection of the united wisdom of the Paradise Trinity.

54:5.9 (617.9) 8. The Faithful of Days on Edentia advised the Constellation Fathers to allow the rebels free course to the end that all sympathy for these evildoers should be the sooner uprooted in the hearts of every present and future citizen of Norlatiadek—every mortal, morontia, or spirit creature.

54:5.10 (617.10) 9. On Jerusem the personal representative of the Supreme Executive of Orvonton counseled Gabriel to foster full opportunity for every living creature to mature a deliberate choice in those matters involved in the Lucifer Declaration of Liberty. The issues of rebellion having been raised, the

Paradise emergency adviser of Gabriel portrayed that, if such full and free opportunity were not given all Norlatiadek creatures, then would the Paradise quarantine against all such possible halfhearted or doubt-stricken creatures be extended in self-protection against the entire constellation. To keep open the Paradise doors of ascension to the beings of Norlatiadek, it was necessary to provide for the full development of rebellion and to insure the complete determination of attitude on the part of all beings in any way concerned therewith.

54:5.11 (617.11) 10. The Divine Minister of Salvington issued as her third independent proclamation a mandate directing that nothing be done to half cure, cowardly suppress, or otherwise hide the hideous visage of rebels and rebellion. The angelic hosts were directed to work for full disclosure and unlimited opportunity for sin-expression as the quickest technique of achieving the perfect and final cure of the plague of evil and sin.

54:5.12 (618.1) 11. An emergency council of ex-mortals consisting of Mighty Messengers, glorified mortals who had had personal experience with like situations, together with their colleagues, was organized on Jerusem. They advised Gabriel that at least three times the number of beings would be led astray if arbitrary or summary methods of suppression were attempted. The entire Uversa corps of counselors concurred in advising Gabriel to permit the rebellion to take its full and natural course, even if it should require a million years to wind up the consequences.

54:5.13 (618.2) 12. Time, even in a universe of time, is relative: If a Urantia mortal of average length of life should commit a crime which precipitated world-wide pandemonium, and if he were apprehended, tried, and executed within two or three days of the commission of the crime, would it seem a long time to you? And yet that would be nearer a comparison with the length of Lucifer's life even if his adjudication,

now begun, should not be completed for a hundred thousand Urantia years. The relative lapse of time from the viewpoint of Uversa, where the litigation is pending, could be indicated by saying that the crime of Lucifer was being brought to trial within two and a half seconds of its commission. From the Paradise viewpoint the adjudication is simultaneous with the enactment.

54:5.14 (618.3) There are an equal number of reasons for not arbitrarily stopping the Lucifer rebellion which would be partially comprehensible to you, but which I am not permitted to narrate. I may inform you that on Uversa we teach forty-eight reasons for permitting evil to run the full course of its own moral bankruptcy and spiritual extinction. I doubt not that there are just as many additional reasons not known to me.

6. The Triumph of Love

54:6.1 (618.4) Whatever the difficulties evolutionary mortals may encounter in their efforts to understand the Lucifer rebellion, it should be clear to all reflective thinkers that the technique of dealing with the rebels is a vindication of divine love. The loving mercy extended to the rebels does seem to have involved many innocent beings in trials and tribulations, but all these distraught personalities may securely depend upon the all-wise Judges to adjudicate their destinies in mercy as well as justice.

54:6.2 (618.5) In all their dealings with intelligent beings, both the Creator Son and his Paradise Father are love dominated. It is impossible to comprehend many phases of the attitude of the universe rulers toward rebels and rebellion—sin and sinners—unless it be remembered that God as a Father takes precedence over all other phases of Deity manifestation in all the dealings of divinity with humanity. It should also be recalled that the Paradise Creator Sons are

all mercy motivated.

54:6.3 (618.6) If an affectionate father of a large family chooses to show mercy to one of his children guilty of grievous wrongdoing, it may well be that the extension of mercy to this misbehaving child will work a temporary hardship upon all the other and well-behaved children. Such eventualities are inevitable; such a risk is inseparable from the reality situation of having a loving parent and of being a member of a family group. Each member of a family profits by the righteous conduct of every other member; likewise must each member suffer the immediate time-consequences of the misconduct of every other member. Families, groups, nations, races, worlds, systems, constellations, and universes are relationships of association which possess individuality; and therefore does every member of any such group, large or small, reap the benefits and suffer the consequences of the rightdoing and the wrongdoing of all other members of the group concerned.

54:6.4 (619.1) But one thing should be made clear: If you are made to suffer the evil consequences of the sin of some member of your family, some fellow citizen or fellow mortal, even rebellion in the system or elsewhere—no matter what you may have to endure because of the wrongdoing of your associates, fellows, or superiors—you may rest secure in the eternal assurance that such tribulations are transient afflictions. None of these fraternal consequences of misbehavior in the group can ever jeopardize your eternal prospects or in the least degree deprive you of your divine right of Paradise ascension and God attainment.

54:6.5 (619.2) And there is compensation for these trials, delays, and disappointments which invariably accompany the sin of rebellion. Of the many valuable repercussions of the Lucifer rebellion which might be named, I will only call attention to the enhanced careers of those mortal ascenders, the Jerusem citizens, who, by withstanding the sophistries of

sin, placed themselves in line for becoming future Mighty Messengers, fellows of my own order. Every being who stood the test of that evil episode thereby immediately advanced his administrative status and enhanced his spiritual worth.

54:6.6 (619.3) At first the Lucifer upheaval appeared to be an unmitigated calamity to the system and to the universe. Gradually benefits began to accrue. With the passing of twenty-five thousand years of system time (twenty thousand years of Urantia time), the Melchizedeks began to teach that the good resulting from Lucifer's folly had come to equal the evil incurred. The sum of evil had by that time become almost stationary, continuing to increase only on certain isolated worlds, while the beneficial repercussions continued to multiply and extend out through the universe and superuniverse, even to Havona. The Melchizedeks now teach that the good resulting from the Satania rebellion is more than a thousand times the sum of all the evil.

54:6.7 (619.4) But such an extraordinary and beneficent harvest of wrongdoing could only be brought about by the wise, divine, and merciful attitude of all of Lucifer's superiors, extending from the Constellation Fathers on Edentia to the Universal Father on Paradise. The passing of time has enhanced the consequential good to be derived from the Lucifer folly; and since the evil to be penalized was quite fully developed within a comparatively short time, it is apparent that the all-wise and farseeing universe rulers would be certain to extend the time in which to reap increasingly beneficial results. Regardless of the many additional reasons for delaying the apprehension and adjudication of the Satania rebels, this one gain would have been enough to explain why these sinners were not sooner interned, and why they have not been adjudicated and destroyed.

54:6.8 (619.5) Shortsighted and time-bound mortal minds should be slow to criticize the time delays of the farseeing and all-wise administrators of universe affairs.

54:6.9 (620.1) One error of human thinking respecting these problems consists in the idea that all evolutionary mortals on an evolving planet would choose to enter upon the Paradise career if sin had not cursed their world. The ability to decline survival does not date from the times of the Lucifer rebellion. Mortal man has always possessed the endowment of freewill choice regarding the Paradise career.

54:6.10 (620.2) As you ascend in the survival experience, you will broaden your universe concepts and extend your horizon of meanings and values; and thus will you be able the better to understand why such beings as Lucifer and Satan are permitted to continue in rebellion. You will also better comprehend how ultimate (if not immediate) good can be derived from time-limited evil. After you attain Paradise, you will really be enlightened and comforted when you listen to the superaphic philosophers discuss and explain these profound problems of universe adjustment. But even then, I doubt that you will be fully satisfied in your own minds. At least I was not even when I had thus attained the acme of universe philosophy. I did not achieve a full comprehension of these complexities until after I had been assigned to administrative duties in the superuniverse, where by actual experience I have acquired conceptual capacity adequate for the comprehension of such many-sided problems in cosmic equity and spiritual philosophy. As you ascend Paradiseward, you will increasingly learn that many problematic features of universe administration can only be comprehended subsequent to the acquirement of increased experiential capacity and to the achievement of enhanced spiritual insight. Cosmic wisdom is essential to the understanding of cosmic situations.

54:6.11 (620.3) [Presented by a Mighty Messenger of experiential survival in the first system rebellion in the universes of time now attached to the superuniverse government of Orvonton and acting in this matter by request of Gabriel of Salvington.]