

A CHRISTIAN MEETS THE URANTIA BOOK

A talk by David Jaquith at the 12th Annual Oregon Conference for students of The URANTIA Book, May 30, 1986, at Indian Mary Park, Grants Pass, Oregon.

It was spring in Boulder, Colorado. Patches of snow and yellow daffodils brought contrast to the brownness of the countryside. The year, 1972, as I recall. Here during a week long visit with relatives, and having some free time, I headed for the city library where I came face to face with a book that was profoundly to alter the course of my life.

I had asked the librarian for a certain book. She didn't have it, but she had one of related content which she thought might interest me. And without getting up from her chair (somehow that now seems significant), she reached to a shelf directly behind her and handed me a heavy volume with a blue cover and gold letters that read, "The URANTIA Book". I thanked her, and taking it to a nearby table, I opened it and stepped through a stargate into another reality. I read avidly - no, gluttonously. My spine tingled. I thought, "I'm on to something."

Returning to my home in Oregon, I soon had a copy of my own. For these fourteen years it has been friend and companion, a fountain of inspiration and wonderment. Is the world ready for such a book? Some of us definitely are.

What will a reader find among its pages? Here are some of my impressions.

The URANTIA Book:

- glorifies and honors God as the living father of all creation.
- reveals Jesus Christ as Son of God, creator of our native universe and supreme sovereign of all His starry hosts.
- tells in marvelous detail of the vast and varied celestial persons, entities and beings who work in harmony with Christ our universe ruler, and of the forces, energies and powers in the cosmos that are harnessed and deployed to keep the universe in order.
- tells of the rise and fall of Lucifer, the "Angel of Light" who became blinded by his own brilliance, fell in love with himself, and with his followers waged war against the Almighty.

- gives detailed account of the life of Jesus of Nazareth - God become flesh - beginning before his birth and continuing through his early childhood, his youth, his extended travels as a young man, his private and public ministries, and his crucifixion and resurrection.

The URANTIA Book overflows with inspirational, instructional insights into the meaning and purpose of God in relation to his beloved children - to mortals and angels throughout the extensive systems of time and space, the varied and magnificent heavens and on to Paradise.

It speaks of origins, pathways and destinations, revealing truth about mortal life, life after mortal life, and what wonders we may one day behold - things hinted at in the Bible, here more fully explained.

NOTE: Some people have appeared to be quite certain that The URANTIA Book (perhaps not having read it through?) is the handiwork of "Satan". Certain Christians are quite adept at ascribing all kinds of things to that denizen of the ultra-deep.

Were this true of the book we are here considering, it must surely have been the second greatest mistake of "Satan's" life, the first mistake being to have imagined that he could improve upon God.

As to authorship, the "Prince of Devils", having lost in his bid to take control of heaven and earth (and whose rag-rag rebels are now bent only on vengeful destruction of all that is holy) would hardly produce or promote a book which so eloquently glorifies and upholds the majestic person and plan of God. And would this wily serpent take such pains to point out, as The URANTIA Book does, the awful consequences of joining forces with him?

The URANTIA Book brings a message of hope without sidestepping the tough realities that come with the territory of mortal existence. The book does not guarantee life free of hardship or stress, but it supplies the basic tools which enable us better to handle anything life can throw at us and emerge from the encounter spiritually victorious.

WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE?

Sooner or Later the question is sure to be asked, "How does The URANTIA Book get along with the bible? Authors of certain parts of the bible have cautioned against anyone's adding on to or subtracting from their recordings concerning their beliefs about the nature and acts of God, their visions and prophecies and their recollections of certain experiences they and their compatriots underwent. These admonishments undoubtedly served over the centuries to protect the integrity of the Bible, a book which has stood, as the poet

writes, "like a rock undaunted through the raging storms of time".

It is not difficult to imagine the disastrous consequence of humankind's losing sight of the eternal truth so faithfully preserved between the covers of the book we Christians know today as "The Holy Bible". Civilization (however thin its veneer) owes a debt to those valiant saints who through the ages have sought, often at life's peril, to keep "The Word" intact and undefiled.

The Bible is a source of wonder for what it reveals; no less so for what it conceals. It presents a challenge to inquiring minds that so very much of the then known world's happenings - and certainly much of heaven's happenings - are missing from its pages. The URANTIA Book fills in some of the gaps. Not everyone is comfortable with this. Atheists, already overtaxed, now have much more yet to disbelieve. And not a few Bible scholars, teachers and preachers, having invested heavily in various certainties are now presented with the opportunity further to stretch the mind to encompass further truth.

This leads me to ask myself while shaving: Do we do our hearts and minds a favor by limiting our acceptance of reality to only that which has already been imagined or experienced? Shall I with my fear of the unexplored, circumscribe God, rationing his Word to my shortened understanding?

Someone has said that The URANTIA Book is to the Bible as the New Testament is to the Old Testament. This is true in this sense, that The URANTIA Book augments rather than supplants, the Bible.

To those who are convinced that the Book of Revelation marks the end of inspired revelation, I suggest that it may be best for you to lay The URANTIA Book aside. It will only disturb you. If you are of the mind that man's present understanding of God and His extended domains is as complete as need be, or that God has nothing further to add to scripture, no more of Himself to reveal to His children, then please, find peace in praying for those who think otherwise, and go in God's grace. Heaven will surely surprise us all.

And now to back up and get a running start with this question: Where does the world begin? How and when did "the world" come to be whatever it is? A verse from a favorite hymn tells this story in beautiful imagery:

A thousand ages in Thy sight
Are but an evening gone
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

As for how things came to be, these three schools are prevalent in contemporary western thought:

1. Godless evolution. Here the cosmos is amindal and there being no planner, an unplanned sequence of random if fortuitous patterns of cause and effect - a mechanistic, unfeeling universe or construct. Here, God is a myth invented by primitive, superstitious minds; man is the apex of creation, the alpha and omega.

2. "Instant" Creation. God created the heavens and the earth in six twenty-four hour days - 144 hours in all (earth time of course; what other time was there?) a staggering six thousand years ago.

3. Evolution as a process, part of God's planning. Here a careful, caring Father-God untold ages ago and in the now of eternity caused the cosmos (all things great and small) to begin its ordered purpose, wherein Truth-in-Love, Personified, reaches "down" to dwell in man, saving him from all that is false, and that very man responding, reaching "upward" to experience completion in the exquisite dimensions of the Father's kingdom.

The URANTIA Book, as I have seen it, aligns with the third view. Its 196 Papers elevate, uphold and glorify the Person and handiwork of the God of Abraham, Isaiah and Moses - even that very heavenly Father so faithfully served by The Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God and Son of Man, the Bethlehem born.

In reading and contemplating its revelation, I experience much that is valuable to effective daily living. In applying its truth there is a lifting up of my spirit and a wholesome, exhilarating stretching of my mind. Nowhere do I read anything that requires laying aside my highest ideals, my loftiest concepts of honor, decency or compassion. Rather are these concept enhanced and expanded - edified. Throughout its pages are passages which render my faith in God and his matchless plan ever more certain, my love for my fellow man ever more real. And what is of utmost importance to me as a born-of-the spirit Christian, The URANTIA Book upholds Jesus Christ as Lord, before Whom "every knee shall bow and every tongue confess."

Will the URANTIA movement compete with other faiths, other religions, seeking to take their places? The answer lies in the question, "Did Jesus come to do away with the law and the prophets, or to fulfill?" A poet has said, "The new is in the old concealed; the old is in the new revealed." TRUTH lives within us and breathes the pure and holy air of Paradise. Let us look in our hearts for Truth and find Him waiting there.

DAVID JAQUITH, 1804 N. COLLEGE,
NEWBERG, OR 97132

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