



# HARMONY

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## The URANTIA Book And Christian Fundamentalism

by MEREDITH J. SPRUNGER

Many devout Christians of conservative or fundamentalistic background have read sections of The URANTIA Book and recognized the superb quality of its spiritual insights but have been troubled by the revelatory claim of the book or positions taken which differ from some of the literalistic doctrines of fundamentalism. These people over the years have written to ask questions, express perplexity, seek help, or challenge statements.

This paper seeks to speak with constructive understanding to these questions and spiritual anxieties. In many ways it has been the Christian fundamentalists who have maintained the vibrant spiritual emphasis of religion in America. Our intent is not to contend with fundamentalistic beliefs but, rather, to set these spiritual truths in a larger frame of reference which, hopefully, will enable those who hold to a conservative theology to more adequately

understand that we subscribe to the same spiritual realities and are brothers in Christ.

Most people who accept the Bible as revelation do not do so because some one demanded obedience to this belief. They accept the Bible as the word of God because they recognize its spiritual truths. Your approach to The URANTIA Book should be made the same way. Before you read The URANTIA Book you should not regard it as revelation. Only after you have read it are you in a position to begin to consider whether or not it may have been inspired by God. Faith and conviction must come from honest and sincere inner leading and not from external authoritarian claim or demand.

### How We Got Our Bible

In thinking about the entire question of revelation it may be helpful to know how we got our Bible. Theological schools devote entire courses to this question and dozens of books are available on the subject. But you can get a short, synoptic



# HARMONY

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knowledge of the Bible's origin by going to the Public Library reference shelf and get a copy of Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible. Look up the term "canon", which means "officially accepted standards or books" and read about how we got our Bible.

You will find the Old Testament evolved in three main stages over thousands of years of history. It was edited periodically by many scholars. The entire canon of the Old Testament was not decided until around 90 A.D. at the famous Council of Jamnia where Hebrew scholars finally determined which books should be included in the "official" scriptures of Judaism. The process and the conclusions are much more complex and extensive than this brief description might lead you to believe.

The New Testament began in the early Christian Church as a series of papers and letters written by numerous people. These papers were circulated among believers, edited, combined, and added to by many early scholars and church leaders. The names of apostles were often attached to the better papers so that they would have more authority for church members. From around 144 A.D. to 367 A.D. various scholars and bishops drew up their own lists of books which they thought should be canonical or officially recognized books. Finally, Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, wrote an Easter letter to the churches of his diocese in the year 367 in which he discusses the books which he considered canonical. This is the first list which includes all of the twenty-seven books of the New Testament as we now have it. His list, however, was in a different sequence than our current New Testament. At various church councils in the years that followed, Athanasius' list was widely adopted and in this way we got our New Testament.

In Athanasius' pastoral letter he wrote with all of the authority of a bishop, "let no one add to them (his list) or take away aught of them." Such authoritarian exhortations were considered necessary to protect the purity of revelatory teachings; and statements like the admonition in Rev. 22:18-19 "I warn every one who hears the words of the prophecy of this book..." were common. In the same way the revelators of The URANTIA Book requested that the book be published under international copyright protection so that the purity of these teachings could be safeguarded. These precautions are not meant to imply that God ceases to enlarge the revelation of himself and spiritual truth to succeeding generations. The history of the Bible



shows that God does progressively reveal larger truths to a developing world. Early religious leaders used authoritarian warnings and admonitions frequently to protect the latest prophetic messages.

Once you understand how the content of the Bible was accumulated, edited, adopted, and officially approved, you realize that revelation is validated by centuries of experience. Many people recognize revelation immediately because the indwelling spirit of God confirms what they hear or read but it takes many people over a long period of time to establish a social tradition of revelation such as the Bible. This tradition along with the authority and prestige of the institutional church results in a cultural conditioning which largely determines how the average person thinks and acts.

### Recognizing New Revelation

The URANTIA Book being very new must be evaluated by the indwelling spirit of God working in the mind and heart of each individual. You should accept nothing in The URANTIA Book or any other book unless it passes this inner test of truth. I am confident that a thousand years hence, we will have a solid social tradition witnessing to the revelatory quality of The URANTIA Book.

Revelation is always the product of the action of God in the life of man. God has an infinite number of ways to do this. In Jesus of Nazareth he used both genetic-physical and spiritual means to bring revelation to us in the form of a person. In the writings of Paul he used spiritual inspiration in the mind of Paul to bring us revelation in the form of brief letters to churches. In John's book of Revelation he used a vision to the mind of John to bring us revelation. In The URANTIA Book he used high spirit personalities to bring revelation in the form of a book. God could use an infinite number of channels and manifestations to bring revelation to his mortal children. It is God's wisdom which determines the time, place, method, and form of revelation. We might speculate on why God uses certain channels and forms but this would only be an educated guess. The spirit of God is always active in the world and in this sense revelation is continuous - usually through inner guidance to individuals who share these prophetic insights with their society. Periodically epochal revelations occur - such as the coming of Jesus. Epochal revelations

naturally have a much greater effect on our world than the continuous forms of evolutionary revelation. A study of these epochal revelations show that each succeeding one enlarges and enhances the earlier spiritual understanding.

Revelation must always be given in the language, forms of knowledge, and philosophical concepts which are meaningful to the people given this revelation at the time in which it is given. As human knowledge expands revelation uses these more advanced concepts to convey its spiritual message. This is a never ending process.

### The New Fulfills and Enhances the Old

Just as the New Testament fulfills and upsteps the Old Testament, The URANTIA Book confirms and enlarges the truths of the Bible. Most people have a much greater appreciation of the Bible after reading The URANTIA Book. The Bible and The URANTIA Book are companion volumes. Not to recognize this close supportive relationship is to repeat an ancient error. Early in the Christian Church a wealthy ship-owner by the name of Marcion headed a movement to eliminate the Old Testament from Christian literature. The church wisely rejected his views. Any reader of The URANTIA Book who took this same attitude toward the Bible, in my judgement, would be making this same mistake. There are many people, in fact, who have not been interested in the Bible until after they have read The URANTIA Book.

Because of the natural suspicion conservative religionists have toward any claim of new revelation, a rather common reaction which well meaning fundamentalists have toward The URANTIA Book is that it could be the work of Satan. This is an understandable attitude of people who do not have a scholarly background in religion and who have been taught to zealously defend the Bible. It is also interesting to recall that this was the same possibility raised in connection with the message of Jesus. Jesus' response to this accusation, I think, is as good as can be made. He said he should be judged by the fruits of his life - "How can Satan cast out Satan?" The URANTIA Book should be judged in the same way. You will find it supports the mission and message of Jesus and refutes the intentions and message of Satan! Epochal revelation will probably always meet the same reception given the message of Jesus. The leaders of traditional religious institutions are likely to oppose it; but, in time, the common people will receive it gladly.



## The Human and the Divine

A careful study of the life and teachings of Jesus reveals there is no contradiction between the spiritual teachings regarding Jesus found in The URANTIA Book and the Bible. Certain physical and cosmological facts or assumptions are corrected and Jesus' entire life and teachings are enlarged by The URANTIA Book; but the essential spiritual truths do not change.

For instance Christian theologians generally affirm that Jesus was both a human and a divine personality but the majority of scholars in mainline churches have long recognized that the story of the immaculate conception and virgin birth were added by the early church to make his divine nature more believable for the church members of those times. An interesting observation is that today, except for the most unlettered people, this story is generally a stumbling block to belief in the authenticity of the Biblical record of the divinity of Jesus. If the virgin birth is a historical fact, the reverse argument is a much sounder philosophical position. That is, since God could have used any method he desired to incarnate his son, the fact of the divinity of Jesus makes the virgin birth a possible option of the divine plan.

The reason most mainline church theologians do not accept the virgin birth story is that only two of the four gospels record it and no where else in the New Testament is it referred to. The earliest gospel, Mark, and the latest gospel, John, do not mention it. Such an important event one would expect all of the gospel writers to highlight. Secondly, there are many instances of supernatural conception and virgin birth recorded in the annals of religious history. It was the characteristic method by which ancient peoples designated the divine origin of their prophets and leaders. Paradoxically, the Biblical account traces the lineage of Jesus back to David through the ancestry of Joseph, not Mary. Finally, modern Christian scholars reject the virgin birth story because it is observed that God usually uses the natural laws of his creation to work his purposes in the world.

The spiritual truth regarding the nature of Jesus is that he was both human and divine. This The URANTIA Book strongly affirms. The book does not even mention the immaculate conception and virgin birth doctrines. It is assumed that the

Father could incarnate his son as a mortal on our world through the natural process of conception and birth. The ancient legend is quietly ignored while the spiritual truths regarding the nature of Jesus are substantiated and enhanced.

## An Enlarged Spiritual Universe

The writers of the various books of the Bible had a comparatively simplistic universe cosmology. They visualized a flat earth in the center of creation encompassed by the vault or "firmament" of heaven. This limited astronomical knowledge naturally conditioned their interpretation of spiritual realities and personalities. Basic spiritual truth, therefore, had to be revealed to the Biblical authors in prescientific frames of reference.

The revelators of The URANTIA Book present a cosmology which, while in essential agreement with our present astronomical knowledge, goes far beyond our contemporary science. They also clarify our knowledge of the Paradise Trinity, the prebestowal personality and universe status of Jesus, and the functional relationships of spiritual beings in general. Although the Bible does not speak of the Trinity per se, Christian thinkers have developed the doctrine of the Trinity and naturally assumed, without specific Biblical confirmation, that the preincarnate Christ was the second person of the Trinity. The fact that the prologue of John speaks of him as the actual creator of our universe was more or less regarded as a poetic "logos" doctrine since theologians regarded God the Father as the creator. The authors of The URANTIA Book, however, tell us this Biblical description (also stated in Col. 1:16 and Heb. 1:2) of the pre-existent Christ is literally true. He is both the Creator and saviour of our universe.

Each Creator Son of a local universe is a unique creation of the Universal Father and the Eternal Son and is known as "the only begotten son" in his universe and all who go to the Father in this universe go through the ministry and means established by this Creator-Savior Son. Even though Jesus is not the second person of the Paradise Trinity, his presence and power are exactly the same as that of the Eternal Son, the second person of the Trinity, if he were acting in the place of Christ in our universe. After Jesus' bestowal on our confused



planet the Father, as recorded in Matthew, placed "all authority in heaven and earth" in his hands; and he has promised one day to return to this world of his crucifixion experience. Here, again, we see The URANTIA Book, while correcting assumptions made due to our very limited universe knowledge, confirms and reinforces the basic spiritual truths of the Bible.

### Saviour of Mankind

All Christians look to Jesus as the mediator between man and God and regard him as the saviour of mankind. It is in the explanation of this salvation that they differ. Theologians of mainline Christian churches see salvation as the gift of God through faith in Jesus emphasizing God's love for humanity and full acceptance of them as his mortal sons and daughters. The theologians of Christian fundamentalism regard salvation as the gift of God through faith in Jesus because he offered himself as a blood sacrifice demanded by God the Father as the price for forgiving the sins of mankind. This is known as the blood atonement doctrine in which Jesus is seen as the redeemer of humanity from the condemnation of a just and holy God.

The only Christian belief which the authors of The URANTIA Book vigorously criticize is the blood atonement theory. They do so because this doctrine distorts and slanders the great love which the Universal Father has for his mortal sons and daughters. It is completely incompatible with Jesus' teachings about the nature of God the Father. God's love is not subordinate to his righteousness or holiness. Love is the Universal Father's primary attitude toward all persons. Jesus is, indeed, the saviour of mankind but not a redeemer.

The blood atonement theory has its origin in the conceptual language of Paul. Coming out of the Jewish tradition and writing with Jewish people in mind, Paul used the symbolic idea of Jesus as the "final sacrifice" in their sacrificial system as a missionary approach which made sense to those with a Jewish background. New Testament scholars today recognize that Paul did not hold a God concept which would be compatible with a literal blood atonement doctrine. He used this sacrificial language because it was the only frame of reference which would be acceptable

to the Jews of his day. It was a missionary attempt to relate to the thought patterns of the Jews.

Most ministers in mainline Christian churches have long since abandoned this retributive concept of God. The Bible commentary most widely used in America today is The Interpreter's Bible published by Abingdon Press. In volume VIII, p. 510-11, the writer in commenting on John 3:16 says, "Some of the past explanations of the gospel are not overhelpful to us now. Most of us are not at home in the Jewish sacrificial system; and metaphors drawn from it can be confusing rather than illuminating. And some of the interpretations, popular in the Middle Ages, are to us incredible, and even monstrous....So do many, with the Gospels in their hands, appear to see in them a lesser God giving himself to save us from the implacable fury and resentment of the great God, slow and hard to be appeased, and demanding his pound of flesh from someone. That is hideous heresy; and the blasphemy of blasphemies. It was in the eternal plan of God the Father that Jesus Christ lived out in fact: 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself' (II Cor. 5:19), not standing sullenly aside, and needing himself to be reconciled."

We should recognize that most of those who still accept a literal blood atonement theory in our day probably do so out of misunderstanding and with no intent to deny the loving nature of God. To believe that God the Father cannot or will not love man until his innocent son is brutally executed is a cruel distortion of the loving nature of the Heavenly Father Jesus revealed to man. But The URANTIA Book does affirm the positive spiritual values associated with the crucifixion and man's salvation which are important to fundamentalists as well as other Christians.

It was the Father's will that Jesus allow the Jewish leaders to dispose of him as they desired. God does not arbitrarily interfere with the premeditated intentions of man. Jesus' death on the cross demonstrates the profound love he and the Father have for man even when they were torturing and executing him. He refused to use divine power to save himself or punish these misguided evil doers. This great love is the most powerful saving act the Father and the Son



could bestow on self-willed man in this situation to eventually deliver him from his ignorance, evil, and sin and cause man to recognize God's transcendent love and accept sonship. Salvation is something which God in Christ makes possible for man. Finite man cannot save himself but through faith he may accept this gift of eternal life. Christ is the way by which all mortals in our universe go to the Father.

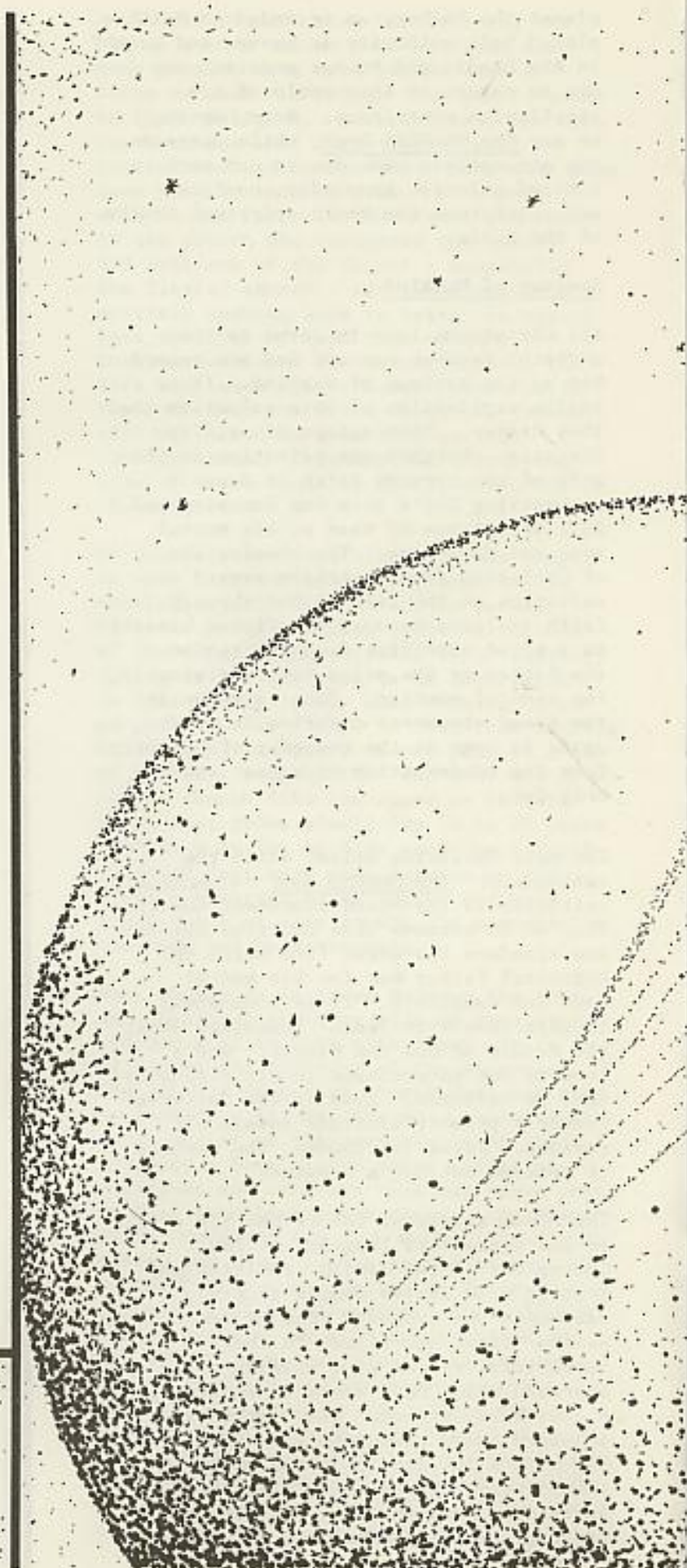
### On Approaching New Truth

New truth is always challenging and often threatening to traditionalists. This is both natural and good. The tried and true values of historical experience cannot and should not be easily replaced by the new and untested. But these historic truths are periodically upstepped by prophetic vision. Such growth is usually a traumatic experience for individuals, the church, and society.

Every prophet in the history of the Old and New Testaments has met with unbelief and opposition. The priests of society have regularly stoned its prophets. Then their sons of another century build monuments to honor the prophets persecuted by their fathers. It is good to be cautious and critical; it is helpful to doubt and carefully evaluate. But we need to be open and objective enough to allow the spirit to lead us to larger truth. Jesus told his apostles that he would send the Spirit of Truth through which he would lead them to greater truths in the future. We must be sensitive to this Spirit of Truth. We need to learn to recognize truth in its many forms and varying appearances.

You will find that The URANTIA Book will stand the test of critical examination. It is rooted solidly in the traditional spiritual verities of the Christian faith which have endured for centuries. Reading and studying The URANTIA Book will give you a deeper and larger vision of this saving faith and help you become a part of a spiritual renaissance which is dawning on our world.

If you do not wish to continue to receive HARMONY, please drop us a note.







## On Introducing The URANTIA Book To The World's Religions

by RICHARD BAIN

One of the great tasks for students of The URANTIA Book in the next century and beyond is the introduction of the book to people of the world's different religions. This article can only scratch the surface of the problems that will be encountered. In fact, presenting each religion as a separate entity is somewhat misleading, because each religion is a collection of sects that can be quite different. Nevertheless, they do have points in common, and it is these points that I have tried to examine to determine what conflicts may exist between them and the concepts of The URANTIA Book.

It is likely that much of the task of introducing the book to a given religion will be done by someone who is a part of that religion. As the staff of the Planetary Prince trained people from each tribe to go back and teach their fellows, so should we use this wise method. Initially, however, we will need to interface with those of various religions and it would be well for us to know what issues they may be sensitive about. We may save ourselves a good deal of embarrassment.

A further consideration in our efforts to spread the teachings of the book concerns its reception. We may expect that our sincere efforts will bring in many people who will become dedicated students of the book. More likely however, we will find, as did Christian missionaries, that people will not entirely give up the old. They will try to graft the new onto the old. They may reject ideas which are in strong conflict with their old concepts. They may show only a weak interest in the book. Whatever the case, we need to be realistic and realize that universal acceptance



of the book may not occur for hundreds or thousands of years. Let us be thankful for any progress we can make during our stay here, and let us not forget to share the credit with our unseen friends.

The idea of introducing people to the book raises the interesting question: "What do we think we're introducing people to?" People have and will ask if it's a religion. The book is obviously not a religion, but is there a religion associated with it? Is the URANTIA movement a religion, a fraternal grouping, or what? I believe that the movement is in a state of becoming, and what it is becoming is not very clear yet. At present, the movement consists of people bound together mostly by their interest in and study of the book. But even if a religion should develop around the book, it is the book as the Fifth Epochal Revelation that we are introducing to people. If we are involved with the Christian church, we must be especially careful to make it clear that the book is not a part of Christian literature. And Christians are one of the first religious groups to whom we'll have to make this clear.

### Christianity

Introducing the book to Christians presents some interesting problems. The concepts in the book are closer to Christian ideas than to the ideas of any other religion. This may tempt Christians to label it as just another esoteric Christian sect. Our greatest problem may be being ignored! It seems to me that we must be careful not to over-emphasize either the differences or the similarities.

The task of introducing Christians to The URANTIA Book is greatly complicated because Christianity is divided into so many sects, some almost as different as Islam is from Hinduism. I doubt that any one technique will work equally well with all the different sects. It seems that even with Christianity the most desirable method is the one used by the Planetary Prince's staff: Train people from the tribe, and then send them back to teach the ideas to their fellows. If this is not possible, we should at least talk with someone of the faith or sect we wish to deal with so we can understand their outlook on theological matters.

It is unfortunate that Christianity has become such a second hand religion for many people; they have become used to being an audience rather than participants in their religion. Nevertheless, the book seems to say that Christianity will be revitalized and no doubt the book will play some part in this process. What will work in our favor is that there are those in the church who recognize the apathy and problems of the church - especially the liberal church - and these people are actively seeking ways to bring the church back to life. I hope that so many Christians become enthusiastic about the life and teachings of Jesus presented in the book that the whole Christian church will be forced to give them serious consideration. This new and refreshing view of Jesus could be a real tonic for Christianity.

Of course, there are already those people in many different denominations who are working quietly on a person-to-person basis to bring the book to the attention of their fellow Christians. Unfortunately, trying to see the results of their work is like trying to see what's going on in an anthill. It's hard to tell from looking at the top that there is one heck of a lot of activity underneath. The book may grow in the church like the agave or century plant that grows slowly for 10 to 20 years, then in a matter of days sends up a stalk 30 to 40 feet high with flowers on top. Visible progress often occurs suddenly after years of slow growth and preparation that may not be noticeable.

What conflicts in ideas between the book and Christian theology will we encounter, and how will we deal with them? There is of course the Doctrine of the Atonement. The liberal Christian church does not seem to emphasize it, but the more conservative sects see it as the cornerstone of their theology. Some of the other Christian doctrines and concepts that may prove more or less troublesome are these; the Virgin Birth, Original Sin, the authority of the Bible, and Jesus as the second person of the Trinity, and belief in Jesus as the only path to salvation. If we follow Jesus' example, we will avoid attacking the old while we're introducing the new. We must not expect Christians or those of any religion to accept all of the teachings of the book. At first, they will pick and choose to find concepts that they are comfortable with. As they study the book, they may gradually replace the old concepts with the newer ones. We



must expect that some will never give up all of the old; there will be all levels of commitment just as there are now among students of the book.

At this time, the conservative churches generally are doing well in attracting members and this seems to justify their conservatism. But even they are evolving, if they will pardon the use of that term. The struggles between the moderate and the conservative factions in several denominations is a sign that the old ideas are losing their hold on many people. By contrast, the liberal churches are going through a crisis. They are losing members and support. They are going through a period of self-examination to determine why they are losing members. They might be good candidates for the updated theology presented in The URANTIA Book.

How might the hierarchy of the church react to The URANTIA Book and to students of the book in the church? When there are only a few people in the church who study the book, they can simply ignore the issue. When there begin to be significant numbers of these students in the church, then the hierarchy will realize that they will have to deal with the issue. Their reaction will of course depend on how they perceive this new movement within the church. After all, a dozen wasps in your car create a lot more excitement than a dozen houseflies. I doubt that the hierarchy could ever discredit the students on the basis of their behavior or tactics; most students whom I know could hardly be described as wild eyed fanatics. I hope that we will see a peaceful evolution leading to the theologians taking a serious look at the book. I don't expect them to be overjoyed about it, though. After you've spent years studying and teaching Biblical theology you may not be too happy about someone rocking the boat.

Is there an example of a new movement in the church that might offer some idea of what to expect? I think so. The charismatic movement created some consternation in the Christian church in the recent past. There was a great deal of publicity about the charismatics within both the liberal Christian churches and within the Baptist church. It seemed an issue that might split Baptist churches apart. Now however, there is hardly a mention of the charismatics. What happened? It seems that everyone made the needed adjustments and got back to business as usual. The

difference is that the charismatics and the others share the same holy book; The URANTIA Book is something new. There may be a great deal more adjustment required before peaceful co-existence is achieved.

### Buddhism

The URANTIA Book says that Buddhism is the best of the godless religions. At first consideration, it might seem that this would pose a problem for those trying to introduce the book to Buddhists. Actually, quite the contrary may be true. Except for a few sects, they do not have the concept of a personal within their religions, so the God concepts in the book will not conflict with anything they already believe. A Buddhist concept that may prove troublesome to deal with in light of the teachings of Jesus is the idea that we should escape from our sufferings by detaching ourselves from the world. Will the Buddhist be able to move from this escape idea to the more creative idea of seeing our suffering as a growth opportunity or as a stimulus to creative action? It is possible that the Buddhist will find ways to meld the transcending function with the activist concepts that Jesus taught. Actually, both Jesus and Buddha taught self-forgetfulness; the difference is that the Jesus method is self-forgetfulness through service.

There are other differences between the philosophies of the book and Buddhism that might appear to be a problem but can be easily resolved. The URANTIA Book says that prayer and worship are the techniques to get in touch with ultimate realities, whereas the Buddhist uses meditation to transcend self and become one with ultimate reality. But these two techniques can be synthesized to yield a technique that reaps benefit from both. Prayer should be a dialogue, not a monologue. We talk, and God listens. God talks and we listen. Prayer can only be a dialogue if our talking is followed by our listening. Meditation makes an excellent postlude to prayer. When we clear our minds of cares and worries, we make a space into which God can place something of greater value.

If there is a religion that it will be easier to introduce the book to than Buddhism, it may be Hinduism.



## Hinduism

Hinduism is difficult to typify. It consists of a large and diverse group of sects that have been lumped together under the label "Hinduism". There are only a few things that all these sects have in common; one of these is the caste system. According to The URANTIA Book, the caste system was invented by the Brahman priesthood in an effort to keep the natives from intermarrying with them. The Brahman priesthood came from the Aryan invaders who invaded northern India between about 2750 to 2250 BC. While the caste system is no longer an accredited part of Indian culture and Hinduism, there still exists a residual of it, a strong social stratification that effectively keeps the various social classes segregated. The caste system is hardly consistent with the brotherhood of all people advocated by Jesus and The URANTIA Book. Nevertheless, the inequities of the caste system have been challenged by such great spiritual leaders as Gandhi and its days seem numbered. As it passes, perhaps it will be replaced with a culture that is in harmony with the high vision of the book.

Another feature of Hinduism that its various sects have in common is a belief in reincarnation and Karma. These ideas are tightly interwoven with the caste system. If one does one's duty and stays within one's caste, then one has good karma and may be born into a higher caste and live a more pleasant life in the next reincarnation. If you are suffering in this life, then you must have bad karma from a previous life.

The caste system may present some problems to acceptance of the book, but I don't feel that the concept of reincarnation will be as difficult to deal with. After all, the desire of the Hindu is to reincarnate into a higher life, and isn't that exactly what happens to us when we graduate to the mansion worlds? Perhaps the idea of eternal progression will be more appealing to the Hindu than the concept of being caught in the endless cycles of the wheel of karma. Karma does offer an easy answer to the question of why we suffer. This easy answer, not unlike some earlier Christian doctrines, satisfies less sophisticated minds but may not be very satisfying to deep thinkers and truth seekers. Our problem is to persuade people to examine their long cherished beliefs and consider new concepts that

offer better answers to the questions of existence, answers that reflect a greater spiritual insight.

The cosmology of The URANTIA Book may be especially appealing to the Hindu mind. An appreciation for the absolute and infinite nature of God has long been a part of Hinduism.

The Hindu may also closely relate to the concept of the Thought Adjuster in the book. The book points out that the Hindu concept of the Atman is similar to the idea of the Thought Adjuster.

It seems to me that the book will fare quite well among the Hindus. They have been quite open to new religious ideas; in fact, the problem is that they may be too open. The teachings of the book may be simply absorbed into Hinduism as Buddhism was. Though Buddhism originated in India, it no longer exists as a separate religion there today.

And what of Jesus and Hinduism? Here again, the Hindu already have similar ideas. They have traditions of many avatars, gods appearing in the form of men on earth. Many of them no doubt already accept Jesus as an avatar. Is this so far from the truth? It appears quite likely that the concepts of The URANTIA Book will find fertile soil in which to grow in India.

## Judaism

Jesus may prove to be quite a stumbling block for the Jews to overcome when considering the book. They have, after all, been beaten over the head with the Christian's Jesus for centuries. Had Christianity embraced the religion of Jesus rather than becoming a religion about Jesus, the Jews might find him more acceptable. But there is hope that this attitude can change. The Jews may be able to more readily accept the Jesus of The URANTIA Book because he is not portrayed as a savior we must believe in or a sacrifice necessary to obtain God's forgiveness as he is in Christian doctrine. The Jew may even be willing to consider the possibility of a dual-nature Jesus if the divine part is not portrayed as part of the Trinity. There are those today calling themselves Jews for Jesus. If some Jews can accept Jesus as portrayed by Christianity, then might not many more accept the superlative portrayal of Jesus in The URANTIA Book?



The Trinity concept may prove to be a stumbling block for the strongly monotheistic Jew. They fought long and hard to keep the polytheistic concepts of the tribes and nations around them from creeping into Judaism, so it is no surprise that they have such a strong monotheism. I feel that the Jews will be able to accept the idea of God manifested as three persons when they see that these three are unified in the Trinity and that on infinite and eternal levels, God is one.

It may appear to us that the book does not have a good chance with the Jews, but we would do well to remember that where we see little possibility the Father's many spiritual forces may do works we do not believe possible.

### I s l a m

It seems to me that the book will have an even tougher time penetrating Islam than Judaism. The present wave of fundamentalism sweeping Islam will make it not only difficult but dangerous for a Muslim to study The URANTIA Book. Nevertheless, eventually the fundamentalist voices will dwindle from a roar to a whisper, and then Islam may begin to be receptive to new concepts, even the concepts of the book.

The Muslim is as strongly monotheistic as the Jew. This means that the Trinity concept will also be a problem for the Muslim. However, the Jesus of the book should fare much better with the Muslim than the Jew. Jesus is not recognized as a dual nature being by Islam, but he is recognized as a teacher and a prophet.

Though it may be a long time before Muslims begin to study the teachings of the book, we cannot afford to ignore Islam, the second largest religion in the world. We certainly need to understand this religion and the culture of its peoples before we can approach the Muslim with The URANTIA Book.

### C h i n a

China does not have a dominant religion, but because it contains about a quarter of the world's population, I feel that it is important to consider the spiritual receptivity of the people in its culture. It has been said of China, "Do not disturb the sleeping dragon." It appears that someone has, and this country is surging into the 20th century. Religion there

appears to be undergoing a significant renaissance; as a result, a vigorous Christian community appears to be emerging. Will this Christian community continue its rapid growth?

I believe that the Chinese Christian church will grow at an unbelievable pace if the government continues to be as tolerant of the church as it has been recently. An example of what may happen is what has already happened in South Korea. Several decades ago, Christianity was a small presence in South Korea; Buddhism was the dominant religion. Today, the number of Christians has nearly surpassed the number of Buddhists in the country. The Buddhists feel so threatened by this surge that they have started outreach programs to recruit members using methods like the Christians are using. China seems to be a spiritually hungry country; I believe the book will find a receptive audience when it finally arrives there.

### Closing Thoughts

There is one area that has been and still is a problem in all of the world's religions. To a greater or lesser extent, the role of women in the world's religions is less than that of men. Both Jesus and The URANTIA Book stress the equality of all people before God. But religion is not alone in this unequal treatment; it is a part of all of the world's cultures. This century has witnessed a significant elevation of woman's status in Western culture, but only in the last few decades have women begun to take their rightful places in the liberal Christian church. In Eastern culture, women still languish in the bonds of a chauvinism like that of the European Middle Ages. As it is in the Eastern culture, so it is in the Eastern religions. I do not believe that the teachings of the book can be fully assimilated by any culture until women have equal spiritual status in that culture. Nevertheless, the book and its ideas are already penetrating Western culture; the book is already spreading despite the lack of the brotherhood of all persons. The coming of this brotherhood - when it finally arrives - may be due in part to the ideas of The URANTIA Book acting as a spiritual catalyst in our culture.

The world's religions have evolved over centuries. They change slowly; we cannot



expect otherwise. The results of our efforts may seem small and insignificant, but remember that if each person lights just one candle, soon the world will be filled with light. We and our children and our children's children, and so on down the corridors of time, will help build the spiritual structures envisioned in the mind of the Supreme.



## Our Wonderful Cosmos

by DAVID GLASS

Wonderment and revelation  
 Span the cosmos with their joys,  
 And among the hosts of heaven,  
 Each his spirit-love employs

Just to win another mortal  
 To the Father's timeless plan,  
 And to cheer him in his progress  
 Toward the bliss awaiting man.

Never can there be an ending,  
 Never can adventure halt,  
 For each level of the journey  
 Leads each person to exalt

Everything the Father wishes,  
 All the love he would express,  
 Giving us the joys of sonship  
 And eternal happiness.

How can I withhold my service?  
 How can I allow a day  
 Here to pass without exhorting  
 Everyone to find his way

Through the tumult of this planet  
 To the time when he must part,  
 Soon again in higher mansions  
 To begin? In truth, to start

In that climb that leads him Godward,  
 Ne'er again to be a man  
 On this splendid world of wonder,  
 Ne'er to be its dust again.

For each person is an offspring  
 Of the Father's will to love,  
 And he'll draw his far-flung family  
 Home to endless joys above.

## Unity

a song for Urantians...

by W. DAVID ROBERTSON

### VERSE 1

C G C C7  
 Together we can climb the highest mountain.  
 Dm G C  
 As one we can go where no man's trod.  
 E F  
 Unified we'll always find the answer,  
 Dm G C  
 Hidden in the unity of God.

### CHORUS

Dm G C  
 \*Help us Lord to look upon each other,  
 Dm G  
 With love and understanding,  
 Dm G C  
 As children we need God and one another.

\*Replace after second verse with:

Show us Lord the way to help our brother,

\*Replace after third verse with:

We live in unity with our brother,

### VERSE 2

And though the world around us seems divided,  
 We will join together hand and hand,  
 And from the strength provided by our union,  
 We'll lead each other towards the promised land.

### VERSE 3

Look beyond the bad and seek the goodness,  
 Throw away our prejudice and sorrow.  
 For God will help us all to love each other,  
 And we will live in harmony tomorrow.