

Grace United Church of Christ

307 Plymouth Street

Culver, Indiana

MEREDITH J. SPRUNGER, MINISTER

January 13, 1959

Dr. William S. Sadler
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago, Illinois

Dear Dr. Sadler:

I am very happy to have your paper "Some Criticisms of the Urantia Book." Have been gone all day and therefore have only be able to give it a hasty reading. It is an excellent paper. In the next day or two I will give it a more thorough reading and write you concerning any observations which I may have.

We have just passed a mile stone here in Culver. As you know two of our elders wrote the president of the church concerning our associations with the Urantia Book. Throughout the year they have been working behind the scenes to build a following to take action at the annual congregational meeting. It only resulted in solidifying the great majority of the congregation in our favor. There was a large turn out for the meeting Sunday evening and the first action of the meeting was to elect board members (elders and deacons) for the coming year. Both of these men were defeated for re-election and progressive men of good will were uniformly elected to the nine offices opening up this year. When it came time for the president of the congregation to ask for comments, suggestions, etc. not one of the agitators said anything. For all practical purposes the opposition has ended. Actually I paid very little attention to it and was not really concerned about the meeting but I think Irene was relieved.

I am much concerned about the relationship of the Urantia Movement to the Church. The other evening I wrote up what seems to me a necessary policy to establish among the people who are interested in the Urantia Book. Am enclosing a copy and would appreciate your comments. Will write you later concerning the first paper on Urantia Apologetics.

Cordially yours,

Meredith

Grace United Church of Christ

307 Plymouth Street

Culver, Indiana

MEREDITH J. SPRUNGER, MINISTER

January 14, 1959

Dr. William S. Sadler
533 Diversey Parkway
Chicago 14, Illinois

Dear Dr. Sadler:

Here is a running comment of ideas that come to me as I read your fine paper, "Some Criticisms of the Urantia Book." I especially appreciate the inclusion of admonitions given in connection with the publication of the Urantia Book. The positive letter preceding the criticisms is also good.

1. This is a generalization which could be made about almost any advance in knowledge. In the November issue of Harper's Magazine there is a fine article by Dr. Ian Stevenson entitled "Scientists with Half-closed Minds" from which many parallels could be cited. The discoveries of Harvey, Pasteur, Semmelweis, Darwin, and many others are referred to. A member of the Paris Academy of Sciences tried to stop the demonstrator of Edison's phonograph by saying, "Wretch! Do you suppose that we are fools to be duped by a ventriloquist?" Professor P. G. Tait said when he heard of the telephone, "It is all humbug, for such a discovery is impossible." Paley said, "There is a principle, proof against all argument, a bar against all progress...which if persisted in cannot but keep the mind in everlasting ignorance - and that is, contempt prior to examination." Whitehead wrote that "every great idea sounds like nonsense when first propounded." So in a sense, rejection by the top theologians is one of the historical measurements of value we would look for in a really new and superior spiritual conception of the universe.

2. This section is very well done. Would question the word "exalts" sex, on page 5. Maybe the word "ennobles," "enhances," or "elevates" would be better.

3. You are so right about Christian cosmology being almost non-existent.

4. The critic's views are certainly distorted. It might be good to say that the Urantia concept of man is in harmony with the best Christian thought about man.

5. Even if this knowledge were known, it would prove nothing of significance about the Urantia Book.

6. Only a person completely ignorant of the essence of the message of the Urantia Book could honestly formulate such a criticism.

7. The goal of salvation is infinitely more clear in the Urantia Book than in Christian eschatology.

8. This criticism is actually more appropriate placed in a setting some nineteen hundred years ago - exactly what a Pharisee might have said to Jesus or one of the apostles.

10. Again the critic's statement "commonplace hodge-podge" reveals his almost complete ignorance of the book.

11. Dr. Moss in a little book, We Believe, says, "Atonement literally means at-one-ment." He denies that it has any "propitiation" meaning. In this sense, that Christ added one more ^{indispensable} bond to link us with the Father, or that the Urantia Book adds one more bond to make us at-one with the Father, this is not out of harmony with the Urantia Book teaching. Very few modern theologians believe in the crude blood atonement doctrine. The Urantia Book has a very clear plan of salvation.

13. There are many small things which are constantly showing up. The section "Climatic and Geologic Changes" p. 890 takes on new significance in the light of last week's Post article "The Earth's Shifting Crust" - Charles Hapgood.

16. General denunciations mean absolutely nothing - except to reveal a negative emotional state in the author. If the author does not agree with specific statements in the Urantia Book, any valid criticism must deal with these specific disagreements.

17. This is tremendous but it should be pointed out that some of these concepts, i.e. The Paradise Trinity, are not new in Christian thought. They are new in that they do not appear in the Bible. And of course many are completely new.

The only other criticism it occurs to me to suggest is one made by Dr. Robert Moss to one of our elders: "The Urantia Book takes away the centrality of Christ in the Christian faith." While it is true that the Urantia Book enlarges our universe and concept of God and, with Jesus' teachings in the N. T., makes the Universal Father the center of all things (As does the N. T.) but within the New Testament cosmological framework, it makes Jesus even more important - in addition to the concept of Saviour, he becomes our Creator, and Sovereign Lord. "No one cometh to the Father except by me," becomes even more absolute in its significance.

I think you have done an excellent and needful job. I hope that you will make this available through the Brotherhood in duplicated form. We are approaching the time when individuals need such a tool as this and it should be made available to them.

Under separate cover I am sending you a copy of the first book(1-41) of the Psalms. At your leisure I would appreciate any suggestions you may have for improving them.

Cordially yours, "

Murdish

January 15, 1959

Dr. Meredith J. Sprunger
215 N. Slate St.
Culver, Indiana

Dear Dr. Sprunger:

Thank you for your suggestions about my Paper. I suppose if there is a request for this Paper, it will be mimeographed later on, and be available.

I think your note about the Urantia Book and the churches was very good. I would suggest that if you have a duplicate you will send us a few copies that Miss Rowley might have in her files for use now and then.

I was very happy to learn how your church election came out. You really have had better luck with the "brethren" than I ever thought you would have. I am glad things have turned out as they have.

Thanking you again for your helpful suggestions, I am

Sincerely,

William S. Sadler

WSS/ar