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BASIC CONCEPTS OF THE URANTIA BOOK

By Ruth Burton

The *URANTIA Book* is a revelation of facts and truths which have long been sought after by scientists, historians, philosophers, and religionists -- Urantia being the universe name of this planet. The book gives as its authorship superhuman, divine beings who would, understandably, have access to certain information not available to mortals. The authors, however, make use of all human concepts and information possible, and resort to superhuman sources only when necessary. The subject matter of the entire book centers in the general purpose of making clear "man's divine and eternal destiny," "the age-long progress from animal to angel, from angel to spirit, from spirit to God." (*2075, 558) It is to clarify this fundamental, unifying theme of man's eternity-long evolution that all the various phases and topics of the subject matter are included in the book's more than two thousand pages. The basic ideas and philosophy of the URANTIA revelation may be stated briefly as follows:

The Cosmos

The scene of this drama of man's continued development, the arena in which it occurs, is the entire stretch of the starry universes of space. Therefore must we understand something of the vast cosmic stage on which the action unfolds. There is given a word-map, a sort of blueprint of what the Palomar telescope is beginning to reveal: the hitherto unimagined magnitude of the galaxies and universes of space. The book tells of the revolutions and ordered movements of component systems and sub-systems; of the origin and basic constitution of matter, including its absolute unit, the ultimaton; of the relation of matter to energy, mind, and spirit; and of the eons-long evolution of matter into nebulae and star-clouds, suns and planets, and finally into stabilized universes. At the eternal center of this immeasurable swing of the far-sweeping galaxies, holding it all in absolute control, is the Isle of Paradise, the dwelling-place of God, the universal Father-Creator.

Personalities of the Universes

This vast cosmos, says *The URANTIA Book*, is inhabited by a tremendous population of living beings -- divine personalities, angels, and mortals like us on earth. The purpose, the reason, for bringing into existence all this infinite stretch of universes and personalities is this: That God willed not to be self-contained. He is not selfish. He wishes to share the joy, the adventure of being, to the very farthest extent possible, even down to such lowly animal-origin creatures as the mortals of earth. There are millions of planets inhabited by human beings similar to us, and the Father loves us every one. "There is in the mind of God a plan which embraces every creature of all his vast domains, and this plan is an

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eternal purpose of boundless opportunity, unlimited progress, and endless life. And the infinite treasures of such a matchless career are yours for the striving!" (*365)

The History of Urantia

Since our planet, Urantia, is the starting point of the eternal career of earth mortals, it is fitting that we better understand its beginning and our own evolution from animals. We are therefore told of the earth's astronomic origin, of the gradual, but violent, formation of its stone crust and the oceans, of the super-human implantation of life, which evolved through countless ages into plants and animals, until finally there appeared the first human family -- and of this we have a fascinating, detailed account; of primitive peoples (including the genesis of colored races), their early clans, pre-civilizations, and strange religious rites, for from these evolved the moral imperative, which is the prerequisite for spiritual growth. We mortals are the very lowest order of being capable of spiritual development, and this is predicated on the fact that the human mind has evolved to the point where it can be indwelt by a spark of eternal divinity. The planets are the spawning-ground of will creatures farthest from God who nevertheless possess the potential of finding him.

The Continuation of Evolution

If we mortals sincerely choose in this life to follow the gentle leading of the divine spark within us, we can continue life and development on the "mansion worlds," and on literally millions of other spheres of training. On these mansion worlds the tragic incompletions, the injustices, the inequalities of opportunity of earth life are rectified; but we earn every inch of progress, by study and training under the guidance of angels and other competent teachers, and chiefly by service which we give to those following us. We do not, however, in this universe age, return to our native planet. There is no communication here, says *The URANTIA Book*, with departed loved ones. The entire stellar itinerary of our inconceivably long evolutionary journey toward spirit status is described, including graduate courses on the billion worlds of Havona. "You humans have begun an endless unfolding of an almost infinite panorama, a limitless expanding of never-ending, ever-widening spheres of opportunity for exhilarating service, matchless adventure, sublime uncertainty, and boundless attainment." (*1194) Such is the long, alluring path to Paradise. Such is the mortal ascension plan.

The Downreach of God

The mortal ascension plan is a two-way proposition. Not only does man climb toward God, but God reaches down toward man. The initial basis for movement outward, the very first step away from absolute self-containment, was the creation of the Eternal Son and the Infinite Spirit, thus forming the Trinity. Of course the Trinity has existed eternally, but to our time-bound, finite minds, these existential personalizations of Deity must necessarily be presented in sequence. The absolute First Source and Center down-stepped himself further in the creation of many additional divine personalities, less than absolute, more and more nearly approaching the finite.

About two thousand years ago, one of these divine sons of God incarnated himself on Urantia, in part, in order to help us mortals to realize that we too are sons of God, indwelt by a divine light. "The Kingdom of God is within you." This inner guidance can lead us in timeless evolution, life after life, toward perfection. Jesus literally meant it when he commanded, "Be ye perfect." But there is an added

reason for Jesus' incarnation. By his life in the flesh he was earning his own sovereignty. The *URANTIA* Book teaches that this same Son, who became the carpenter of Nazareth, was the actual and literal creator of the earth, the solar system, and our entire "local" universe, with its potential of ten million inhabited worlds. And out of all those possible planets where he might have lived his life of the flesh, he chose to come to ours -- probably because of our great need. The moral and spiritual backwardness of Urantia in comparison with other planets, is due, we are told, to certain unfortunate events of long ago -- such as are always possible in finite worlds, where imperfect beings have free-will choice. Six times before, on other spheres, this divine Son of God had bestowed himself and lived the life of one of his own creatures, thereby, with this seventh and final one, in the likeness of the lowest order, earning complete and absolute sovereignty over the universe he created. Jesus did not come to Urantia to placate a God of wrath, nor to offer himself as a ransom by dying on the cross. The cross was wholly man's doing, not God's requirement. He came to say that God is a loving Father, that man is a son of the eternal God, and that all men are brothers. By these seven bestowals, he enriched his divine and perfect personality, making it not only complete, but replete. He thus became the Son of Man, in addition to being the Son of God.

Many other orders of being, created perfect, add to their natures by ministering to ascenders on the path to Paradise. Perfect beings descend to serve those who ascend -- a two-way plan.

The Supreme Being

All this life experience of both ascenders and descenders is gradually being synthesized and co-ordinated into an evolving, universal consciousness, a growing oversoul of all creation, eventually to be personalized as the Supreme Being, the administrator of the perfected, finite universes -- so teaches *The URANTIA* Book. To the evolution of this developing God of time and space, even we mortals are contributing by the experience of living. The concept of a growing, finite Deity has been propounded by certain philosophers of our planet.

The Life and Teachings of Jesus

The account of the life and teachings of Jesus in *The URANTIA* Book is much more complete than that of the New Testament, but not contradictory. The superhuman authors base their narrative chiefly on records supplied by a sort of guardian angel of the Apostle Andrew. They give definite dates and many hitherto unknown details, making an exceedingly readable, simply told story. This biography occupies the last third of the book, the foregoing two-thirds constituting an informing introduction, a universe backdrop, for the enthralling drama of this human-divine life on our troubled planet. The presentation, therefore, of the picture of this matchless life in its cosmic frame, is rightly the climax, the fitting conclusion, of the *URANTIA* revelation. The opening paragraphs of the book give that invitation-command of the Creator Father of all the universes to his far-flung family of finite, mortal children, "Be ye perfect"; and the following two thousand pages spell out details and steps in the path of perfection attainment. For us mortals, Jesus points the way. Indeed, his life and precepts, in their original form, unencumbered by tradition and dogma, are by far the greatest possible help that mortal man can have in his age-long climb toward Paradise, which is begun here and is continued on the numberless spheres of space.