

## AN EVALUATION OF THE URANTIA BOOK

Meredith J. Springer 1/57

Rarely does one find a book on theology or religion today that one feels has the potential of shaping human destiny. It is generally observed that religion in our day has ceased to be a molding force in our culture. Religion plays a supporting role to the economic, political, and scientific forces which are now the architects of the future.

Therefore it is most refreshing to find a book which appears to have the potential of introducing real creative thinking in the religious field. This book is entitled The Urantia Book. It was published by the Urantia Foundation, 588 Diversey Parkway, Chicago, Illinois (60614), in 1955 and contains 2097 pages (\$15.). Examining its contents you will discover that it claims to be written by numerous celestial beings as a special revelation to man living on this world, Urantia. It asserts that it contains the first major divine revelation since the coming of Christ to our planet.

This is certainly claim enough to make anyone suspicious of its contents. People who pose as the bearers of "new revelation" are quite common. Almost every generation produces a number of such individuals and movements. What is surprising about the Urantia Book is that it has almost nothing in common with these radical movements. It does not advocate a new religion. Elements of fanaticism will find no support in its teachings. It contains nothing contrary to the highest insights or basic convictions of the Christian faith. From ancient Gnosticism to modern Secularism, it cannot be accused of falling into any of the traditional heresies of the Christian faith. Yet its viewpoint is fresh, expansive, and profound.

The superior quality of the philosophical-religious insights of the Urantia Book is clear to anyone of discriminating mind who will read it. It is a book, however, that cannot be properly evaluated until one grasps its comprehensive universe cosmology - its total religious picture. Just as students of the life of Jesus recognize the superlative quality of his character even though they reject his divinity, so mankind is destined to recognize the unparalleled quality of the insights of the Urantia Book - even though they do not accept it as a new revelation.

At this time I believe the question of revelatory authenticity is a secondary consideration. Even if this book should live and become a shaping influence in our religious world, it will take at least a hundred years for society or the church to make up its mind about it. Individuals, of course, will probably make up their minds much sooner. The real question which this stimulating book poses is: does it have something creative and constructive to contribute to our modern religious-philosophic outlook?

There is little question but that it can and probably will make a tremendous contribution to our religious thinking. It presents the finest world view of religion which I have ever read, yet it is not actually syncretistic. Evaluated on the basis of spiritual insight, philosophic coherence, and reality-centeredness it is far superior to any book with which I am acquainted.

We should remind ourselves that every advance in knowledge is a disturbing and painful experience for man. This is true of both quantitative knowledge (science) and qualitative knowledge (religion). The prophets are stoned and the pioneers of science are ridiculed. Man's historic resistance to truth is greatly aided by his tendency to accept second-hand sources of information - usually authoritarianism and tradition. If you are interested in progressive philosophical and religious thinking which as the potential of molding world destiny, the Urantia Book is a first hand source of information which you cannot afford to miss.

(over)



A. An inclusive, integrated, and masterful concept of Reality.

1. It bridges the gap between a monistic and pluralistic concept of Reality without doing violence to either.
2. It presents a view which includes both mechanism and vitalism in such a way as to bring unity rather than diversity.
3. Its deity concept ranges from the finest theism (Universal Father) to an impersonal absolute (Unqualified Absolute) which is so well unified that the concepts are not antagonistic.
4. The devotees of Unitarianism, Trinitarianism, and Christology will find each view enhanced and stimulated without having any of these views feel they are excluded from the essence of the metaphysical picture.
5. It contains the most reasonable and realistic material-mindal-spiritual cosmology in the entire field of philosophy.

B. The most reasonable concept of immortality in the field of religion.

1. Survival is pictured as dependent only on the spiritual reality status of the individual which in turn is the result of the free choice motivation and decisions of the individual toward truth, beauty, and goodness as he sincerely understands these values.
2. It presents the most reasonable concept of soul (reality) evolution in the entire field of religious psychology or theology.
3. It depicts growth toward perfection as the most fundamental and universal motivation of life. This growth is evolutionary or gradual.

C. A superior understanding of planetary history, dynamics, and destiny.

1. It presents evolution as the key modus operandi of our planet.
2. It integrates the mechanism of the physical universe with the intelligence of "overcontrol."
3. It gives an excellent summary of planetary history, institutions of religion, and civilization with admirable conciseness and insight.
4. Its penetrating analysis of religion, culture, and the family is of exceptional quality.
5. Its basic philosophy of the various forms of energy is that matter is ultimately subject to mind and that mind is eventually controlled by spirit.

D. A life of Jesus which is unsurpassed in theistic philosophical reasonableness, spiritual insight, and personality appeal.

1. The life of Jesus is basically acceptable to all religions as well as Christianity. It emphasizes believing with Jesus rather than a narrow, Romantic belief in Jesus.
2. It distinguishes sharply between the religion of Jesus and Christianity.
3. It presents a superb life of Jesus which will inspire almost everyone reading it.

E. The history of philosophy and religion tells us that a book of this stature will almost certainly become controversial and be banned or condemned by fundamentalists and those who emphasize forms of religious orthodoxy; nonetheless, it is my guess that The Urantia Book will become a major influence in shaping man's philosophic-religious thinking in the years to come.